

# MLQ

THE THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (M.L.)

SPRING 1972, NO.1.

PRICE 20p., ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: £1 POST PAID

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**Marxist  
Leninist  
QUARTERLY**

## EDITORIAL

The first issue of Marxist-Leninist Quarterly appears during a period of mounting struggle in Britain. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the class struggle in Britain followed well-worn economic paths without seriously disturbing the political and ideological status-quo. Large scale unemployment was a memory from the 1930s and armed struggle was practiced only in the Tricontinent. Today things are different. Mass unemployment and an onslaught on working class living standards of sharply increased intensity has been met by increasingly militant resistance from key sections of workers. The kind of military repression we have seen in Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Aden is now practiced in Ireland. As resistance grows on the economic front expressing itself in more determined strike action, the prospect of open state violence against the workers, paralleling the Derry murders of early February, finally coming home to roost, can no longer be discounted. We are moving into a situation more critical than any experienced since the last world war.

Comparisons are being made with the '30s. But there is at least one important difference: the left forces are in greater disarray than they were then. Whatever may have been the weaknesses of the pre-war Communist Party (and we do not doubt that there were serious weaknesses) it did wage important and considerably effective struggles against unemployment and fascism. It was a rallying point for militant working class resistance. Today the Communist Party is a pale shadow of its former self, an incurably reformist, almost totally ineffective organisation. Outside the revisionist CP, the left is divided into several Trotskyist organisations all of which, because of the falseness of their analysis are unable to make a real mark or offer effective leadership to the workers. In a situation of mounting struggle there exists no revolutionary party.

The Communist Federation is convinced that there must be a revolutionary party and that the only genuinely revolutionary party is one based on Leninist principles. The disintegration of the world communist movement has produced a proliferation of theoretical alternatives to Leninism. We have not ignored them. We remain convinced that the principle postulates of Leninism are valid; that without the party the working class will never be able to overthrow capitalism.

We do not treat Marxism-Leninism as a dogma. For too long it has been treated in that way by many who call themselves Marxist-Leninists. The dogmatic distortion of Marxism-Leninism is inseparably bound up with revisionism: dogmatism and revisionism are two sides of the same coin. In Britain the anti-revisionist movement has, for the most part been dogmatic. There has been little serious attempt to investigate the roots of revisionism, to examine critically the past practice of the international communist movement. Instead there has been a dogmatic assertion of certain supposedly eternally correct propositions. The building of a Marxist-Leninist party requires

more than a set of slogans and a proclaimed commitment to Mao Tse-tung's thought.

During the five years since the formation of the Joint Committee of Communists we have held consistently to the view that the construction of a Marxist-Leninist party needed long and serious preparatory work. We have not always been clear about every stage of that preparation and we do not now claim to have all the answers. But we do think that our general approach has been correct - i.e. uniting together in a federation all those groups and individuals who accept a common set of general objectives. We do not favour the federal structure as an end in itself, but as the form of organisation best suited to developing the political-organisational-ideological prerequisites for the building of a party. In the conditions prevailing in Britain today alternative methods, such as the establishment of a 'central committee' followed by the setting up of branches, have proved to be quite bankrupt. Since the foundation of the CFB we have developed towards political and organisational maturity. We have not tried to pretend that there are no differences in our organisation. We have engaged in the most thorough discussion and the lines of policy that have emerged (or are emerging) on important questions such as the foreign policy of socialist states, peaceful-coexistence and proletarian internationalism, the class character of the Soviet state, the struggle in Ireland etc. have resulted from a fully democratic, comradely exchange of views in a common endeavour to answer such questions in a Marxist-Leninist way. This is the only real way to put politics in command of organisation. A journal has a crucial part to play in this process.

For a long time we have recognised this need. We have reached the conclusion that such a journal can only be of real value if it reflects the growth of the CFB. It will provide for the developing political exchange that is basic to our style of work. Different points of view must be expressed publicly. There will be argument and sometimes differences will be sharp. But it will be more than a discussion journal. Its main aim will be to assist in the formation of a Marxist-Leninist line on the major questions of theory with which the movement is faced. These questions cannot be left to committees to work out. Our purpose is not the cultivation of brilliant theoreticians whose writings are intelligible only to a few experts.

The subjects treated in our first issue have been chosen because of their importance in the development of an overall Marxist-Leninist critique of revisionist and non-Marxist positions. None of these articles should be taken to represent a final CFB position on the subject it treats.

In addition to articles we shall carry all CFB policy statements. We will welcome contributions from comrades and friends outside the Federation.

The emergence of Marxist-Leninist Quarterly at this time is a sign of our greater strength. We have no illusions about how far we have to go. The correctness of our general approach

will, we are sure, emerge clearly in the course of time. We intend to shape Marxist-Leninist Quarterly into an indispensable political weapon. We start with a modest first issue confident of our ability to produce theory and analysis appropriate to the task we face - the building of a Marxist-Leninist party in Britain.

## WHAT IS A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY ?

THIS ARTICLE IS INTENDED AS AN OPENING TO DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION POSED IN THE TITLE. (EDITOR)

Two years ago the Joint Committee of Communists published a document called 'Origins and Perspectives' in which an attempt was made to assess our experience during the 1960's and to outline our perspective for building a revolutionary party. 'Origins and Perspectives' was very much an outline document. Its historical survey was intended to be no more than a sketch and the delineation of aims and objectives was intended as a general direction-pointer based on a presentation of where we stood in relation to others.

For some time it has been necessary to say more, but we have not had the means to do so effectively. Our paper 'Struggle' is not a theoretical journal and the fact that we have so far been unable to produce a theoretical journal is an indication of our level of development. We believe that the many problems involved in building a revolutionary party need the fullest and most serious discussion. Such discussion will only be meaningful if it occurs within the orbit of practical, Marxist activity, and given that there is sufficient common ground between the participants to prevent it from degenerating into sectarian squabbling. Practical and theoretical development towards a revolutionary party demands an organisational structure based upon a certain level of political agreement. The Communist Federation provides that structure, and we shall be able to judge ourselves by our ability to develop our theory and our political practice in accord with the requirements of the struggle in Britain.

### DEFINING TERMS

We start with the conviction that the working class needs a revolutionary party in order to achieve power. But that is only the start. We ask the question 'What is a Marxist-Leninist Party?' rather than 'what is a revolutionary party?' because part of the answer to the question posed involves understanding the term 'Marxist-Leninist'. We may feel that terms like 'Marxist-Leninist' and 'revisionist' are self explanatory but we soon discover how wrong we are when we try to use them amongst workers outside the communist movement - which is where most workers are. In fact the terms are not understood by nearly as many people on the left as we may imagine; or at least they are not understood by everyone in the same way.

For example, the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Socialist Labour League, the International Socialists and the International Marxist Group all regard themselves as Marxist-Leninists. The SLL, the IMG and probably the IS also regard themselves as Trotskyists and see no contradiction involved in so doing. The CPGB regards its program 'The British Road to Socialism' as a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to British conditions, and would hotly deny that it represents a capitulation to parliamentarism and reformism. The SLL, the IMG and the IS share with us the view that socialism cannot be won through a peaceful,

parliamentary transition, and would, in general, say that the CPGB is reformist. The terms 'revisionist' and 'Marxist-Leninist' are employed by each of these organisations and clearly each understands them in a different way.

We cannot take Lenin's model of 1902 - 1903 as a prototype and say simply that in constructing a party here we should work from that model. This approach would be the worst kind of dogmatism for it would fail to take into account the particular conditions in which the Russian revolutionaries were working, and the influence of those conditions in determining the specific features of party organisation developed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This needs emphasising because there still seem to be those who think that 'What Is To Be Done?' was intended as an organisational formula for all revolutionaries everywhere. Needless to say such an approach indicates a failure to develop the theory of the party related to the real conditions prevailing in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century.

## REALITIES OF POWER IN MODERN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Developments in Ireland for example during the last two years should leave no room for complacency about the question of power in our society. If the struggle for political power is to be taken seriously it must be understood that we confront a formidable enemy in the form of a highly organised, heavily militarised and centralised State whose ramifications have, during this century been extended steadily to embrace wider sections of society.

