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'STATE AND REVOLUTION'**

**NUMBER FOURTEEN
SPRING 1970 Price 2s**

**THE
MARXIST
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THE MARXIST

Contributions to the next issue of *The Marxist*, which will be published in September, should reach the editorial office (see address below) not later than 1st August, 1970.

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A remittance for 14 shillings will bring you six issues of *The Marxist*, post free. Single copies 2s 6d post paid. Overseas rates: Europe 25 shillings post paid; rest of the world 30 shillings post paid.

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PRODUCTIVITY DEALS

Employers' New Weapon

by the West London Workers' Group

THE GOVERNMENT CONCEPT that a growth of incomes should be directly related to a growth in productivity, goes back to the establishment of the Prices and Incomes Board in 1966 by the Labour Government.

The concept was the logical culmination of a process to control the wage demands of the working class. It was a direct progression by the Labour Government of the initial attempts by the previous Tory Government through Selwyn Lloyd.

The aim of the Labour Government, through the Prices and Incomes Board, was to provide a legal and constitutional framework of operation for the employers' inherent tendency to maximise profits.

The growth in the number of productivity deals in the past three years has been phenomenal. Over six million workers have now been engulfed, covering the entire spectrum of industry, and embracing around one million office workers. Almost every wage increase now has accompanying it the shackles of a productivity deal. These are welcomed by the government, the employers and the Trade Union bureaucracy (both left and right); they are a manifestation of the class collaboration policy of such leaders.

Concrete experience of the agreements already signed demonstrates that they represent a most fundamental attack upon the wages and conditions of the working class. The necessity for the ruling class to insist upon productivity deals at this historic stage can be demonstrated politically and economically.

Political basis

Politically, the crisis of capitalism is having its impact in Britain as it has done in France and the United States. The inherent contradiction is heightened to new levels by the National Liberation Movement led by the Vietnamese in asserting through force of arms their right to run their own country in their own interests.

The impact of the Vietnam war on the Western economies is not underestimated by bourgeois economists. Each of the subservient imperialist nations is

compelled to stabilise its economy to strengthen the dollar. Wilson is a willing tool in this, and during the crisis of the dollar was compelled to cut back on social services on the instruction of the United States — a process described by Michael Shanks, in the Times, as the British Socialist Government manning the Khe Sanh defences of the world monetary system.

The National Liberation Movement reduces the areas of traditional colonial exploitation. Those areas which do remain as the prey of the imperialist forces are feverishly contested amongst them. Confronted by increased restriction on its ability to carry out abroad its most intense exploitation, a metropolitan country increases the rate of exploitation of its own working class. Productivity deals are a fundamental part of this process.

This higher rate of exploitation is also necessary to provide surplus for imperialist investment in those areas which remain open to economic exploitation. In July 1966, the Labour Government imposed the wages standstill for one year. (During 1967 the avalanche of productivity deals was gaining momentum and averaged some 60 per month). These measures were said to be imperative in the 'National Interest', necessary to strengthen sterling and get our balance of payments right. Yet in the same year (1966) accumulated British investment in South Africa, for example, was \$3,042,000,000. Further, each year since then, British capital has continued to flow to South Africa at about \$280,000,000 per annum, to exploit the slave wage situation which apartheid provides.

Economic basis

There are a whole series of economic reasons which necessitate, from an employer's viewpoint, the introduction of productivity deals.

Marx spoke of the increasingly short life of fixed capital. This is most graphically demonstrated today by the rate of obsolescence of capital equipment. A hundred years ago, when an employer purchased a piece of equipment, he could rest assured that it would last his lifetime and would even be an asset he could pass on to his son. In the 1930's however,

the average depreciation period of equipment was 25 years, in the 1950's 15 years, and in the 1960's 5 years. Further, the amount of capital necessary to carry out any major productive process with its ancillary services, continues to increase. Thus possessing very costly capital equipment which will be obsolete in 5 years, the employer will seek to exploit it for 24 hours a day in order to maximise his profits. It follows that the elimination of 'non-productive time' is from the employer's point of

view, imperative. Productivity deals provide the negotiating framework in which shift work is introduced and the 'non-productive time' of tea breaks, washing up time etc., is eliminated.

The economic necessity for productivity deals is further intensified by the diminishing rate of return of capital investment. This is demonstrated by the following extract from 'The Impact of Size' by E. Goodman. It covers all firms in Britain.

Mean Rates of Return

Size-Group (£1m)	1954	'55	'56	'57	'58	'59	'60	'61	'62	'63	Average (54-63)
65 & over	15.17	17.41	16.74	14.80	13.94	13.80	14.46	12.21	11.10	11.91	13.93
35 — 65	21.81	21.60	18.86	16.77	16.22	14.78	16.37	13.89	12.42	12.49	16.47
15 — 35	15.86	15.20	14.85	13.89	13.97	13.46	14.40	11.96	10.59	11.60	13.48
10 — 15	19.94	18.49	16.82	17.74	16.68	17.30	17.71	12.60	12.61	13.02	16.09
5 — 10	16.96	18.07	15.91	16.54	16.01	15.25	17.09	15.33	13.53	13.75	15.83
2.5 — 5	18.41	19.53	17.54	16.48	14.81	14.46	14.54	13.72	12.98	13.73	15.65
1 — 2.5	21.12	22.14	20.96	18.96	17.07	16.82	15.06	14.56	14.02	14.32	17.52
0.5 — 1	23.58	23.54	22.33	21.89	21.49	18.77	19.21	18.97	17.72	16.56	20.39
0.25 — 0.5	17.62	15.92	15.19	14.47	14.56	16.36	17.45	18.63	15.32	15.46	15.68
Under 0.25	21.78	21.08	18.53	19.18	18.19	17.46	17.22	18.94	18.40	18.63	18.70
Average	19.31	19.38	17.84	17.18	16.42	15.96	16.20	15.17	13.95	14.15	16.54

If manufacturing industries alone are considered this is equally true, as was shown during the negotiations between the EEF and the CSEU on March 27 1968:—

Net profits as proportion of invested capital in manufacturing industries: 1955 — 10.3 per cent; 1956 — 9.0; 1957 — 8.6; 1958 — 8.4; 1959 — 9.7; 1960 — 9.3; 1961 — 7.8; 1962 — 7.0; 1963 — 7.5; 1964 — 8.3; 1965 — 7.1; 1966 — 5.8.

Productivity deals are used in an attempt to reverse this inherent contradiction.

Technological change

Technical change also necessitates the implementation of productivity deals. With new production techniques, the output per worker-hour can be dramatically increased. In one West London firm, the introduction of an electro-chemical machining plant reduced the production time for a complex component from 43 to 3.8 hours!

More widely known is the situation when containers were introduced into the docks. Very large vessels can now be discharged in under 48 hours; they would require three weeks by conventional means. The productivity of some dockers was increased by up to 700%. The reward gained by the workers when a productivity deal replaced payment by results, was a mere 8%.

Productivity deals, wherever they occur, have a number of points in common. In exchange for an increase, they buy the defensive practices (so-called restrictive practices) which the working class have painstakingly built up over decades to defend themselves from the worst excesses of the system. These rights can be sold only once. Most productivity deals seek to eliminate non-productive time such as tea breaks and washing up time. They remove demarcation lines and result in one worker doing several jobs. Where a payment-by-results system is in operation, it is abolished and new forms of payment, usually based on measured day-work, are instituted. The difference this can mean in earnings was demonstrated effectively in the recent Ford dispute, where Ford workers involved in productivity bargaining and measured day-work found they were £10 per week behind motor car firms in the Midlands where pay is based on payment by results.

The introduction of shift work is frequently included. Central to most productivity bargains is the philosophy that negotiations are focussed upon decreased wage costs per unit of output rather than increased pay for the worker.

The analysis of Marxists, based on their understanding of the role of the employer, the state and the Trade Union bureaucracy, which has always been that productivity deals represent a fundamental attack on the working class, can now be substantiated by the consequences of those deals.