The maintenance of capitalist rule depends ultimately on coercion. The use of force by the police or the army against strike pickets or demonstrators is 'legal' while force used by the latter against the former is 'illegal'. Press, radio and television all defend the use of force by the State against the workers, and oppose the use of force by the workers against the State. This has been most vividly expressed recently in the different treatment accorded to the Parachute Regiment and the IRA in Derry. We need to recognise the enormous impact of the mass-media on the lives of the community; the all-pervasive ideological conditioning that has throughout the advanced capitalist world effectively reinforced the more traditional methods of control. Since World War 2 we have witnessed the employment by monopoly corporations of advanced techniques of mass persuasion; the enlistment of a huge army of ad-men engaged in a massive enterprise of mass manipulation the effects of which we cannot afford to underestimate. In this we see vividly expressed the truth of Marx's famous dictum 'The prevailing ideology in every society is the ideology of the ruling class.'

But Marx also designated the working class the 'grave-diggers of capitalism' - the emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself. Between the two claims there is a contradiction that can only be resolved in political action - through the socialist revolution itself. The working class is not the gravedigger of capitalism by virtue of any intrinsic merit it possesses as a class qualifying it for that role, but because of the objective role it plays in the pro-

duction process of capitalism. Thus it can be, and indeed has always been, that the very class which alone is capable of destroying capitalism and with it all class society, is itself deeply imbued with the ideology of the ruling class it is historically destined to overthrow. The contradiction between the objective role of the working class as an agent of social revolution, and its own lack of consciousness of that role, makes necessary the party. If the workers as a class were conscious of their role as the agent of social revolution there would be no need for a party.

It is sufficient to mention two important trends, because it is around them that much of the argument has proceeded between the different currents in the revolutionary movement since Lenin's time. These trends can be associated broadly speaking with Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. Two different theories of the party became associated with their names.

If we try to find the essential principles of Lenin's theory as distinct from the particular forms of party organisation necessary in a given conjuncture, we must try to isolate some of the general features of working class existence under capitalism. The basis on which Lenin built his theory of the vanguard party is clearly expressed in the following passage:

"The common idea prevailing among the old parties and the old leaders of the Second International that the majority of the toilers and the exploited can acquire complete clarity of socialist consciousness and firm socialist convictions and character under conditions of capitalist slavery, under the yoke of the bourgeoisie (which assumes an infinite variety of forms; the more subtle and also the more fierce and ruthless the given country is), is also the embellishment of capitalism and bourgeoisie democracy, is also the deception of the workers. As a matter of fact only after the vanguard of the proletariat, supported by the whole of this, the revolutionary class, or the majority of it, overthrows the exploiters, suppresses them, emancipates the exploited from their state of slavery, improves their conditions of life immediately at the expense of the expropriated capitalists only after this, and in the very process of the most acute class struggle, is it possible to educate, train and organise the broadest masses of the toilers and the exploited around the proletariat, and under its influence and guidance, to rid them of the selfishness, disunity, the vices and weaknesses engendered by private property, and to transform them into a free union of free workers." ('Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International' July 1920. Lenin. Selected Works. Vol.10)

Lenin saw the party as a 'vanguard detachment' of the class. A detachment is a part of but apart from the whole. In "What Is To Be Done?" and "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" he stressed the party's organisational apartness from the working class as a whole. This was a necessary condition for the effective operation of 'mass line'. The stringent conditions governing membership of the party which ensured that not just any sympathiser would be able to join, were essential if the party's political tasks were to be carried out. Underlying his theory of the party

is an acute awareness of the realities of power in capitalist society. From the earliest days of Bolshevik organisation Lenin had argued that it would be wrong

"to think that at any time under capitalism the entire class would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, of its Social Democratic Party... To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the vanguard to raise ever wider strata to the most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut ones eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down those tasks." (Lenin, Collected Works, Russian Edition. Vol.4 pp 205-206.)

In the early days of Bolshevism under the Tsarist autocracy, Lenin stressed the partness of the political vanguard from the masses of workers in his argument with the economists who held that political consciousness grew naturally out of trade union struggles and that therefore there was no need for distinct and separate political organisations.

The party is conceived primarily as an instrument that serves the working class in the struggle for power and the need for the party is basic because it is the means by which the class can train its cadres and begin to shape a socialist consciousness and build the organisational strength and unity necessary eventually to overthrow the centralised and class conscious forces of capitalism. The party brings proletarian ideology to the proletariat and stands as a vanguard detachment at the head of the march.

It is important to note that these features distinguished Lenin's concept of the party throughout his political life. Rosa Luxemburg's objection was based on the belief that the working class is able spontaneously to generate its own political organisations in the course of struggle, and that the element of spontaneity in the struggle is the primary factor. In opposition to Lenin's view she held that 'social democratic centralism... can be nothing other than the imperious co-ordination of the will of the enlightened and fighting vanguard of the workers as contrasted with its different groups and individuals; that is, so to speak, a 'self centralism' of the leading element within its own party organisation.' ("Organisational Problems of Social Democracy." Rosa Luxemburg.) Social democracy was for her 'the movement of the working class itself' There is, at the core of her thinking a deeply felt antipathy to all centralised rules and discipline within the working class movement, no doubt based on her experience in the heavily bureaucratic Social Democratic German Party. The outcome of the German revolution showed her views to be romantic; the outcome of the Russian revolution showed Lenin's to be realistically based. With a different strategy involving the application of bolshevik principles in the German situation it is at least arguable that the outcome would have been different in 1918-1919. It was not solely the objective circumstances that produced the different results in each case.

But the longer term results of the October revolution have been very different from what Lenin envisaged; Soviet society today certainly does not resemble the 'free association of free workers' to which he looked forward in 1920.

## SOCIALISM AS A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

It is worth re-stating an elementary lesson of Marxism which is often overlooked. Like previous revolutionary changes from a lower to a higher social order, the proletarian revolution represents a tremendous step forward in the progress of mankind. What distinguishes it from all previous revolutions is that, in liberating itself and establishing its rule over the oppressing class the proletariat takes the first step towards eliminating not only itself as a class, but all classes, and it is therefore a qualitatively new act in the liberation of all mankind. The proletarian dictatorship is the last form of class rule and the proletarian state, no longer a state in the previously accepted sense, is from its inception in the process of withering away, eventually to be negated in classless communism. The proletarian revolution marks the end of man's pre-history and the beginning of his real history. So the struggle for socialism should never be regarded as an end in itself; socialism cannot be a completed stage of development - it is a transition. Mao Tse-tung put it well on the eve of the Chinese revolution in 1949;

'When a man reaches old age he will die; the same is true of a party. When classes disappear all the instruments of class struggle - parties and the state machinery will lose their function, cease to be necessary, therefore gradually wither away and end their historical mission; and human society will move to a higher stage. We are the opposite of the political parties of the bourgeoisie. They are afraid to speak of the elimination of classes, state power and parties. We on the other hand declare openly that we are striving hard to create the very conditions which will bring about their extinction. The leadership of the Communist Party and the State power of the people's dictatorship are such conditions...the road to the abolition of classes, to the abolition of state power and to the abolition of parties is the road all mankind must take. ('On People's Democratic Dictatorship')

Unless communists keep this constantly in mind their own ideology will be kept at the level of the bourgeoisie. This lesson is particularly important in relation to the party because if workers' power is seen as an end, as a thing in itself, then the party will come to be regarded in the same way. Lenin never for a moment lost sight of his aim - the classless society. But he did not make the mistake of thinking that the working class would establish its rule without a political organisation powerful enough to defeat the highly organised bourgeoisie. If it appears that his demand for centralised rules and strict discipline in the party was in contradiction to his goal of a 'free association of free workers' that is because there actually is a contradiction. But it is a necessary contradiction which reflects the contradiction of the workers' role as both the agent of social revolution and a class subordinated to bourgeois ideological hegemony.

## THE SEEDS OF REVISIONISM

The limited vision which sees the proletarian revolution as an end and regards the proletarian dictatorship as a finished stage of social development rather than a period of transition to the classless commune of mankind, is a bourgeois vision. It contains the seeds of revisionism. Such an outlook also sees the party as an end in itself rather than as a weapon in the struggle for power and for the remoulding of society during the transition. Revisionists worship institutions. This reflects the conservatism in bourgeois thought which wants to preserve things as they are.

The Communist Party of Great Britain like the majority of other C.P.s. has been revisionist since the mid 1930's. The majority of the communist parties of the world are revisionist and have been so for many years. In most cases they made the transition relatively smoothly, often without noticeable changes in leadership. An apparently strict adherence to Leninist principles was a marked characteristic of these parties long after they had in fact become revisionist. What should be clear is that if a party sticks to the letter of Leninism but ignores the spirit of Leninism, then those organisational principles are turned into the opposite of what was intended. They become the means of perpetuating the domination of a bureaucratic clique and are used to shackle serious discussion and stultify inner-party democracy. All this happened in the majority of communist parties. And it can be predicted with certainty that most of those organisations which have sprung up within the last few years calling themselves Marxist-Leninist, will go the same way as the other parties. Here we should refer specifically to the organisation calling itself the "Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)". The founders of the "CPB(ML)" attempted no serious critique of revisionism, contending themselves with the unsubstantiated claim that the CPGB was never a revolutionary party. They have shown themselves to have no real understanding of revisionism and it is therefore not surprising that their methods of work are so similar to those of the revisionists. Within the methods of work are so similar to those of the revisionists. Within the CPB(ML) there is no genuine democratic centralism. Policy is decided in a largely arbitrary fashion by a few 'leaders' and more often than not the members outside London have no idea what is being decided in their names. Serious discussion of political differences is not encouraged. Democratic centralism in the CPB(ML) is no more than a phrase. With a different set of slogans and a different international allegiance they are repeating most of the mistakes made by the CPGB.

## THE MYSTIFICATION OF THE PARTY

One of the most striking features of revisionism is its mystification of the party. The party comes to be regarded as a substitute for the class. A members first loyalty is expected to be to the party - not to the class. An attitude not unlike religious faith is encouraged in the membership towards the party and its leaders. The result is the destruction of serious enquiry

and questioning - the party and the leaders become the repository of all political wisdom; the party is always right. Revisionism turns dialectical thinking into a parody of Marxism; 'dialectics' becomes the rationale for whatever particular twist and turn expediency may force on the revisionist leadership.

Another feature that came to distinguish revisionist parties was their totally unquestioning, totally uncritical support for every aspect of Soviet policy - what the Chinese described as 'baton following'.

Once the party becomes sacrosanct it means that the working class has been relegated to a role of secondary importance; the handmaiden of the party's inspired truth. The whole purpose of the party has become distorted and the meaning of revolution forgotten.

## TOWARDS A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY

Unless these lessons are learned it will be impossible to build a new party that is genuinely Marxist-Leninist. From the beginning the principles of proletarian democracy must be genuinely and not merely formally linked to the vitally necessary principles of centralism and strict discipline. Self criticism is still more talked about than practiced. But it is essential to the healthy functioning of a proletarian party. Mao Tse-tung's 'Combat Liberalism' should be read and re-read; it is universally relevant. But criticism must also extend beyond matters concerning the inner life of the party. Among some comrades there is still an attitude of mind more akin to Roman Catholicism than to Marxism. Accordingly it is felt that certain questions are best left alone because there may not be a line on them, or whatever the line is it must be right. In the past this led to an uncritical attitude to everything the Soviet Union did - a point best illustrated by the fact that only a handful of people in the CPGB criticised Khrushchov revisionism before the Communist Party of China did so. Marxist-Leninists can accept nothing on faith; faith has nothing in common with Marxism.

## LEGAL AND ILLEGAL WORK

It seems apparent that almost universally under conditions of bourgeois democracy communist parties have neglected Lenin's warning concerning legal and illegal work. All the indications are that insufficient attention has been paid to the question and grossly inadequate preparation has been made to meet the contingencies of illegality. Most probably a leadership operating in a bourgeois democracy does not seriously expect that it may find itself one day under conditions of fascist dictatorship. Such naivety breeds the feeling that 'it won't happen here', and leads to communist parties operating on an exclusively open, legal level. It should never be forgotten that the Communist Party of Germany with its mass working class support, armed detachments, large parliamentary and trade union representation, was all but decimated in a matter of a few months in 1933. A more recent and equally poignant example of what can happen when a communist party cherishes

illusions about bourgeois democracy is the fate of the Indonesian Party in 1965.

It is not only a matter of defence. Preparation for the struggle for power demands the building of an alternative leadership and organisation which will be capable of giving practical leadership to that struggle in conditions of illegality. It may be said with certainty that any party calling itself communist which fails to take such steps is in fact a revisionist party.

M.F., 1972

## BOURGEOIS NATIONALISATION - AN EXPRESSION OF CRISIS

'Public ownership' has existed since the emergence of capitalism. Initially consisting of Arsenals, Post and later Tele-communications; the state sector existed to protect and serve capitalist development at home, while at the same time providing a structure for increasing and consolidating colonial exploitation abroad. The military implications of this early sector of 'public ownership' are clearly visible historically - namely in Britains' empire.

By 1870, the principal capitalist countries were faced with the high capital demands of more sophisticated means of production and communication. Engels writing on the increasing role of joint-stock companies observed;

"At a certain stage of development even this form no longer suffices; the official representative of capitalist society, the state, is constrained to take over their management."

As to the nature of these forms of ownership, Engels is equally explicit.

"But the Conversion into either joint-stock companies or state property does not deprive the productive forces of their character as capital. (My emphasis - J.B.) In the case of joint-stock companies this is obvious. And the modern state, too, is only the organisation with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachments either by workers or individual capitalists. The modern state, whatever its form, is the ideal collective body of all capitalists. (My emphasis) The more it becomes the collective body of all capitalists, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage earners, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished; it is rather pushed to an extreme." (My emphasis).

Apart from munitions, and related strategic sectors, the growth of 'public ownership' was comparatively slow until after the end of the first World War in 1918. With the cessation of hostilities all the imperialist powers faced unprecedented political and economic crisis. Large capitalist enterprises faced imminent bankruptcy, nationalisation was widely implemented in an attempt to shift the financial crisis onto the working class, while also, largely effectively, confusing the growing working class clarity gained from the experiences of the imperialist war and the great October Revolution. In Italy 250,000 million lire\*1 was spent in the nationalisation of industry by the Italian government in the 1920-21 economic crisis. State intervention in the era of imperialism is increasingly necessary if a comparatively balanced and profit yielding, capitalist economy is to be maintained. These considerations became or rather were by this time, the programme of the second inter-

national - reforming the entire capitalist system in line with the needs of monopoly capital. It is necessary at this point however, to stress that Marxism holds that the presence or absence of the individual capitalist is immaterial, what is important is the class nature of exploitation - one class takes the surplus value.\*2

The 'public sector' expanded after the first World War, but it was still relatively small in relation to the economy as a whole. The exceptions to this general rule were the fascist countries - Italy and Germany. Fascism is the last card of the bourgeoisie and it is interesting to note the important role bourgeois nationalisation played in these countries, particularly with regard to the ideological confusion it caused - in itself a necessary ingredient to the consolidation of fascism. During the 'great slump' of 1929-33, the Mussolini regime in Italy paid out approximately 1,440,000 million lire in the purchase of three large private banks - the centres of finance capital in Italy - along with many industrial enterprises controlled by them when they were all in a state of bankruptcy. In Germany large scale share purchases\*3 saved many banks and companies on the verge of bankruptcy from liquidation. Schacht - the Nazi finance minister stated that 70% of Germany's banks, and thus many joint-stock companies were controlled by the State.

## POSTWAR EXPANSION

Since the end of the second World War the capitalist states have organised large scale nationalisation. A brief survey of the major western European capitalist countries shows that now, state run enterprises make up a comparatively large proportion of their economies.

Britain led the way, as early as December 1945, the Labour government passed the law nationalising the Bank of England. This was followed by five nationalisation laws in three years\*4. By 1951, the Coal, Power, Gas, Steel and internal transport industries had been nationalised. It is estimated that the state now owns over a fifth of British industry, employing over 6,000,000 people including police, army, civil servants etc. "In 1970 about £42,000 million worth of wealth was produced, of this £23,000 million was spent by the state. This compares with spending only one sixteenth of the national product in 1860 and one eighth in the 1930's" (Struggle Dec.71). Of course private industry relies heavily on state contracts and orders, this is exemplified by the chain reaction to the Rolls Royce bankruptcy - vast quantities of R.R. work was for military purposes, for which of course the state is responsible. The government of the day is but an executive committee, or board of directors for the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois state is as Engels said "the ideal collective body of all capitalists", it provides the structure for the maintenance of capitalism. The two terms 'state' and 'government' although related, are quite distinct.

In France several sectors, and some of the principal enterprises of some others were nationalised in the 1945-46 period.

As well as industries of the type taken into 'public ownership' in Britain, the French also nationalised such profitable concerns as Renault and the Tobacco industry. There are now approximately 650 enterprises operated directly by the state or jointly with private capital. The state sector makes up over 20% of the total productive capacity of French industry.