Long-term reality

The first major productivity agreement was signed at the Esso Oil Refinery at Fawley, Hants., in July 1960. It was at that time hailed as a great leap forward both by the trade union leaders who negotiated it and the company. An immediate direct result of the agreement was an increase in the rate of pay by some 40%. Yet the long term reality was crushingly demonstrated when the Company was able to report to the Donovan Commission:—

'We did a survey in the Southampton area in the oil industry, chemicals, shipbuilding, heavy electrical, light engineering, a nationalised industry and a contracting industry. We found in these eight industries . . . on hours worked in the week it was lowest; and on total weekly earnings it came sixth out of the eight.'

Lord Delacourt Smith — General Secretary of the Post Office Union, signed a major productivity agreement in which he put 'the dynamic thrust of the trade union movement for higher pay and better conditions behind the plans for higher productivity; that we can produce more rapid progress in the direction of modernisation.'

The progress for his members, however, was not as great as that of workers in other industries who had no productivity agreement at all. Between January 1966 and January 1969, the rise in wages of Post Office engineers was 21.4% for a technical officer and 20.1% for a Senior Technician. However, in Engineering Industries as a whole the percentage rise for skilled workers was 22%.

Productivity, not production

It should be recognised that the philosophy behind productivity deals is not to increase production — indeed the Labour government, like the Tories, have actively discouraged this. The aim of a productivity deal is, as the name implies, to increase productivity, i.e. production per head, thereby inevitably leading to unemployment. Mining is a glaring example. The following approximate figures from charts 2 and 3 in the National Coal Board Report and Account, 1968-69, illustrate the point:—

Year	Average manpower in thousands	Output per shift in cwts.
1956	700	25
1958	690	26
1960	600	28
1962	520	32
1964	490	35
1966	420	37
1968	350	42

That the same trend is quite discernible in industrial output as a whole was shown by *Le Monde Weekly*, 31 December 1969:—

Year	Per capita output	Industrial output	Employment
1963	100	100	100
1964	106.8	108.1	102
1965	108.8	111.8	103.3
1966	110.4	113.2	102.8
1967	113.8	114.1	99.8
1968	122.1	119.7	97.7
1969 (Sept.)	128	124	96.5

Unemployment is now running at its highest level since the war, whilst productivity has been rising much higher than production.

Industrial relations 'jungle'

The employers have long recognised the real power of the trade union movement centres at the point of production. The shop steward movement has therefore been the focus of ruling class attack for many years. Productivity deals are an attempt to undermine the shop steward, and place negotiations of the most detailed production practices in the hands of the outside full-time official. Workers at the point of production know well the importance in a tactical, guerilla sense, of the so-called Industrial Relations Jungle. Productivity deals, almost without exception, seek to bring orderliness to this scene. Thus Alan Flanders said of the famous Fawley productivity agreement:—

'This is the aspect of productivity bargaining that I particularly want to stress. I find it difficult to see how the accumulated disorder, which is the heritage of two decades of post-war growth in the unofficial system of collective bargaining, can be cleared up without the help of productivity agreements.'

Such disorder is directly in the interests of the organised working class, and helps to limit the control of management.

When DATA recently refused to be involved in any productivity deals, or permit its members to be subjected to the measurement of the output of individuals or groups of individuals, the EEF in a research paper said:—

'What one would say is that DATA does not really want to understand the nature and purpose of the techniques . . . If one is to show a measurable increase in productivity, and a significant improvement in efficiency, one must have a base line on which to begin. It is agreed however, that opposition of the DATA type need not be rational and indeed is **all the more dangerous because it is not** (our emphasis). Its resistance to the application of such methods is in reality a resistance based upon a power struggle over the issue of management control.'

(concluded on p. 8)

LENIN

and the Birth of Bolshevism

by Mike Faulkner

FEW SERIOUS REVOLUTIONARIES would now deny that the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 was made possible largely through the painstaking theoretical and organisational work done by the Bolsheviks during the preceding decade and a half. Lenin's insistence upon a clear set of principles to guide revolutionary work and his demand for a centrally organised force of revolutionary activists, produced sharp and bitter divisions in the ranks of the amorphous Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party at the beginning of the century. Lenin considered that the issues involved were sufficiently important to take precedence over all considerations of unity, and long-standing friendships were severed because of basic differences over what appeared, to many, secondary questions of organisation.

But the differences that split the RSDLP were not secondary. At root they concerned different class lines. It was not simply a matter of confusion on the part of those who consistently opposed Lenin at the 1903 Congress; it was a matter of proletarian politics in conflict with bourgeois politics.

Since those early debates in the Russian Labour Movement, parties basing themselves on Leninist principles have been formed in almost every country of the world. In some countries they have led successful revolutions; in most countries they have become transformed beyond all recognition from the 'new type' of party Lenin had in mind.

There have always been those who have argued that Lenin's ideas about democratic centralism and his conception of the party as an advanced detachment of the proletariat with a professional revolutionary nucleus, were no more than unpleasant necessities forced upon him by the conditions of backwardness prevailing in Russia. An examination of Lenin's views on the party between 1903 and 1921 will reveal whether or not this was really so.

In order to clarify some of the questions concerning party-building which face the revolutionary movement today, we shall need to look for the essential elements in Lenin's teaching on the party. We shall also need to consider the arguments of his early critics, such as Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg.

Most important, we shall need to consider what should be the main features of a Leninist party in Britain today.

Lenin set out his views on revolutionary theory and party organisation mainly in two works: 'What Is To Be Done?' (1902) and 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back' (1904). Like most of his work they were written in the heat of battle against political opponents within the Russian workers' movement.

In 'What Is To Be Done' Lenin spelled out the main tasks facing the Social-Democratic movement and argued the need for a vanguard organisation of professional revolutionaries which should be armed with a consistent Marxist theory and a political program. He opposed the idea that the working class would move spontaneously to revolutionary action:

'We have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the "new trend" in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its bowing to spontaneity, and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a mass of consciousness from us Social Democrats.' (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*)

He labelled 'economist' the theory and practice of those who hold that the economic struggle was itself the political struggle:

'Is it true that, in general the economic struggle "is the most widely applicable means" of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is absolutely untrue.' (*Ibid.*)

Lenin argued that for the day-to-day spontaneous struggles of the working class to be given a political character, it was necessary to transform the working class consciousness generated by such struggles, into *political* consciousness. This could only be done, he said, by training the workers 'to respond to all cases — *without exception*, of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter what *class* is affected. Moreover to respond from a Social-Democratic and not from any other point of view.' (*Ibid.*)

'The spontaneous working class movement by itself is able to create (and inevitably creates) only trade unionism, and working class trade union politics are precisely working class bourgeois politics. The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle, and even in political revolution, does not in itself make its politics Social-Democratic politics.' (*Ibid.*)

The development of Social-Democratic political consciousness would never be achieved by attempting to 'lend' the economic struggle a political character. The framework of the economic struggle was too narrow to allow for its politicisation from within. Political consciousness could only be introduced from outside.

It was on these precepts that Lenin began to develop his ideas about the need for a 'new type' of party, which would be more than a broad workers' organisation and would be capable of uniting all oppositionist classes and strata in the Russian Empire under the leadership of the working class, for the overthrow of the autocracy.

Under the conditions of Tsarist autocracy secrecy was an absolute necessity in the revolutionary movement. It would have been impossible to have built a party with a mass, open membership. All the most important functions had to be secret. Much of the criticism levelled against Lenin at that time was along the lines that the small, centralised organisation of professional revolutionaries would become a self-perpetuating clique which would 'do the thinking for all'. To such criticism Lenin replied:

'The centralisation of the most secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations which are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions, workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature, socialist and also democratic circles among all other sections of the population, etc. etc.'

In relation to problems of organisation, democracy and cadre building, Lenin contrasted the situation in Russia with that in 'politically free' countries like Germany, where the workers' organisations were able to operate legally. Addressing those who criticised the 'Iskra's' 'anti-democratic tendencies', Lenin stressed the impossibility of applying 'broad democratic principles' to the party organisation in the conditions of secrecy made necessary under an autocratic regime:

'It would be absurd to speak about democracy without publicity that is not limited to the membership of the organisation. We call the German Socialist Party a democratic organisation because all it does is done publicly, even its party congresses are held in public. But no one would call democratic an organisation that is hidden from everyone but its members by a veil of secrecy . . . Nor is the situation any better with regard to the second attribute of democracy, namely, the principle of election. In politically free countries, this condition is taken for granted. "*Membership of the party is open to those who accept the principles of the Party program and render the Party all possible support*" — reads clause one of the rules of the German Social-Democratic Party. And as the entire political arena is as open to the public view as is a theatre stage to the audience, this acceptance or non-acceptance, support or opposition, is known to all from the press and public meetings . . . The universal control (in the literal sense of the term) exercised over every act of a party man in the political field brings into existence an automatically operating mechanism which produces what in biology is called "survival of the fittest" . . . Just try to put this picture into the frame of our autocracy!' (*Ibid.*, pp. 351, 352.)¹

At the beginning of the century the young Russian labour movement regarded the German Social-Democrats and their leaders, Kautsky and Bebel, with the respect a keen pupil reserves for a wise teacher. Although Lenin shared this respect for the German party, unlike many prominent members of the RSDLP, he clearly understood that it would be useless to model a revolutionary party in Russia on it. At that time the German Marxists had just done battle with Bernstein and the reformist wing that supported him. Karl Kautsky then stood higher in prestige than anyone else in the international revolutionary movement, and the big issues which were later to split the Second International and reveal the inner corruption of the German party, were still a long way off.

Although it did not become clear until more than a decade after Lenin had written 'What Is To Be Done', the division in the ranks of the RSDLP was significant far beyond that small organisation and, indeed, far outside Russia's frontiers. The principles on which Bolshevism was established were to be put to the test throughout the socialist movement. The parties of the Second International did not suddenly capitulate in 1914; they had been capitulationist for years, but it was only in 1914 that they were put to the test. Just as the open reformism of Bernstein did not represent the complete summation of revisionism, neither did the exposure of the later and more subtle revisionism of Kautsky settle the issue finally. Concerning the big, obvious issues

such as reform or revolution, parliamentary transition or violent overthrow, it was not difficult to see where people stood. But it was precisely at that point, in the ranks of those nominally committed to revolution, that really important questions arose concerning the 'how' of revolution. And the central question concerned organisation.

The Second Congress of the RSDLP, 1903

'As a current of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 24).

Lenin regarded questions of organisation as political questions and he was ready to fight to the end against anything that would weaken the political organisation of the working class. Most of the Second Congress of the RSDLP was spent in fierce debate between Lenin and his supporters on the 'Iskra', who fought for an organisation based on the principles set out in 'What Is To Be Done?', and their opponents, led principally by Martov, who, on every issue of importance advanced political and organisational lines that could only serve to debilitate the party.

Bolshevism or Menshevism?

In 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back' written early in 1904, Lenin gives a detailed account of the debates at the Second Congress and makes an analysis of the major issues involved. The essential elements of Lenin's political thinking, which had been reflected in the pages of the 'Iskra', emerged at the Congress as an organised political force.

Shortly after the founding congress of the RSDLP in 1898, the members of the Central Committee had been arrested. From that time until 1903 the party was no more than a collection of scattered groups united only by a common commitment to socialism. Concurrently with the emergence of Bernsteinism in Germany, a similar trend developed amongst the exiled Russian Social-Democrats. Concerning the bourgeois trends in the party at that time Lenin commented:

'The intellectuals, who in our party made up a much larger percentage than in the West-European politics, had taken up Marxism as a new vogue. This vogue very soon gave place to slavish acceptance of the bourgeois criticism of Marx.' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 479.)

Liberal, Economist and Anarcho-Syndicalist ideas became widespread. A consistent proletarian line came from the 'Iskra' on whose editorial board sat Lenin and Plekhanov. 'The need to create a really unified party', said Lenin, 'that is, to effect what was only foreshadowed in 1898, asserted itself more and more insistently' (*Ibid*, p. 480).

The struggle between the Iskra supporters and the anti-Iskra-ists was really over whether there was a need to create such a party. Both at the Congress and in polemics afterwards, Lenin was accused of 'dictatorial', 'anti-democratic', 'bureaucratic', 'Jacobin', 'splittist' behaviour. But Lenin dealt neither in name-calling, nor generalities; he dealt with facts. In his speeches he fought for an end to the heterogeneity and diffuseness of the party, explaining that only by creating a definite organisation with a centralised leadership would it be possible to carry the revolution to victory.

There was a solid body of support for the programmatic and organisational line of the 'Iskra', and a consistent opposition supported by a vacillating centre of anti-Iskra delegates. On most issues the Iskra-ists won the day. Of the questions directly relating to party organisation, there were three of outstanding importance. They concerned: (a) whether or not the old groups should be fused into the party and subordinated to it, (b) whether there should be centralistic Rules of Organisation, and, (c) the definition of a party member (paragraph I of the Rules).

The anti-Iskra-ists opposed the fusion of the separate groups into the party and the proposal for centralistic rules. On both counts they were defeated. The controversy over conditions of membership centred around two conflicting formulations of Rule I. Martov's formulation demanded of a party member only acceptance of the program and the rendering of financial support. It did not make active membership of a party organisation obligatory.

'We could only rejoice', said Martov, 'if every striker, every demonstrator, answering for his actions, could proclaim himself a Party member.'

Lenin's formulation of Rule I read:

'A member of the Party is one who accepts its program, and supports it both materially and by personal participation in one of its organisations.'

His insistence on participation in a Party organisation clearly differentiated Lenin's definition of membership from Martov's. Martov's formulation was no good, said Lenin, because, according to it, any 'high school student' and any 'professor' could proclaim himself a Party member. He showed how such looseness of organisation appealed to the bourgeois intelligentsia:

'In a word, Comrade Martov's formula would either remain a dead letter, an empty phrase, or it would be of benefit mainly and most exclusively to "intellectuals who are thoroughly imbued with bourgeois individualism" and who do not wish to join the organisation. Martov's formulation

ostensibly defends the interests of the broad strata of the proletariat, but in fact it serves the interests of the *bourgeois intellectuals*, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organisation. No one will undertake to deny that it is *precisely its individualism* and incapacity for *discipline* and organisation that in general distinguishes the *intelligentsia* as a separate stratum of modern capitalist society. (Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*).

By a narrow majority the Congress voted down Lenin's draft and accepted Martov's. But on most of the other major issues Lenin's majority bloc on the 'Iskra' was successful.

It is important to relate briefly what happened over the elections to the Central Committee and to the new Editorial Board of the 'Iskra', because it was really over these questions and their implications that the RSDLP split irrevocably. Lenin had been convinced of the necessity to fight for an Editorial Board and a Central Committee composed of the staunchest revolutionaries. The only people unmistakably of that calibre were the Iskra-ists. Lenin envisaged the 'Iskra' Editorial Board playing a leading ideological role in the party.

His proposals to reduce the numbers of the Editorial Board to three and to limit membership of the Central Committee to three, were carried by clear majorities. The Congress elected a Central Committee of Iskra-ists. Lenin, Plekhanov and Martov were elected to the Editorial Board, giving the Iskra-ists a two-to-one majority there. Thus, the majority (Bolshevik) line triumphed organisationally over the minority (Menshevik) line. Lenin explained this new division into a minority and majority as 'only a variant of the old division into a proletarian-revolutionary and an intellectual-opportunist wing of our Party. That is a fact, and there is no explaining or laughing it away.' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 482.)

The subsequent behaviour of the Mensheviks is instructive. Because they didn't like the way the voting went they withdrew from all further elections at the Congress. Martov refused his place on the 'Iskra' Board. After the Congress they refused to work under the new Party committees and demanded the co-option of their old representatives back to the 'Iskra'. Plekhanov, who had agreed with Lenin 'in principle', weakened when it came to putting principles into practice, declaring that 'fighting revisionism did not necessarily mean fighting the revisionists', and expressing the wish that the old Menshevik editors should be co-opted. He began to join the chorus of Menshevik attacks on Lenin, who, unable any longer to work under conditions in which Congress policy decisions were being overturned in

the name of 'anti-bureaucratism', resigned from the Editorial Board of 'Iskra'. The Mensheviks were co-opted and for a time their representatives gained ascendancy in the Party.