## BANKRUPT ENTERPRISES BOUGHT-OUT

Italian nationalisation had been carried-out largely before the war. However since 1945, the state has purchased bankrupt enterprises through the Institute per la Reconstrzione Industriale - the state investment fund for engineering and related industries. More than 200,000 million lire was paid out for this purpose, from 1947-55, alone. In 1962, private power enterprises were nationalised. The state now operates 30% of Italian productive capacity.

In Germany the capitalists followed a similar pattern to Italy before the war. Now in West Germany (see footnote\*2), the state runs several specialised credit organisations playing an important role in many industries. In 1958 the total capital of the state owned and joint state/private capital enterprises amounted to 4,927 million Marks, constituting about 18.3% of production in West Germany. This trend of increasing 'public ownership' is apparent throughout the entire capitalist world.\*5

## WHO SAYS ITS THE 'SOCIALIST SECTOR'?

Leaders of the 'labour movement' and their 'theoriticians' assert that bourgeois nationalisation is the most important economic and political measure to build up a 'socialist economy'. The state-run industries are called the 'socialist sector'. These conceptions are to be found in the Labour party and trade unions, principally and most fully developed by their respective 'leaderships'. However it is a mistake to ignore their spontaneous base - capitalisms fairly consistent and prolonged recovery during the post war period, combined with the absence of effective Marxist-Leninist ideological work amongst the working class. Lenin persistently pointed out that the class struggle in itself only yields Trade union politics - bourgeois politics. Disillusionment is now widespread with the results of nationalisation, again the reaction of many workers is to rationalise this as a failure of working class ownership. Our major task is the clarification of what working class power really is, and how the principles of scientific socialism are the complete anti-thesis to the class collaborationist ideas symbolised by the T.U.C. and social democracy in general. 'Dual responsibility', 'management-labour co-operation', 'increased productivity' were further developed by union officials during this period. Unions in the 'public sector' were particularly defferential, comparatively low wages and the

large scale hatchet jobs on the Mining and Railway industries are the products of this approach. It would seem correct to characterise capitalism's post war period up to the early '60's as one of recovery and expansion. However the inherent contradictions of capitalism have again come to the surface; the period we are now living in is one of deepening political and economic crisis - hence a 'fresh approach' is necessary from all our present day social democrats.

Our 'left' trade union officials, 'Communist Party of Great Britain' 'theoriticians' prefer to express conceptions of a 'socialist sector' in a more wary and 'qualified' way. Now they claim that the state sector will become truly socialist only when we return a Labour government "committed to Socialism" and that meanwhile the nationalised industries must be protected. This is not to say that we are opposed to campaigns against 'hiving off'. Quite the contrary, but our opposition is that of exposing the frauds of various capitalists, but always from the perspective that this entire system is one basic fraud. The latter is our basic position, while the former provides a useful tactic in heightening the class struggle so that this lesson is more widely and deeply grasped. 'Workers Control' in the state sector and the nationalisation of all bankrupt companies and firms with redundancies are the additions that the Trotskyists insist upon in their 'transitional programme' to 'Socialism'. Meanwhile the nationalised industries are a 'half-way house' in this 'transition'!\* (See footnote) attached).

Early cases of nationalisation were backward industries suffering from lack of capital investment with a low profit yield. Here in Britain the coal industry was first to be nationalised; the industry had been in a state of decline since the end of the first world war. Mining methods were primitive, equipment obsolete - mechanisation was in name only. Such conditions naturally resulted in low labour productivity. The average output of 216 tons per miner in 1945 was not only below other major capitalist countries, but even below the 1873-82 level! Railways were in a similar position. According to 1947 statistics, approximately 200,000 of the railways 1.25 million goods wagons needed, or were being repaired. The steel industry was also technically backward. Blast furnace production rates were only about a quarter of that in the United States - steel output per working hour was only a fifth of that in the U.S.A.

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(Footnote)

REFERENCE

'The Post Office Workers v The State' - 'International Marxist Group' publication 1971. Trotskyite confusion as to the class nature of the state owned industries is displayed from the following quote; "There was a section of nationalised industry making a vast profit (referring to Telecommunications - J.B.) with even bigger possibilities for the future and none of this surplus going to the pockets of the scrounging class." pp5  
Later on the following page it is asserted "that all nationalised

industries are to some degree or another in a limbo between two basic alternatives." They go on to develop their theory that nationalisation is in some way or another a "halfway house" - the phrase is used as part of the chapter title - to Socialism. Clearly, the Trotskyite conception of 'Socialism' is more a definition of form, rather than its class nature.

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The coal, railway and steel industries thus required large investments, but produced very little profits; the owners were faced with the prospect of losses or even bankruptcy. This was also bound to have an effect on other industries and the high profits of other capitalists, and thus their 'way of life'! With these very much in mind, those capitalists who owned these backward enterprises were only too anxious to relieve themselves of the burden, providing - it almost goes without saying - they didn't lose by it. Safeguarding and serving monopoly capital as a whole, the state found it necessary to take-over these industries for 'rationalisation' and renovation. This also saved the former owners from bankruptcy and assured them of a higher, more reliable income than before. It also ensured continued high profitability for monopoly capital as a whole. What is the basic motivation within the capitalist system which ensures these developments?

"It is said that the average rate of profit might nevertheless be regarded as quite sufficient for capitalist development under modern conditions. That is not true. The average profit is the lowest point of profitableness, below which capitalist production becomes impossible. But it would be absurd to think that, in seizing colonies, subjugating peoples and engineering wars, the magnates of modern monopoly capitalism are striving only to achieve the average rate of profit. No, it is the average rate of profit, nor yet super-profit - which, as a rule, represents only a slight addition to average profit - but precisely the maximum profit that is the motor of monopoly capitalism. (my emphasis - J.B.).<sup>4</sup>

It is essential to understand that the quest for maximised profits is the very core, the motor which has developed capitalism from its primitive pre-monopoly stages to its last, and highest stage - imperialism. Of course the political realities in a given situation and time determine the level of expropriation (of profits) by the bourgeoisie. Generally this is a result of direct struggle by the working class, rather than the ruling class making a correct evaluation of what they can get away with.

Thus the general developments of capitalism, combined with the particular conditions of the post war period, led to a spate of nationalisation throughout west European capitalist countries. Many industries were so seriously damaged by the war, that the individual companies concerned were unable to re-start production, let alone finance the re-equipment necessary to ensure profits. For instance Austria recovered a large number of war-

ravaged enterprises which had been siezed by German capitalists. In such conditions, the bourgeois State took over. Austrian capitalists aimed to get commodities and services on the cheap after re-equipment.

A third category are those industries whose nationalisation would provide monopoly capital with low-priced materials and motive power. The nationalisation of the Gas and Electric Power industries provide an example. Power supply prior to the State take-over was becoming increasingly inadequate for the expanding demands of modern industry. As Engels pointed out above, only the bourgeois State under capitalism, has adequate planning and financing facilities for the increasingly high capital demands of certain industries. Many bourgeois States have also nationalised Banks, mainly for the purpose of providing monopoly capital with cheap finance.

Fourthly, there are the enterprises directly involved in arms manufacture and expansion inate in the aggressive imperialist system - government military contracts provide fat profits for the bosses, often where enterprises have been nationalised, operations requiring comparatively low capital costs are sub-contracted out to private enterprise at inflated rates.

### GENEROUS COMPENSATION

Normally, compensation paid out to the former owners is rigged, so that by one means or another their capital assets grow - often share prices are quoted for a time when the industry was making a profit. Usually, enterprises are nationalised for the reasons stated, that is obsolete equipment, inadequate capital reserves for expansion, low return on capital, or bankruptcy.

During the 1929-33 economic crisis, there was a huge slump in the Italian stock markets; the Mussolini regime purchased stock at the socalled "normal" pre-crisis stock exchange prices. This was the case for the Commercial Bank, the Italian Credit Co., and the Bank of Rome. After the war, the British railway companies received approximately £1000,000,000 worth of government bonds, in return for their shares, at the time worth just £500,000,000 on the Stock Exchange. Compensation of £400,000,000 was paid out to the former owners of the Coal Industry, this was several times the value of the eventually nationalised Coal Industry. In one amazing case, the Thomas Tilling Co. received £24.8 million in bonds from the Labour government for it's shares worth just £4.42 million on the stock exchange at the time. Interest from the bonds is much higher than their former dividends were, what is more, this income is guaranteed: With the former railway owners, 5% was paid on bonds, while previously, exceptional years only allowed for a 1.5% dividend.

For the former owners, nationalisation meant no more than a change of hats! In many cases they received even more than the total profits. From 1947-58, British Railways averaged more

than £28,000,000 annually in profits. However, the interest paid to the former owners amounted to sums as high as £45 million annually.