Lenin v. Kautsky

In addition to the voluminous abuse thrown at Lenin by the Mensheviks, there came criticism from Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. These, who were not so closely in touch with conditions in the Russian movement, can be partially excused for making errors of judgement. However, Lenin replied quite sharply to Kautsky, who had supported Martov's formulation on membership and also accused Lenin of 'expelling' three members of the Editorial Board of 'Iskra':

'Comrade Kautsky has sided with Martov's formulation and the argument he pleads is expediency. In the first place, at our Party Congress this point was not discussed from the standpoint of expediency, but of principle . . . His view that I (*sic*) "expelled" three comrades from the Editorial Board can only be attributed to his being totally uninformed about our Congress . . . Non-election is far from the same thing as expulsion.' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 482.)

Kautsky refused to publish an article by Lenin defending the Bolshevik position in the German Party paper, 'Neue Zeit'.

Lenin v. Luxemburg

In an article entitled 'Organisational Questions of Russian Social Democracy', published in the 'Neue Zeit' in July 1904, Rosa Luxemburg characterised Lenin's 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back' as 'the systematic exposition of the views of the ultra-centralist wing of the party'. She accused him of 'fettering the initiative of the party spirit and raising a barbed-wire fence around its capacity for leap-like expansion', and of demanding 'the absolute, blind subordination of the different organs of the party to their central authority . . . a mechanical carrying over of the organisational principles of the Blanquist movement of conspiratorial circles into the social-democratic movement of the working masses.' She claimed that Lenin had defined the position of a revolutionary social-democrat as 'a Jacobin indissolubly linked with the organisation of class-conscious workers'. On this she commented: 'Social-democracy is not linked or connected with the organisation of the working class, but is the movement of the working class itself'. She rounded off her article with some dubious theorising about 'The "ego" which has been beaten down by Russian absolutism (taking) revenge by setting itself on the throne in its revolutionary thought-world and declaring itself omnipotent — as a conspiratorial committee in the

name of a non-existent "popular will". (All quotations taken from the ILP's 1962 edition of Rosa Luxemburg's pamphlet, *Leninism or Marxism*)

Lenin took up Rosa Luxemburg's criticisms in detail, correcting her many mistaken notions about the struggle in the RSDLP. Referring to the charge of 'ultra-centralism' he pointed out that his book was not concerned with the difference between one system of organisation and another, 'but with how any system is to be maintained, criticised and rectified in a manner consistent with the party idea'. He went on:

'I am very grateful to Comrade Luxemburg for explaining the profound idea that slavish submission is very harmful to the Party, but I should like to know: does the comrade consider it normal for supposed party central institutions to be dominated by the minority of the Party Congress? — can she imagine such a thing? — has she ever seen it in any party?' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 476.)

It is worth reproducing at some length Lenin's reply to the charge of 'Jacobinism', because Rosa Luxemburg's mis-quotation has so often subsequently been presented as an accurate statement of Lenin's position in 1903:

'Comrade Luxemburg says that I characterised my standpoint more accurately, perhaps, than any of my opponents could have done when I defined a revolutionary Social-Democratic as a Jacobin who has identified himself with the organisation of the class-conscious workers. Yet another error of fact. It was P. Axelrod, not I, who first started talking about Jacobinism. He was the first to liken our Party trends to those of the days of the great French Revolution. I merely observed that the parallel could only be allowed in the sense that the division of present-day Social-Democracy into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing corresponded to some extent to the division into Montagnards and Girondists. The old 'Iskra', which the Party Congress endorsed, often draws such a parallel. Just because it recognised such a division, the old 'Iskra' fought against the 'Rabocheye Dyelo' trend. Rosa Luxemburg here confuses comparison of the two revolutionary trends of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries with identification of those trends. If I say, for example, that the Jungfrau stands in the same relation to the Little Scheidegg as a house of four storeys to one of two, that does not mean I identify a four-storey house with the Jungfrau.' (*Ibid*, p.477.)²

1 At the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904 Lenin expressed his doubts about Clause I of the German Party Rules. 'The formulation of Rule I of the German Party

Rules, which did not make it obligatory for a member to belong to a definite party organisation, was extensively utilised by disruptive elements.'

2 In his biographical sketch, 'Rosa Luxemburg' (*International Socialism*, 1959) Tony Cliff writes: 'Marx's statement about the democratic nature of the socialist movement, quoted previously, and Lenin's, that revolutionary Social Democracy represents "the Jacobins indissolubly connected with the organisation of the proletariat" are definitely contradictory' (p. 49).

(to be concluded in next issue)

PRODUCTIVITY DEALS

(continued from p. 3)

Heighten the contradictions!

The present industrial situation in Britain provides fertile ground for the continuous harassment of the employers. The high capital investment for materials compels the employer to accurately synchronise his manufacturing capacity. It is a fact that components leaving Lucas, Birmingham, in the morning are fitted to vehicles on the production line in Coventry the same afternoon. This greatly increases the strike power of the workers involved. The worker, using high capital, complicated equipment, no longer leaves down his hammer and chisel when going on strike. He immobilises plant often costing millions of pounds. Revolutionaries at the point of production could raise these contradictions to new levels in the struggle to prevent the employers extracting their present £8,000 million surplus value each year.

In contrast, the Social Democrats provide a moderating force which seeks to minimise the struggle which inevitably arises from the mutually exclusive interests of the exploiter and the exploited. 'Left' Trade Union leaders can still advocate productivity deals, have sham battles as to whether the increases should be 8 or 10%, sell basic Trade Union rights in exchange, and pose the whole affair as a shining example of their militant leadership. The concrete experience of millions of workers is however, gradually exposing the true nature both of the 'leaders' and their productivity deals. Recent months have demonstrated that more and more workers are prepared to take direct industrial action in defence of their wages and working conditions. This defensive action can be extended to the offensive in an industrial attack upon productivity deals and upon the manifestation which they represent of the economic base.

Principled resistance to productivity deals, drawing the political lessons, can provide the objective circumstances in which the struggle can be elevated from economism to a political level. In the process, the class nature of the Labour Party and Government, the 'left' TU leaders, the 'National Interest' and the State will be exposed to wider sections of the working class.

LENIN

and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

by Virginia Penn

AT THE VERY CORE of Marxism-Leninism lies the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a truth which Lenin learned from Marx and Engels when he was still very young. To many western ears the word 'dictatorship' conjures up images of military cliques seizing power, juntas brutally suppressing any indications of revolt, fascist dictators such as Hitler enforcing autocratic rule with guns and batons against the majority of the people. The apostles of 'free democracy' maintain that where there are 'free' elections based on universal suffrage, the will of the majority prevails. Therefore, they say, there can be no contradiction within the 'democratic' state which cannot be resolved by legal and parliamentary means. From this reasoning it follows that 'dictatorship' is a rude word. But from Marx to Mao socialists have understood the real meaning and significance of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', and its principles have been applied to resolve the problems of class struggle during the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, 1848, Marx and Engels for the first time analysed the historic role of the proletariat in the class struggle. After showing that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles', they said that 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class'. Why? Because 'the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class'. Other classes vacillate, some supporting the revolution at one time and betraying it at another. Marx carried this argument further in *The Civil War in France*, after the success and failure of the 1871 Paris Commune, when he declared that it was not sufficient just to lay hold of the ready-made state machinery; the workers must smash it and replace it with their own.

From his student days Lenin was a careful reader of the works of Marx and Engels, as well as of contemporary political and philosophical writers. At the age of 20 he translated the *Communist Manifesto* into Russian, and some of his early political activities were in study circles of workers, where he taught and discussed Marxism.

But Lenin's understanding of the nature of class struggle in the Russia of his time, and the need for

working class leadership, was not just based on theory. He grew up in Asiatic Russia, where he saw the poverty and oppression of the peasants and non-Russian nationalities. He also met workers at that time, and all his life stressed the vital importance of constant contact with the working people. In the 1890's in St. Petersburg, for example, he spent much of his time visiting factories, talking with the workers. His political philosophy and tactics, therefore, had deep roots in Marxism directly related to the lives of the working people.

From Marx's premise that all human history is the history of class struggles and that contemporary society was tending to split more clearly into bourgeois and proletarian classes, Lenin turned to look at his own country. He accepted the basic principle that until the stage of Communism is reached, every society is a class society in which one class rules. In the Russia of his day he saw a great deal of unrest and revolt which was ruthlessly put down by tsarist troops and police. The severe economic crisis which gripped Europe at the turn of the century, hit Russia particularly hard. The peasants suffered severely, unemployment and appalling conditions among workers led to many strikes and demonstrations, students in universities revolted at the repressive regime and Marxism became fashionable among them.

In 1904 there was a serious crop failure and widespread industrial depression. Shaky tsardom was further weakened by the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese War. The workers of St. Petersburg informed the Tsar that they wished to send him a petition asking him to consider their sufferings; on January 9th, 1905, 'Bloody Sunday', troops shot and cut down hundreds of men, women and children bringing the petition to the 'Little Father' at the Winter Palace. In the following months the bitter anger of the workers and peasants led to revolts throughout the country, put down with the same brutality, and years of reaction bore heavily on Russia's working people.

On state power

From the start of his political life Lenin understood the primary need to overthrow the Tsar. In

1902, in the *Draft of a Programme for the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party* (e.g. the party of the Socialists), he said:

'In order to carry out this social revolution the proletariat must win political power, which will make it the master of the situation and allow it to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of its great objective. In this sense the dictatorship of the proletariat is the necessary political condition of the social revolution.'

Lenin returned to this point on many occasions. In November, 1905, for example, an article entitled *Things Are Coming to a Head* exposed the hollowness of tsarist promises:

'... we were "granted" only promises, for we have no real power. We have come close to liberty; we have compelled absolutely everybody, even the tsar, to recognise the need for liberty... What we want is not a scrap of paper, promising legislative rights to the representatives of the people. What we want is the real sovereignty of the people. The nearer we approached it, the more intolerable became its absence. The more alluring the tsar's manifestoes, the more impossible is the tsar's rule.'

'The struggle is approaching its climax, the settlement of the question of whether real power is to remain in the hands of the tsar's government... I promise you anything you like — says the tsar — only let me retain power, let *me* fulfil my promises... I grant everything except power — declares tsarism. Everything is a phantom except power — answer the revolutionary people.'

Lenin developed his analysis further after the experience of the Russian people during and after the February 1917 revolution. Tsarist autocracy collapsed under the hammer blows of insurrection by workers and peasants and the desertion from the tsarist army of soldiers of proletarian origin. Throughout the country Soviets of Workers' Deputies sprang up, to become later Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But the Provisional Government which was set up was bourgeois dominated, and not a dictatorship of the proletariat. There began a period of *dual power*, an unstable situation which could not long last. In this complex state of affairs Lenin continually stressed the need for the proletariat to seize control of state power. In August-September 1917, he said:

'The state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another; its aim is the creation of "order" which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes.' (*State and Revolution*)

'The main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power. In the

hands of which class it is — this decides everything.' (*One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution*)

Lenin's whole revolutionary experience, his personal contact with and warm feelings for the workers in Russia and in Western Europe, his knowledge of peasant life, and his study of the revolutionary principles of Marx and Engels, confirmed him in his unwavering conviction that *only* the working class could lead the socialist revolution, and that they must always work in close alliance with the poor peasantry. He accepted as undeniable the concept of Marx that the culmination of the historic role of the proletariat in the revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which will last as long as there are classes in society. This concept he reaffirmed clearly in *State and Revolution*.

Moreover, the achievement and consolidation of this dictatorship of the proletariat could not arise from the spontaneous revolt of the masses, but must be guided. Therefore, in the vanguard of the proletariat there must be a centralised, revolutionary Party, a Marxist Party. Lenin saw this principle as applicable not only to Russia; he stressed the same point when sending greetings on October 10, 1919, to French, Italian and German Communists.

On armed insurrection

The workers and peasants must be prepared, Lenin frequently said, to carry through armed insurrection. At the Third Party Congress held in London in April 1905 and again in his article, 'Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution' in July that same year he stressed, 'since we are out to fight, we must wish to win'. He was exposing the tactics and principles of the Mensheviks whom he accused of being afraid the proletarian revolution might be victorious, and of the desire to subject the proletariat to bourgeois leadership. The bloody orgies of tsarist repression so recently inflicted on the Russian people made him burn with fury, and he was mindful of the lesson taught by Marx and Engels after the European upheavels of 1848 and after the Paris Commune of 1871. The Third Congress adopted Lenin's resolution that the most important task of the Party was to prepare for, organise, and carry out armed insurrection. He later staunchly defended this line despite the failure of the armed struggle against tsarism at the end of 1905. He had been subjected to fierce criticism by the Liberals and the Mensheviks, who attacked him as having caused tremendous loss and suffering in these abortive attempts at insurrection. In 1908, at the height of the tsarist reaction, he proclaimed the 1905 armed struggle as the 'greatest movement of the proletariat since the (Paris) Commune'. *Only* this form of struggle could guarantee success in the future and the 1905 events had schooled the proletariat for coming battles.

After the outbreak of World War I Lenin strenuously attacked the parties in the Second International which supported their own imperialist governments and he condemned equally strongly those who took refuge in pacifism, urging the workers of all countries to turn the imperialist war into a revolutionary war. He understood that neither imperialist war nor imperialist peace could bring freedom to the people, and he directed all his energies and work to preparing the Russian proletariat for direct action. He saw that proletarian revolution and the capture of state power were on the order of the day. He warned the workers and peasants that they must be ready and must act at the right time, but they must not act without preparation and engage in premature conflicts.

His task was immensely difficult because the majority of the Soviets, including those in key cities, were dominated by the Mensheviks who sought to compromise with the ruling bourgeoisie. The Provisional Government issued a warrant for Lenin's arrest and the Bolshevik Party had to go underground, but Lenin never ceased his agitational work, calling on the workers to prepare to seize power. He treated with withering scorn those who sought to frighten the masses, saying that the proletariat with the poor peasants as allies were fully capable of winning and holding power, providing they did not allow themselves to be cowed. In his *April Theses* (1917) he declared that the chief demand at that time was the transfer of all state power to the Soviets from the existing bourgeois dictatorship, and the setting up of a Soviet Republic. Within a few months the Soviets themselves had been won by the revolutionary Bolsheviks from the petty-bourgeois Menshevik compromisers and the path was open for the October Revolution.

'What the Friends of the People are'

This is the title of a work Lenin produced in 1894 when he was fighting all those who opposed the principle that the working class would lead the revolution. He exposed those, such as the Narodniks, who advocated conciliation with tsardom and who were champions of the landlords in the countryside. Lenin also attacked the 'Legal Marxists' who would confine proletarian action within the legal limits of the bourgeois state, and the Economists who would limit action to the satisfying of economic demands. He consistently linked the peasantry with the workers in the revolutionary struggle, as essential for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1905 Lenin's resolution was adopted, which said that the leading proletariat must establish a firm alliance with the peasantry, and isolate the bourgeoisie. In his arguments he exposed the 'inconsistency, cupidity, cowardice and treachery of the liberal bourgeoisie' and those who ran alongside them.

Lenin warmly sympathised with the problems and demands of the peasants and never forgot that their needs must receive full attention in the revolutionary struggle. An article in *Iskra*, the organ of the RSDLP, in 1901, urged the formation of Peasant Committees to sweep away survivals of serfdom, and agitation to secure restitution to the peasants of land 'enclosed' by the landlords. A further demand, he said, should be the nationalisation of all land. In *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (1905) he urged the proclamation of three slogans to stimulate support for armed insurrection: the formation of Revolutionary Peasant Committees, and for workers, mass *political* strikes, and the immediate introduction of the eight-hour day.

At the Second Congress of the RSDLP, which met first in Brussels, then in London in 1903, Lenin fought fiercely against the Mensheviks who opposed his call for a disciplined, militant Party which would lead the way to the seizure of power by the proletariat and to the setting up of proletarian dictatorship. He combated the tendency of the Mensheviks to place the interest of separate circles above those of a unified Party. The opportunists were routed and for the time being isolated, labelled by Lenin as averse to discipline, guilty of splitting tactics, mere petty-bourgeois reformists. The role they were to play later, after the February 1917 Revolution, showed that, though defeated on this occasion, they were not destroyed, and they entrenched themselves in the newly-formed Soviets. The petty-bourgeois Mensheviks were later discarded by the mass of the workers and peasants as enemies of the revolution, and the seizure of power was accomplished under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin.

Democracy for whom?