"State monopoly in capitalist society is nothing more than a means of increasing and guaranteeing the income of millionaires on the verge of bankruptcy in one branch of industry or another."5 - Lenin.

Thus the only change was that the thieving took the form of interest rather than direct profit or dividend. The motivation of every capitalist and the basis of the system itself is the maximisation of profits. The ruling class, through its State apparatus, carries out a pricing policy which results in the cheap supply of raw materials, products and motive power to private enterprise - this lowers production costs and boosts profits. British wholesale prices for Processed Industrial Goods rose by 204% in the 1938-57 period, while, during the same period, the average price of Electricity and Rail freight charges rose by only 39% and 115%, respectively. In France, the price of coal since nationalisation has been consistently below production costs. Of course these benefits cannot be shared with all and sundry, they are intended only for the Monopoly capitalists. In the French Power Industry, enterprises engaged in electrical smelting paid only 1.08 francs, per kilowatt hour in 1951; while at the same time, ordinary consumers paid 26 francs! As in Britain the Power industries profits come mainly from the ordinary consumer, rather than the industrial user. Contracts for the supply of state-owned industries are usually awarded in secret. According to French sources, monopoly capitalists in the Steel, Chemical and other industries, gained a total benefit of approximately 3,000,000 million francs from such methods between 1947-60.

Nationalised industries in the capitalist States are under the direct control of the bourgeoisie, a fact clearly illustrated by the composition of their controlling boards. Answering a parliamentary question in 1949, Attlee then Prime minister, disclosed that of the 131 leaders on the boards of the nationalised industries, almost a half were directors or managers of the former private companies. Among the rest, more than thirty were Knights, Landowners or Generals. In Italy, most of the State-owned enterprises operate in the form of joint-stock companies, over which the State has no direct control - this is in many ways similar to the G.P.O. and the State Airlines here in Britain. Often, the facade of democracy is preserved by the 'participation' of a few 'workers representatives' on the boards of the nationalised enterprises. In the first place, numerically, power is safely in the hands of the bosses; secondly, these 'workers' are chosen on their merits as boot-licking, cringing lackeys - any honest individual who slips through the mill and doesn't knuckle-under, receives the boot pretty rapidly.

### 'HIVING-OFF'

Enterprises have been and are often sold back to private

capital after heavy investment and re-equipment programmes have been completed by the state. Usually, the profitable sectors are returned, while the state retains the rest.\*6 This is common to all capitalist countries in the west. Nationalisation was cancelled in steel, part of the road transport industry in Britain in 1952 and 53, meaning just a change of hats for the capitalists together with the transfer of taxpayers' investments to their bank balances!

But what of the argument that some nationalised industries make a loss and therefore in these cases capitalist exploitation has been ended? Apart from the lack of balance sheet profit for the reasons mentioned above, (ie. profit is transferred to other industries through below costs prices - this is now commonly used in the large companies like I.C.I., Courtaulds where this apparent lack of balance sheet profits appears in militant plants!). There is also the financial juggling which results in high interest payments to the former owners, while vast investments re-equip the industry concerned. As we have said the presence of absence of the individual capitalist is immaterial, the bourgeoisie still takes the surplus value. The financial wizardry of the bosses leads to one thing - inflation! Losses have to be made good, and they are; between 1938 and 1956, direct taxes paid by workers increased by nearly ten times!

Lenin, through studying the characteristics of capitalism in its highest and final stage - imperialism, described the consequences more than fifty years ago;

"Under the conditions where private ownership of the means of production is preserved, all these steps to bigger monopolies and increased nationalisation of production are accompanied by intensified exploitation of the labouring masses, intensified oppression, greater difficulties in resisting the attacks of the exploiters, the strengthening of reaction and military despotism, and at the same time lead inevitably to the increase in profits of the big capitalists at the expense of all other strata of the population, to the saddling of the labouring masses for many decades with tribute to the capitalists in the form of thousands of millions in interests on loans" (all emphasis mine - J.B.)<sup>6</sup>

The nature of nationalisation is determined by the nature of the state. In class society, "the state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class, other, subordinated classes".<sup>7</sup>

The state can never be neutral. Developed to the stage of imperialism, monopoly capital has brought the state apparatus directly under its own control. Without smashing the bourgeois state, without changing the nature of political power, how can anyone imagine that nationalisation will benefit the working class in any way?

The development of the nationalised sector of the capitalist

economy is an objective trend in bourgeois society. Its growth makes it possible for the forces of production to reach the highest possible stage under capitalism, preparing the material basis for socialism, and after seizing power makes it easier for the working class to effect the Socialist public ownership of the means of production. At the same time, bourgeois nationalisation intensified the exploitation of the working class, sharpening class contradictions, and objectively pushes the proletariat to socialist revolution.

While we hold that the material basis for Socialism is strengthened - objectively promoting the proletarian revolution - Marxist-Leninists also maintain that it reinforces the reactionary rule of monopoly capital, strengthening its grasp on the country's political and economic life. Subjectively too the ruling class strengthens its ideological drive into the working class - the basis for the fascist corporate state lies here. Organisationally attempts are made to control all kinds of working class activity - nevertheless the contradictions in society become more acute and fully defined. We must make sure that the Communist Party is consolidated and thoroughly bolshevised for the task of waging revolution and seizing power in such circumstances.

Contrary to the Marxist-Leninist stand, the various social-democrats assert that bourgeois nationalisation is a 'measure with a socialist element in it'. The basic question of which class holds state power is hedged by one explanation or another, or it is never even considered in some cases! Communist policy can thus be summed up as one of explanation and clarification of the issues involved, combined with active exposure and opposition to all fraud and thieving under the cover of 'public ownership'. We must patiently and persistently point out that it is absolutely impossible to bring about Socialism via bourgeois nationalisation. The first and central task in building Socialism is the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus through armed struggle and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As the class struggle develops in Britain, events will acutely define the true friends of the working class, and their enemies. The confused policies of 'left' Labour, Trotskyists and 'C.P.G.B.' leaderships, will, if maintained, fully confirm their objectively anti-Communist, counter-revolutionary role in the struggle for Socialism and genuine working class power.

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#### NOTES

\*1 Lire are calculated in terms of 1953 prices. Incidentally, Mussolini himself was formerly a member of the Italian section of the 2nd International.

\*2 This should be born in mind when examining the revisionist (state capitalist) countries. In the Soviet Union and eastern Europe the form of exploitation is different to that in the west, however bourgeois appropriation takes place - one class takes the surplus value - whatever their constitution says.

\*3 The same method used at U.C.S. by the Labour government.

\*4 It is interesting to note here that the 'Communist Party of Great Britain' at this time was enthusiastically supporting the production effort, actively discouraging strikes - telling workers not to rock the boat - that is the Labour government and its capitalist state machine. Harry Pollitts' pamphlet 'The way Ahead' sums-up the initial post-war class collaborationist policies of the 'C.P.G.B.' and many other western C.P.'s. Briefly, since the defeat of the Fascist axis powers, it was argued that imperialism had lost its innate aggressiveness, opening up prospects for world peace and the peaceful transition to Socialism in the capitalist countries. In Britain the Labour government was building 'socialism'! These revisionist concepts were rapidly dropped after the expulsion of Browder from the C.P.U.S.A. - Browder was the chief articulator of these 'theories' in the movement at the time. However internally, the 'theory' of peaceful transition to Socialism was systemised and developed in Britain during this period ending with the adoption of the 'British Road to Socialism' in 1951., by the 'C.P.G.B.'

\*5 In the U.S.A - the apparent exception - state contracts and subsidies, particularly in the production of war materials, illimitate at this point in time the need for formal state control.

\*6 This is openly stated by the Tories - 'profitability' is the key to decisions on whether sections of industry remain 'publicly-owned'. However this is only a tactical variation on the profit-grabbing game, a job for the boys approach, an open as opposed to covert method of depositing loot with the capitalist class.

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J.B.

## PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

In relations between states the application of the principle of peaceful coexistence may at times appear to contradict the requirements of proletarian internationalism, but the two in fact are complementary in Marxist-Leninist practice. It is a question of class analysis - whether one thinks in terms of bourgeois or of proletarian 'peaceful coexistence'. Just as questions of peace and war, of 'compromise', of bourgeois or proletarian nationalism, of 'justice', of 'freedom' - these and many other concepts - all are class questions.

For Marxists everywhere, whether in socialist countries, in developing countries, or in advanced capitalist countries, the basic aim is the emancipation of all mankind from oppression and the advance towards establishing socialism, consolidating it, then attaining communism. The Communist Manifesto defines the aim by saying that when communism is achieved

'in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.'