The question of who runs the state became an issue of fundamental importance after the February Revolution. In August-September that year two important works of Lenin appeared, *State and Revolution* and *One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution*. He took to task the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks who pretended to see 'pure democracy' in the constitutional 'democratic' states. These groups in Russia and the social-chauvinists of Western Europe sought to instil into the minds of the people the notion that universal suffrage in the modern state is capable of expressing the will of the majority of toilers. Lenin pointed out that the whole history of bourgeois parliamentary countries proves the contrary:

'A change of Ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is saturated through and through with an anti-democratic spirit, it is connected by thousands

and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie and it depends upon them in every way . . . To attempt, by means of *this* state apparatus, to carry out such reforms as the abolition of land-owners' property in land without compensation, the grain monopoly, etc., is the greatest illusion, the greatest self-deception and a deception of the people. This apparatus *can* serve a republican bourgeoisie . . . but to carry out reforms seriously undermining or limiting the rights of capital, the rights of "sacred private property", not to speak of abolishing them—such a state apparatus is absolutely incapable.' (*One of the Fundamental Questions*)

'The state is a special organisation of force; it is the organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, the exploiting class only, i.e. the bourgeoisie. The toilers need the state only to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression and bring it to fulfilment, for the proletariat is the only class that is thoroughly revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the toilers and the exploited in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely displacing it.

'The exploiting classes need political rule in order to maintain exploitation, i.e. in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority, and against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitations, i.e. in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the slave-owners of modern times — the landowners and the capitalists.' (*State and Revolution*)

The question of proletarian democracy versus bourgeois democracy remained in the Soviet Union after the October Revolution and after the setting up of the Soviet Republic, even though power had been seized by the proletariat and was vested in their Soviets. Lenin realised that the ideological transfer had also to be accomplished. In 1918 he wrote *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* in which he said to Kautsky — 'The fact that after a year's "experience" the Soviets have deprived the exploiters of the franchise shows that the Soviets are really organisations of the oppressed masses and not of social-imperialists and social-pacifists who have sold themselves to the bourgeoisie . . . Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy.' Only after the seizure of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can real democracy for the masses be assured, can they be free of government by bourgeois bureaucrats, bourgeois members of parliament, bourgeois judges.

The later history of the Soviet Union, now that power has been eroded from the hands of the proletariat and has slipped into those of a new managerial bourgeoisie, is sad proof by negative example of the truth of Lenin's analysis. By positive example, the Cultural Revolution in China has consolidated the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthened socialist democracy in that country.

On 'peaceful transition'

Lenin had repeatedly said that the Russian proletariat and its ally the peasantry must overthrow the bourgeoisie by violent action and repel its attempts at counter-revolution. He likewise warned the international working class that it must wage ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism — bourgeois or petty-bourgeois attitudes and tactics — which supported reaction. Since 'dictatorship' is the domination of one part of society over the rest of society and rests directly on force, Lenin pointed out that prevention of the change-over by the bourgeoisie by every means in its power is to be expected. To encourage hopes for a peaceful transition is to foster a dangerous delusion which would disarm the proletariat, weaken its will to struggle, and destroy the revolution. But Lenin was a dialectical materialist, not a dogmatist, and he examined this vital question closely:

'It cannot be denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, in some small country, for instance, after the social revolution had been accomplished in a neighbouring country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is possible, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states Socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the *only* programme of international Social-Democracy must be the recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals.' (*A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, 1916)

Clearly, Lenin never overlooked the fact that as long as there are classes in society there will be class conflict, and he never ceased to fight the revisionist reformism which propagated the theory of 'peaceful transition'. He saw that even after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie this class will continue to resist and even to intensify its resistance to the dictatorship of the proletariat. To talk about a 'state of the whole people', as Khrushchev did, while classes and class contradictions continue, is to play into the hands of reaction. 'The dictatorship of the proletariat,' said Lenin, 'is not the end of class struggle, but its continuation in new forms.' (Preface to *On the Deception of the People by the Slogans of Freedom and Equality*, June 1919)

QUOTATIONS

from Lenin's 'State and Revolution'

WE HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING the centenary of the birth of the great Lenin. He was born on 22 April 1870.

'Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.' (Stalin)

Lenin led the armed struggle of the proletarian revolution, overthrew the Tsarist imperialists and founded the first socialist state in the world.

The Great October Socialist Revolution led by Lenin has become the only road for the peoples of all countries to take for their liberation.

After the death of Stalin, who upheld the banner of Marxist-Leninism, the remnant counter-revolutionaries, headed by Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Kosygin, launched a political coup and seized state power in the Soviet Union. As soon as they had succeeded in overturning the dictatorship of the proletariat, they lost no time in allying the Soviet Union with imperialism, headed by the US imperialists, under the slogan of 'peaceful co-existence'.

Acting as a vanguard for the imperialists, they have split the communist movement on both a national and international scale. Their betrayal has unexpectedly provided the long-hidden enemies of the world proletarian revolutionary movement with a leadership centred in Moscow.

Just as imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, so the transition from socialism to social-imperialism is precisely the outcome of the restoration of capitalism ('peaceful evolution') in the Soviet Union by the counter-revolutionaries.

They place their counter-revolutionary faith in revising Marxism-Leninism, asserting that it is 'out of date'! But, fourteen years after the counter-revolutionary revisionists seized state power in the Soviet Union, it is more than ever before proved that Lenin's revolutionary theory and practice, as set out in *The State and State and Revolution*, far from being out of date, are as relevant to the present day as when first written.

'And now, when the world socialist revolution has begun, and when the revolution has succeeded in some countries, when the fight against world capital has grown particularly acute, this question of the state has acquired the greatest importance and has become, one might say, the most burning one, the focus of all present-day political questions and political disputes.'

(V. I. Lenin: *The State*.)

It is imperative that every genuine Marxist-Leninist study and propagate this well-known revolutionary truth again and again, and observe the way in which Mao Tse-tung creatively applies it to China's revolution. As a preliminary, it will be found useful to study the following selection of quotations from *State and Revolution*, which I have compiled and arranged.

C. T. S.

WHAT LENIN SAID IN 'STATE AND REVOLUTION'

The state is the product and the manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms . . .

. . . the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another . . .

A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

'The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without . . . Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.'

... the 'special repressive force' for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of toilers by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a 'special repressive force' for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat).

... the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this 'alienation' ...

... The toilers need a state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat is in a position to direct this suppression, carry it out; for the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the toilers and the exploited in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely displacing it.

... The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitation ...

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents on the one hand the organised, systematic use of violence against persons; but on the other hand it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism — the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy, and to substitute for them a *more* democratic state ma-

chine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of the armed masses of workers who develop into a militia in which the entire population takes part ...

... the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, in order to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a free people's state! So long as the proletariat still uses the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist ...

'... And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society,' (said Marx), 'nor yet the struggle between them ... What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production ... ; 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society ...'

The teaching on the class struggle, when applied by Marx to the question of the state and of the socialist revolution, leads of necessity to the recognition of the *political* rule of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of power shared with none and relying directly upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming transformed into the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing *all* the toiling and exploited masses for the new economic order.

Read

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TRADE UNIONS and MASS STRUGGLE

by Tom Hill

WHEN LENIN ATTACKED the German lefts for refusing to work in reactionary trade unions he was dealing with an outlook that is not very widespread in Britain at the moment, but which may increase as frustration grows due to the attitude of the unions.

The argument of the German lefts was to the effect that the trade unions were so reactionary that they prevented the workers from struggling effectively for better conditions and for the conquest of power by the working class; therefore, they said, new unions must be created which would be free from capitalist ideas and control.

The idea that any organisation in capitalist society can be entirely free from capitalist influence and penetration is a pipe dream and un-Marxist.

Lenin pointed out that this would not solve the problem of how to bring the workers over to a revolutionary standpoint because the fact must be faced that we have to work where the people are, not where we would like them to be. We also need to remember that we must start from their actual political level, not the level we imagine they should be at.

Lenin's criticism is as correct today as the day he made it, but changes have since taken place in the trade union movement and its relations with the State which compel us to ask the question, can the existing trade unions be transformed into revolutionary organisations of the working class?