The Manifesto also emphasizes that:

'the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things. Finally, they labour everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all countries.'

In the terminology of Marx and Lenin 'democratic parties' and 'social democracy' do not have the same connotations of liberalism and collaboration that they do today. It was after the betrayal of the revolutionary movement by the social democrats of the Second International, when they supported their own reactionary governments in the First World War, that the terms came to be used to describe revisionists and collaborators.

The objective of the revolutionary proletariat throughout the world is clear; the problem is how to achieve it. It is essential first to analyse the main contradictions in the world and in one's own specific situation, so that the main enemy can be determined. Only then can correct tactics be evolved by the revolutionary movement to achieve the strategic goal. Also, only by such an analysis can actions and developments be tested; only in this way can those whose performance is 'socialism in words, imperialism in deeds' be exposed.

## ON CONTRADICTIONS

It may sound trite to say that Marxists must see the situation as a whole, and to determine accordingly who is the main enemy on whom to concentrate at a given time and place; that they must ally themselves with all those prepared to fight him, even there may be many contradictions within that alliance and temporary allies for whom the ultimate goal differs from that

of Marxists-Leninists. But, observance of these principles is fundamental in the revolutionary struggle, and generally extremely difficult and complex. Such an alliance against the main enemy is necessary in order to enable the revolutionary movement to concentrate forces against him and to be able to take every possible advantage of contradictions within the camp of the enemy.

The nature of the contradictions determine proletarian tactics, for example in the application by socialist countries of the principle of peaceful coexistence between states having different social systems. The main contradictions in the world today were set out in the leading report to the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, April 1969. They are between:

- 1) oppressed nations on the one hand, and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other;
- 2) the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist and revisionist countries;
- 3) imperialist and social-imperialist countries; and among imperialist countries;
- 4) socialist countries on the one hand, and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other.

In detail the contradictions change, but fundamentally number one above remains. The balance of power in the world has indeed been changing, but these changes should not obscure this truth. The U.S. emerged from World War II as the strongest imperialist power but her preeminence has been eroded, with sharp competition from such countries as the Soviet Union, Japan, West Germany in economic, financial, and political fields. Since the end of World War II one can also see the increasing impact on world affairs of the smaller developing countries. National liberation struggles have developed on every continent, struggles for political and economic independence, breaking the shackles of colonial and neo-colonial domination.

In S.E. Asia the valiant people are winning their people's war. In Latin America, the Middle East, Africa there is increasing revolt against U.S. exploitation of natural resources and appropriation of their own wealth - as in oil, fisheries, etc. The spurious 'aid' schemes, which keep neo-colonial countries in subjection, are arousing every more resentment. The people of the Caribbean and Panama, of Palestine, Mozambique, Angola, the Philippines are in various ways in rebellion. No longer can Uncle Sam preserve his avuncular image.

The other super-power, the Soviet Union, is similarly meeting growing opposition among the countries of Comecon and the so-called 'socialist camp' of Eastern Europe, while her own forms of exploitation in Third World development schemes are becoming more blatantly obvious. To an increasing extent the Soviet Union has also played the classical imperialist game-with show of military and naval force on China's northern borders, by sailing her fleet into the Mediterranean and the Bay of Bengal, and by providing India with arms and planes for use against China and Pakistan.

At the same time in Asia Japan has become more aggressive, while China has become stronger in her economic base, with increasing consolidation of socialism during and since the Cultural Revolution. The capitalist countries have been compelled to accept China as a world power of importance, so that even Nixon has had to change his tactics (although not his hope of 'containing' China). The dramatic defeat of U.S. manoeuvres at the United Nations, where the majority of countries rallied to China's side, is clear indication of the changed balance of forces in the world and of the fact that the hegemony of the two super-powers has been severely challenged. This does not mean that the imperialist tiger has been chained and put behind bars, but he no longer is lord of all he surveys.

### ON STRATEGY AND TACTICS; ON COMPROMISES.

Once the main contradiction and the main enemy are determined, the proletariat is faced with the problems of how to achieve the goal of emancipation, and for socialist countries, how to prevent any return to capitalism and to consolidate socialist gains in order to advance further. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung have all recognised that revolution never develops along a single, straight road, but that there are zig-zags - with advance, set-backs, retreats, and again advance. They have all seen that the revolutionary process would extend from one to several, then to many countries; that the revolutionary movement would develop unevenly in different countries. Even though revolution did not spread from country to country as at first thought probable, the basic concept is correct. It is a matter of a different time scale, and an increasing understanding that revolution cannot be exported but is developed by the people themselves in their own environment. From Marx to Mao, proletarian revolution has been seen as a world movement, in which the more advanced have the duty to encourage and support others, but not blindly nor in a paternalistic fashion.

At the Second Congress of the Third International (July 26, 1920) Lenin stressed this point:

'Communists should, and will, support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonial countries only when these movements are really revolutionary...the Communists in these countries must fight against the reformist bourgeoisie...The imperialist bourgeoisie is trying with all its might to implant the reformist movement also among the oppressed nations...so that very often... where the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national movement, it simultaneously works in harmony with the imperialist bourgeoisie.'

In other words, proletarian internationalism cannot give indiscriminate support to all apparently revolutionary actions, and care has to be taken not to encourage opportunist trends. At the same Congress (on July 19, 1920) Lenin had dealt with this thesis when he declared that opportunism within the ranks of the working class was a result of defence of the bourgeoisie by 'lackeys' whom the working class thought they could trust:

'Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is not proletarian socialism, but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working-class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power.'

Lenin was dealing here with class struggle within capitalist countries, but, in connection with the questions of proletarian internationalism and peaceful coexistence between states having different social systems, vigilance is necessary against those who serve the international bourgeoisie, who serve imperialism, deceiving the working people, and those struggling for independence with 'progressive' or 'revolutionary' slogans.

Moreover, in Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder he exposed, not only the dangers of opportunism, but also those of both 'right' and 'left' doctrinairism:

'The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working-class movement and social development in general along the straightest and quickest road to the universal victory of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is an incontestable truth. But it is enough to take one little step further - a step that might seem to be in the same direction - and truth becomes error. We have only to say, as the German and British Communists say, that we recognise only one road, only the direct road, that we will not permit tacking, manoeuvring, compromising - and it will be a mistake which may cause, and in part has already caused, and is causing, very serious harm to Communism. Right doctrinairism persisted in recognising only the old forms, and became utterly bankrupt, for it did not perceive the new contents. Left doctrinairism persists in the unconditional repudiation of certain old forms, failing to see that the new content is forcing its way through all and sundry forms, to learn how, with the maximum rapidity, to supplement one form with another, and to adapt our tactics to every such change called forth not by our class, nor by our efforts.'

Lenin was a skilled tactician, recognising in the October Revolution, as Mao Tse-tung did later in the Chinese Revolution, that victory follows correct, flexible practice. In the same work he also said:

'The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they must understand that it is necessary to supplement their knowledge with a knowledge of how best to retreat. They must understand - and the revolutionary class by its own bitter experience learns to understand - that victory is impossible without having learned both how to attack and how to retreat correctly.'

During the course of the Chinese Revolution and anti-Japanese War the comparatively weak Chinese forces learned well how to melt away as the enemy advanced, to isolate sections of his army and to pick them off group-by-group. Later, after

the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, peaceful tactics were also flexible. First, it was essential to overcome the effects of over twenty years' violent internal struggle and war against the invader. The Common Programme, adopted under the leadership of the Communist Party, provided for united action by all democratic parties and people to reconstruct and stabilise the economy and finance. Accordingly, those national capitalists who supported the new people's government retained their private enterprises in order to enable them to contribute to essential national production - but there were restrictions on their exploitation of the workers. Expropriation would have turned them into enemies, whereas many have since been won for socialism. Since then, step-by-step, socialist transformation has taken place. These are tactics which can also be used in the international field to neutralise potential enemies, to win potential friends, and to take advantage of contradictions among the enemies.

In so doing, compromises, or apparent compromises, are at times correct. In 1918 Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were bitterly attacked for signing the Brest Litovsk Treaty with Germany, thus ending World War I for old Russia. The Second All Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (Nov. 7-8, 1917) had adopted a 'Decree on Peace' calling 'upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace'. Such negotiations were not undertaken then by all the belligerents, and the separate Brest Litovsk Treaty with Germany was signed March 3, 1918. The Bolsheviks agreed to 'evacuate' the Ukraine and Finland and to permit large sections of their country to establish their own governments - including Poland, Lithuania, some parts of the Caucasus. In effect, this meant leaving these areas under the control of the Germans. Accused of betraying their own people and the international proletariat for opportunist ends, the correctness of this action was proved by history. Later, in 1921, Lenin's New Economic Policy was a tactical move made to give the young Soviet Union breathing time at a moment of extremely serious economic difficulties.