In our opinion this is an unrealistic aim which is doomed to failure, and the pursuance of it only leads to disillusionment as one group of leaders is replaced by another 'more progressive' group, only to find that each group in turn betrays the interests of the class, although in new and more subtle ways.

The involvement of the trade unions in the workings of the capitalist system is constantly growing and there is very little difference between the two major parties on the advisability of encouraging and where necessary, forcing development along these lines.

The White Paper 'In Place of Strife' was an attempt to fix some guidelines in this respect.

Modern capitalism cannot do without trade unions

It has no other hope of controlling the workers in present conditions, when a maverick group can disrupt production in a very short space of time.

This means that the kind of trade unions that capitalism needs are ones which will establish discipline over their membership in order to prevent such 'anarchy'.

In order to create the conditions for this kind of authority in the trade unions it is necessary to make reasonably sure that the individuals and groups who wield it shall be protected from the wrath of the membership.

In most trade unions this is on the way to being established. Apart from officials who are appointed instead of elected, there is also the tendency to increase the period in office of those who must, under existing rules, stand for election periodically. As a result it is increasingly difficult to remove officials once they have become established.

However good an official may be, he is limited within the broad confines of the union constitution.

The argument is then put forward that this is a matter that can be rectified by ensuring that the right type of full-time official is elected so that the union will change its colour.

Apart from the fact that this is not possible in some unions under their constitution, it also ignores the question of uneven development which would make it likely that if one union did come under the leadership of revolutionaries, it would soon be done to death by the other members of the tribe.

The ETU was a case in point. The Haxel leadership, although far from revolutionary, adopted policies which were a source of irritation to other trade union leaders as well as sections of the capitalist class. Therefore the leadership had to go.

The fact that these leaders had isolated themselves from sections of the membership only provided the opportunity for the attack, it was not the reason for it.

In other circumstances other methods will be used, including expulsion from the TUC and the setting up of a rival union with adequate funds to poach its membership.

It is widely recognised that many good militants who become full-time officials get caught up in the machine after a few years. This tendency is likely to grow as salaries of full-time officials increase out of all relationship to those of the members they represent.

For these reasons we cannot envisage the British trade unions being converted into mass revolutionary organisations.

Only a union with a revolutionary form of organisation and a revolutionary theory to guide it could continue to develop in such circumstances.

As it is not possible to foresee the course of development in this respect we can only concentrate on considering the best methods of work in the situation as we know it.

A criticism of the line of the CPGB in the unions can help us learn by negative example.

The main concern of the Party is to secure the election of Party members to leading positions in the unions, and to do this it encourages shop stewards who have established themselves as local leaders to stand for election to full-time positions.

One result of this has been to denude the factory of leadership and weaken shop floor organisation. It also encourages the growth of opportunism within the Party, particularly in districts where there is the possibility of securing election.

Competition, often very sharp, takes place between individuals seeking Party backing, and in one instance in North London feeling was so strong that the unsuccessful aspirant encouraged a non-Party nonentity to stand, and because of the split in the Party, this person was elected.

The qualification necessary to obtain Party backing is, generally speaking, a degree of potential mass support for the candidate, and loyalty to the Party leadership.

On the surface these appear to be excellent criteria, but in practice, and because of the way in which the Communist Party interprets democratic

centralism, this often results in the nomination and election of a person who may be militant, but who is incapable or unwilling to take an independent political line within the Party for fear of falling into disfavour with the leading Party cadres and losing their support.

This has two effects. Firstly, such people can be safely nominated and elected to leading Party committees in the knowledge that they will not 'rock the boat'. The full-time union official has always been the strongest bulwark of the Party establishment.

The other effect has been that leading members of a union have been bulldozed by the Party into carrying out policies that the union membership would not accept, and the weakness of their political position has led to a greater reliance on organisational methods to deal with any opposition.

This is one of the reasons why the CPGB has been unable to increase its influence among the working class. It has ignored the fact that in terms of resolving contradictions among the workers, a victory due to superior organisation is not necessarily a political victory.

It is well known that on many occasions a relatively small active group of people can so arrange matters that their proposals will obtain a majority vote. All the trappings of a democratic decision may be present, but only one thing (the most important one at that) is missing. The people will vote one way with their hands and the opposite way with their feet. This is the reason why, in spite of 'correct' decisions taken in Congresses and even at mass meetings of workers, there has been little result in terms of mass activity because the people were not politically convinced.

As a consequence, the failure to gain mass support leads to an increased reliance on organisational methods. Incidentally, this can be seen in the USSR where the revisionists, unable to enlist the enthusiastic support of the people for their policies, are being forced to rely on ever more oppressive laws and edicts. One does not need to be reminded that this contains more than a germ of fascism within it.

In an attempt to overcome this isolation brought about by wrong policies and methods of work, the CPGB next proposes to establish 'Unity of the Left'. This has not meant any real change in methods but only that they are now used in the service of different masters, and directed against the opponents of the 'Unity of the Left' policy.

The CPGB is using the slogan of Unity of the Left to foist its policy of class collaboration on the workers under the guise of fighting against the right wing.

Jones of the T & GWU has recently stated that it is the desire of the unions represented in British Leyland to make that firm a show piece of British efficiency. This is in line with the general policy of these lefts who advocate working class cooperation in increasing the efficiency of capitalist industry so that the workers can get a share of a bigger cake.

In practice it is bringing about large scale redundancy and is being accepted in the belief that there will be improved conditions for those who are left.

Although the line of the CPGB is ostensibly one of opposition to such deals, its general policy makes it inevitable that it tails behind and conceals the main exponents of such deals.

This policy of class collaboration which the unions in general are following will bring them into conflict with the membership. Therefore the attitude towards trade unions, methods of work, and political outlook of workers engaged in struggle with the employers at factory level is of great importance.

We have summarized some recent experiences in this field in the hope that they will stimulate others to do likewise so that a revolutionary approach to the problem can be worked out.

A CASE-HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

Old methods of work and leadership die hard, but we had been inspired by the Cultural Revolution in China and the way it was led, so we resolved to try to apply the same methods of leadership and methods of work in the factory.

The real test came when our claim for a wage increase was turned down by the employer.

As a result of a study of the situation we came to the conclusion that even though the factory was only a small unit (350 manual workers) in a Combine which employed about 5,000 in the London area alone, and though the Employers' Federation was trying to get its member firms to take a stand against local wage demands, we could still win provided that we paid attention to five factors.

- (1) We remained united and determined,
- (2) We relied primarily on our own efforts,
- (3) We found the form of struggle most suited to the situation,

(4) We made use of the contradictions amongst the enemy,

(5) We paid even closer attention to correct methods of leadership.

Method of leadership

We at all times submitted the problems and facts to mass meetings of the members and insisted that we should hear their opinions before expressing our own in detail. We also opposed the taking of snap decisions. At the beginning this tended to create irritation amongst some who were impatient for the next move, but we explained that we had no intention of presenting them with ready-made solutions because these would reflect only the experience of the leaders. What we wanted was for them to express their views so that we could have the advantage of their experience also.

Even when the opinions expressed were extremely naive and out of keeping with the feelings of the majority, we insisted that they be listened to with respect.

If there appeared to be a strong minority viewpoint we kept the discussion going until a virtually unanimous decision was possible.

We saw our function of leadership as one in which we paid close attention to the opinions of the members so that we could analyse the positive and negative aspects or trends, and then carefully assist the development of those ideas which would unite the workers and take the struggle forward.

This is what we understand Mao Tse-tung to mean when he tells us to be concerned with living ideas.

We took great care to remember that these different trends were reflections of contradictions amongst the people, and would not become antagonistic if properly handled.

As a result, meetings (which were held every day during the dispute, and lasted from one to two hours) became forums for mass discussion and were far-ranging even though directly concerned with the dispute.

Decisions taken at these meetings came to be regarded as a pledge of personal involvement instead of a mere endorsement of decisions already arrived at by the leadership.

When it was decided to ban overtime and to work to rule it was put into practice with great enthusiasm and with people fully understanding each tactical step. Because of this the Management

were faced with innumerable small challenges which in total brought about a complete breakdown in their authority.

For tactical reasons the screw was given its first turn in areas where Management could not reasonably object. Having consolidated these positions the struggle was then taken into areas which Management disputed but did not consider suitable ground on which to make a stand. These areas were then extended as part of a continuous process.