The idea that all compromises are wrong, whether enforced or voluntary, has been combated from the early days of Marxism. In 1870 Engels severely criticised certain 'communists' for opposing intermediate compromises intended to assist in the struggle to achieve final aims; these very same 'communists' in 1873 actually broke away from the First International. In his Left-Wing Communism Lenin declared it to be 'childish' to reject the admissibility of 'compromises in general' and 'on principle'. He pointed out that 'there are compromises and compromises', some correct, some wrong, and that it is not always a simple matter to decide. Anyone, he said, who promised that no difficulties or intricate situations would be encountered 'would simply be a charlatan.' The crux of the matter is, of course, how to assess the problems correctly, whether such actions are opportunist or flank attacks. Lenin challenged his critics:

'Imagine your automobile is held up by armed bandits. You hand them over your money, passport, revolver, automobile. In return you are spared the pleasant company of the bandits.'

That is a compromise beyond all doubt...("I give you money, firearms, automobile, so that you give me the opportunity to depart in peace"). But it would be difficult to find a same man who would declare such a compromise to be "inadmissible on principle", or would proclaim the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits, having got into the automobile, might use it and the firearms, for new robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was such a compromise...

'One must learn to distinguish between the man who gave the bandits money and firearms to facilitate the task of capturing and shooting them, and the man who gives the bandits money and firearms in order to share in the loot.'

Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to face their critics; and so did Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party. For example, in the period after 1949, as socialism was beginning to be shaped, leftists in China claimed that the tactics used were opportunist and too slow; rightists claimed each step to be premature and too fast. The criteria must be whether tactics used are in the interests of the bourgeoisie or of the proletariat, and on whether or not these tactics weaken and divide the camp of the main enemy. In applying the principles of peaceful coexistence and proletarian internationalism the bandits - the super-powers, the imperialists - are given by Marxists-Leninists treatment appropriate at any given time and place.

## TO SHARE THE SPOILS

From the contradictions listed earlier one can analyse the difference between the bourgeois and the proletarian lines on peaceful coexistence. In the Soviet Union capitalist forms with a new managerial class, material incentives and profits for enterprises controlled by this class, have led to the dominance of capitalist ideology and the need to expand imperialist relations with other countries. Khrushchov's 'peaceful competition' has become imperialist-style 'join the grab game'. The Soviet Union has become one of the two 'Super Powers' from whom 'peaceful competition' and 'peaceful coexistence' with the U.S., other Western and Japanese capitalism in a political and economic necessity. At the same time domination over the East European 'socialist' bloc and over potential victims in the Third World require her to maintain and burnish the image of the First Socialist Country in the world, in order to retain the respect and affection of these junior partners.

The Camp David talks of Sept. 1959 between Eisenhower and Khrushchov were of especial importance in establishing the U.S.-U.S.S.R. collaboration, after which Khrushchov extolled the sweet reasonableness of the U.S. President. On Sept. 23, 1960, at the U.N. General Assembly Khrushchov asserted that the two countries could 'march hand-in-hand' to bring about 'real international cooperation' for peace. Logically following on, he said in a speech on July 5, 1961 that peaceful coexistence is 'the general line of foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist camp'.

Revolutionary struggles which might upset the applecart, therefore, have to be quietened, but in such a way as to give the impression of revolutionary proletarian concern on the part of the erstwhile 'socialist' Soviet Union. For instance, in the Middle East the Soviet Union has frequently proclaimed support for the Arab cause, but has consistently backed the U.N. resolution of Nov. 22, 1967, which called for a cease-fire and Israel withdrawal from seized Arab territories. In July 1970 a joint U.S.S.R. - Egypt communique stated that the two countries 'would give joint support for the efforts made within the framework of the United Nations for a political settlement'. The just demands of the Palestinian people for restoration of their homeland, utterly rejecting this 'political settlement' which ignores their rights, have been brushed under the carpet. 'Peaceful coexistence' in this tender area is - bourgeoisly - the predominant consideration.

In Cambodia the Soviet Union maintains relations with the reactionary U.S. - imposed Lon Nol regime. In Cuba the Moscow-line Communist Party held back from the confrontation with the U.S. Later, Moscow sought to control Cuba by making her a dependent. Using typical colonial and neo-colonial methods, she tried to use Cuba's vital sugar exports as a lever of control.

Also, under-developed countries in receipt of 'aid' from the social-imperialist Soviet Union pay high prices for her supplies and equipment, while low prices are paid for the raw materials and manufactured products they are expected to produce for Soviet consumption. Often the Soviet Union sends old-fashioned or unsuitable machinery of inferior quality which does not meet requirements. For example, in the 1950's China was sent pumps for agricultural irrigation for which she paid, but the peasants found them unusable. Cuba was sent sugar-cutting machines urgently needed at a time of economic stress which had to be left aside as useless (K.S. Karol, Guerrillas in Power). Profits from these ventures are the 'loot' assured so long as peace is maintained.

At the same time, 'peaceful coexistence' with the U.S. and other capitalist countries has not prevented sharp action considered to be in Soviet interests, such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia, economic blockade of Albania, the tearing up in 1960 of hundreds of contracts with China, military attacks on China's northeast border, supply of planes and arms to India when India attacked China and more recently in the war against Pakistan. 'Peaceful coexistence' with other capitalist powers has left her free to play power politics and the role of military aggressor elsewhere.

In these and many other ways the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. have sought to strengthen their world hegemony. Although the U.S. in particular has been losing ground, the basic picture remains, with China the main obstacle. By going to Peking Nixon is hoping to use new tactics to achieve old purposes.

## ON PROLETARIAN PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

For Marxists-Leninists at all times and in all situations the primary consideration is the advancement of the universal socialist, then communist, revolution although immediate objectives may stand

in the forefront at a particular time. The goal does not change, but the tactics do. At the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in April 1969 it was stated to be essential:

'to develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and cooperation with socialist countries on the principle of proletarian internationalism; to support and assist the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed people and nations; and to strive for peaceful coexistence with countries having different social systems on the basis of the Five Principles of mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and to oppose the imperialist policy of aggression and war.'

Since socialism is essential for the emancipation of mankind, it is an international movement although the details of struggle must vary in each country. At the same time, victory or advance towards victory in one country strengthens the struggle everywhere. This does not mean that revolution can be exported; it does mean that self-reliant revolutionaries learn from the experience of others and are supported by socialist countries and Marxists elsewhere in accordance with requirements and practical possibilities. The nature and quantity of the support and aid are determined by these considerations, guided by the basic Marxist principles that proletarian internationalism binds all revolutionaries together and that the main enemy must at all times be the main target.

In the course of this complex, long-term struggle set-backs are inevitable but in the long-term not fatal. China, for example, learned in the long bitter years of anti-imperialist and revolutionary wars that leftist, adventurist actions lead to serious defeats which can be overcome only by correcting the line. China does not support movements and actions which fall into this category and which therefore play into the hands of the enemy, even though the rank and file involved in such struggles are embattled against local or national reaction. Into this category one can place the events in Ceylon where - rightly or wrongly - China saw a dangerous threat to the interests of the working people in foreign intervention to strengthen the ties and subservience to U.S. imperialism.

This concentration on the main enemy can also be seen in China's relations of non-intervention, peaceful coexistence, equality and mutual benefit with certain Third World countries such as Ethiopia, on the basis of mutual concern to oppose U.S. and Soviet imperialism. In the delicate situation which exists in the Middle East, unity against imperialist encroachment and U.S. - backed Israel aggression in the interest of the Palestinians and the Arab peoples is seen as basic. Within these countries serious contradictions exist which their peoples will resolve, but their struggle will only be held back if aggressive imperialism is not checked.

In this connection the changing roles of small, medium and super-powers are important. The pretense of 'peaceful coexistence' on the part of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. is built on expected

acceptance of their world hegemony. The proletarian concept presupposes the equality of all countries. While maintaining relations of peaceful coexistence with capitalist countries, China has consistently supported the demands of those who have been asserting their rights to own and control their own wealth - fishing and sea-bed resources, petroleum, other mineral and agricultural products. By contrast, Nixon talks 'peace' and 'equality' while issuing threats such as that on January 19th when he said that 'aid' would be stopped to countries which did not compensate adequately and quickly U.S. firms 'expropriated', and that the U.S. would block their applications for credits made to international financial bodies.

The question of control of nuclear weapons and arms in general is also closely connected with the practical application of 'peaceful coexistence'. At the United Nations China countered the proposal for a conference of nuclear powers (including herself) with the insistence that such a conference must be a world meeting of all countries, and that a prior condition must be a declaration on the part of nuclear powers that they will never be the first to use such weapons. Moreover, disarmament cannot mean rendering revolutionary struggles helpless but require opposition to the 'imperialist policy of aggression and war.' In his 'State of the Union' message Nixon declared:

'As we have throughout this century, we must continue our profound concern for advancing peace and freedom by the most effective means possible, even as we shift somewhat our view of what means are most effective... Our plans... call for an increase in defence spending... made necessary... in part by the need to proceed with new weapons systems to maintain our security...'  
(The Times, 21.1.72)

(as in S.E. Asia, Taiwan, the Middle East, Latin America?) Nixon, the tired Tiger of Vietnam, is going to Peking to see how this 'shift of view' works.

Questions of nuclear disarmament and many others may well be discussed in Peking, but it is clear that China will not compromise on principles. Sharp attacks on U.S. policy, aggression, and atrocities have continued to be made even since the acceptance in July 1971 of Nixon's request to come to Peking, and there is no question of relaxation of China's support for Vietnam or demands that the U.S. get out of S.E. Asia and Taiwan. 'Peaceful coexistence' extends to discussion but not to abandonment of proletarian international support against U.S. aggression.

The questions of opposition to imperialist aggression and support for revolutionary movements have been complex in various parts of the world - but nowhere more so than in S.E. Asia and the Indian sub-continent. Faced with diminishing strength and prestige in S.E. Asia, it has become all the more important to the U.S. reactionaries to dig wherever possible, hence real or attempted interference by such organs as the C.I.A. in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaya, and military aid to Pakistan. At the same time the Soviet Union has been actively engaged in tying India to her apron strings, an India desperately in need of external aid. Both

super-powers fear the growing strength of China, her socialist system, and her obvious prestige among Third World countries, as marked by the overwhelming vote at the United Nations last October. A foothold on the sub-continent against China is imperative. Having withstood attacks from India in the south and the Soviet Union in the north, China's vigilance to safeguard her territorial integrity is also to safeguard her socialist gains, and is therefore in the interest of the international proletariat. Her support against Indian aggression, backed by the Soviet Union, for Pakistan independence and unity was a further implementation of her policy of confrontation with the main enemy, to oppose imperialist aggression and war.

The absence of expressions of sympathy or support for the oppressed people of East Pakistan and of condemnation of Yahya Khan's genocide was under the given circumstances necessary restraint, as such intervention could readily have given India (and the Soviet Union) just the excuse to widen the war. It does not mean that China condoned the actions taken, nor lack of understanding that the people of Pakistan will themselves make their own internal revolution. Moreover, the adventurist actions of the Awami League and their close connections with India have led to the setting up of a regime subservient to imperialism in East Bengal.

In assessing situations it is helpful to recall Lenin's comment that in revolution twists and turns occur, that some compromises are necessary and correct, and that one would be a charlatan to think there would be no difficulties, problems or contradictions. Peaceful coexistence between countries having different social systems and the practice of proletarian internationalism require dialectical analysis of the overall situation, spotting the main enemy, causing weakening divisions in his camp, and seeking to resolve the main contradiction. Only by using such tactics can the revolutionary movement advance step-by-step.

V.P.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY C.F.B. GENERAL MEETING, 16TH  
JANUARY, 1972, CONCERNING CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE GENERAL  
LINE OF THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

"The Socialist camp...belongs to the international proletariat and working people as well as to the people of socialist countries." (C.P.C.1, p.8) Because the communist movement is internationalist in character the policies and political record of all Marxist-Leninist organisations must be open to questioning and criticism. Only on these principles can a genuinely proletarian internationalist communist movement be built.

The danger of a world war still exists, but revolution is the main trend in the world today. All genuine revolutionaries have a duty to consistently implement policies which advance this trend.

The prime force in making revolution in any country is the revolutionary people within that country basing their struggle on the principle of self-reliance. They must reject the illusion that the strength of socialist countries will allow the peaceful transition to socialism throughout the world. The existence of the socialist countries provides an important base for world revolution (C.P.C. 3, p27-28). The victory of the Socialist revolution in any country provides further support for the world revolutionary movement. Therefore it is vital that all Marxist-Leninists have a full understanding of the policies guiding Socialist countries not only in general outline but in relationship to actual situations as they develop.

The basis of all policy, including the foreign policy of Socialist states and the international relations of Communist organisations, lies in making distinctions. These distinctions should be made on the basis of an analysis of the progressive and reactionary forces in the world at any particular time. Guided by this analysis a broad united front should be created against the main enemy or enemies and as many countries as possible should be won to the united front. In this the forms of struggle at Party and at State level will also be distinct.

The major contradictions in the world today are those four outlined by the Communist Party of China over the last decade or more:

"between the oppressed nations on the one hand and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other; between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the capitalist and revisionist countries; between the imperialist and social-imperialist countries and among the imperialist countries; and between socialist countries on the one hand and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other." (P.R.2,p.12).

In addition to these major contradictions there are others which vary according to historical circumstances. Today the main enemies on a world scale are the two super-powers. Generally speaking within non-socialist countries not occupied by foreign troops the main contradiction is between the working class people and the ruling-class. In areas of the third world the class

contradictions vary so that the area is not homogeneous. In their foreign policy Socialist states concentrate on achieving the most effective united front against the main enemies while within the front struggling against reactionary policies. Within these non-socialist countries the main enemy is the ruling-class. The fight against these ruling-classes is supported by Marxist-Leninists in other countries, bearing in mind at all times the primary world struggle against the main world enemies.

What then is the general line of foreign policy for socialist countries? We believe it continues to be that proposed by the C.P.C. in 1963:

"In our view the general line of the foreign policy of the socialist countries should have the following content: to develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and co-operation among the countries of the socialist camp in accordance with the principle of proletarian internationalism: to strive for peaceful co-existence on the basis of the Five Principles with countries having different social systems and oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war; and to support and assist the revolutionary struggles of all oppressed peoples and nations. These aspects are interrelated and indivisible and not a single one can be omitted." (C.P.C. 1, p.36)

The fundamental principle of this line is proletarian internationalism (C.P.C. 2, p25-28). Peaceful co-existence is proletarian internationalism applied to the requirements of socialist state policies. The strategic aim of world revolution in turn places responsibility on socialist countries to develop throughout the world conditions for revolutionary change, thus supporting the people within the non-socialist countries in making their own revolution. In applying such a policy any socialist country will have to continually resolve certain non-antagonistic contradictions. To have state relations with a country of a different social system based on the Five Principles ("mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference with each others internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.") (C.P.C. 2, p13) while actively supporting a democratic and revolutionary movement within that country aimed at replacing the Government heeds both a highly principled and flexible policy. The "leftist" error of attempting to export revolution must be opposed, with the recognition that for a genuine revolutionary movement to achieve power it is necessary to base the struggle on the self-reliance of the workers and peasants of that country. The other error to be opposed is that of the rightist position of putting the "national interests" of a socialist country before that of actively aiding revolutionary struggles wherever they occur.

In recognition of this type of contradiction socialist countries accept the need for compromise with the reactionary forces, including the main enemies of the world's peoples, the two super-powers. The fact that these compromises may be on important (though certainly not all) issues "does not require the people in the countries of the capitalist (or

any other part of the non-socialist - C.F.B.) world to follow suit and make compromises at home," (Mao. 4 p.87). Peaceful co-existence defines a relationship between countries of different social systems never between oppressed and oppressor classes or nations.

In order to correctly resolve the contradiction between the policies of peaceful co-existence and that of supporting revolutionary struggles wherever they occur it is necessary for socialist countries and the genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations to develop closer and closer links. These will be based on full equality whatever the size of the organisation and will develop on the principles of frank exchange of views, criticism and self-criticism.

On this basis a more democratic and powerful international communist movement can be built than has previously been possible. From this will grow a greater understanding of the different tactical lines which have to be carried out by revolutionaries in different concrete situations. But above all it will help develop a common strategy for all revolutionary forces to unite "to carry the proletarian world revolution forward to establish a new world without imperialism, without capitalism, and without the exploitation of man by man." (C.P.C. 1, p4)

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