As a result production, storage, and movement of goods were bottled up before Management decided to take counter action.

This took the form of each individual worker being told that he or she should inform the foreman that they were prepared to work normally. Failing this, they would not be paid.

Management were confident that this would cause a split, but as we had already decided that an injury to one would be considered an injury to all, not one person yielded to the threat and we continued to present ourselves for work each day on our terms.

The Management refused to negotiate with us under these conditions but after eight weeks they were compelled to do so and a wage increase was won before we relaxed our restrictions.

Thus by finding the correct method of leadership we were able to employ a method of struggle ideally suited to conditions in the factory, which would have been otherwise impossible.

Contradictions among the enemy

These arose from the desire of the management of each local unit to solve its own problems even at the expense of the others.

Although higher management tries to overcome this attitude it is unable to do so if the other conditions are favourable to the workers in struggle.

We took steps by means of leaflets to stimulate the workers in a neighbouring and larger factory in the same Group to demand wage increases.

Our experience over a number of years told us that it was pointless to concern ourselves with the shop stewards, so we concentrated on trying to influence the workers directly.

At each stage of their negotiations we intervened by means of leaflets and personal contacts so that the stewards were unable to reach a settlement behind the backs of the workers.

By this means we forced the management of the larger factory to increase their initial offer of an interim payment of £4 per month until Job Evaluation had been completed, to the final figure of £2-10-0 a week for skilled and £2-0-0 for other grades.

During this period we were able to explain the real purpose of Job Evaluation and to take advantage of the contradiction in one intermediate offer which would have given women workers a smaller increase than semi-skilled men.

This settlement in the other factory could have resulted in a feeling that we had come to the end of the road and would have to settle for the same amount, but because our people had accepted that the struggle could only be won by relying on our own efforts it had the opposite effect and increased our determination to win.

We then turned our attention once again to local management and after a further four weeks of struggle won a wage increase of £3 for skilled and £2-10-0 for other grades.

During this latter period when money was getting very tight for everyone the dominant mood became one of grim determination to win at all costs, which began to override the question of a wage increase.

In other words the question of class power (in an embryo form) became the dominant theme.

The politics of the struggle

We were all too aware of our mistakes in previous struggles when we either avoided politics altogether, or made the equally serious mistake of trying to inject political questions artificially into the struggle.

Then we had confused politics with Party politics and only succeeded in arousing people to defend their Party loyalties, thus causing splits along these lines of demarcation. or attempted to avoid this error by evading problems that demanded a political answer, thus weakening the struggle.

We came to the conclusion that the fundamental lesson which should emerge from the struggle should be the basic one of who wields political power. This immediately takes it into the field of class politics and away from the sham battle of party politics.

The class character of the State

We did not have any confrontation with the police, but mass attendance at the Unemployment and Social Security offices provided the object lessons and material for showing that they are for the pur-

pose of blunting the struggle against some of the more obvious effects of the capitalist system.

The conclusion was quickly drawn that if you were a casualty of the system you would be assisted as long as you remained docile, but if you fought back the ruling class would do their best to starve you into submission.

Role of the Press and Radio

It would have been easy to have obtained a decision to refrain from making statements to these media, but we felt that any misconceptions which might arise in other people's minds would be of secondary importance to the lessons which our own people could learn from direct experience.

After representatives of the Press and Radio had been on the scene it was relatively easy to demonstrate the difference between the statements we had made and the distorted versions that reached the public.

It was quickly understood that the reason for this lay in the class solidarity of the wealthy.

Role of the Union

In relation to the Union the attitude was maintained that its intervention would be welcome as long as it was willing and able to assist us to obtain what we had set out to achieve, but that we did not intend to allow the conduct of the dispute to be taken out of our hands.

Formulae for a resumption of negotiations came and went, but with each passing day it became evident that the employers were placing their hopes on the Officials getting us back to work in conformity with the provisions of the Package Deal agreement which forbade such claims for wage increases without strings.

In spite of this the workers proved to be too united and determined to be frightened, and finally it was the employers who had to give ground.

Dispute benefit

A mass lobby of Union Headquarters took place to demand that the dispute be discussed by Executive Council and that dispute benefit be paid.

As expected by the stewards, payment was refused, but it was intimated that it would be forthcoming after the termination of the dispute. When the workers protested that money is needed during a dispute they were told that when Carron was in the Chair dispute benefit was rarely paid at all.

The implication was that the Union was now further to the left, whereas the true position is that

it is giving ground only because of mass pressure from below. Welcome as this is, it is not quite the same thing as a change in political attitude on the part of a majority of the Executive. The important question of payment of dispute benefit during a dispute is still being avoided for fear of offending the employers.

The danger in such a situation is that unless the reasons for this shift are explained, it can give credibility to the claim of the revisionists that their policy of 'Unity of the Left' is bringing results.

Facing problems politically

Although cash is always welcome, even after the termination of a dispute, the actual receipt of benefit was not a crucial question as far as continuing the struggle was concerned. It was used as a means of demonstrating where a policy of class collaboration leads, and served to strengthen the determination to win our demands.

When Executive Council made its recommendation to us to return to work, it could have had a wholly negative effect, but by developing a spirit of self reliance from the beginning of the dispute we had secured a base from which we could explain in an objective manner why the union was not giving us the unstinting support we had a right to expect. We were thus able to get away from fruitless discussions about the machinations and failures of individuals and have a long and fruitful discussion on the political reasons for such a state of affairs.

Conclusions

The history of the trade union movement in capitalist countries shows that as the crisis of capitalism deepens unions may appear to become more militant in the sense that they respond to mass pressure, but they always use their influence to limit the struggle to the achievement of 'practical objectives', that is, to demands which are realisable within the existing system.

The experience of the French workers in 1968 shows that the capitalist class can ride these storms by conceding wage increases which are almost completely wiped out by rising prices in a relatively short space of time.

The other aspect of the trade unions is that the changing needs of capitalism are pushing them in the direction of becoming more authoritarian.

The deepening crisis of capitalism, which expresses itself in many ways, but particularly in a drive to maintain profits at the expense of the living

standards of the mass of the people, is already bringing about increased militancy and willingness to struggle. As the crisis increases in scope and intensity it will sharpen the contradictions between those engaged in struggle, on the one hand, and the trade union organisation on the other. This will in turn intensify contradictions which exist in the trade union structure itself.

What is the Marxist standpoint?

Do we try to resolve these contradictions by adapting the trade unions to the changing needs of the capitalist class, and then appeal to the workers to accept these changes as a necessary condition for preserving the trade unions?

Or do we uncompromisingly instigate and support mass struggle and utilise the contradictions thus brought out into the open to threaten the destruction of the trade unions if they show signs of becoming too authoritarian?

The first alternative will undoubtedly hinder the working class in its advance towards the conquest of State power, and must therefore be rejected.

The second alternative is concerned both with resisting the degeneration of the unions into Labour Front organisations of a fascist character and, on the other hand, building a mass movement that will go outside the limitations of purely trade union struggle.

A new mass movement will not develop peacefully alongside the older trade union organisation, but will at times come into sharp conflict with it.

We see this as a dialectical process of unity and contradiction, unity and struggle.

What do we mean by this?

The needs of the mass struggle must take absolute precedence over the 'need' to maintain trade union practices, procedures and organisation.

On occasions when these contradictions become sharp the 'old hands' will sling charges of 'weakening' the unions, but these can be met and people won to our point of view as long as we are capable of giving political answers and do not get bogged down in arguing about organisational detail. In other words, put politics in command.

Militants in leading positions in the trade unions will undoubtedly be placed in difficult positions when faced with mass demands and 'unconstitutional' actions on the one hand, and the constitutional limits on the other.

This is a contradiction which they must resolve. It cannot be avoided by any toning down of the mass struggle.

Are official functions of no consequence?

During a struggle over a purely economic issue or a question of trade union principle, a good, competent and militant official can mean the difference between defeat and victory. A militant is also more likely to be influenced by revolutionary considerations than a right wing element.

Therefore we would support the election or appointment of a militant who has a record of struggle against the employers, but with the qualifying conditions already mentioned above.

What of union committees composed of members working at the bench? We need to pay attention to the composition of these, but not to the extent of trying to pack them. They are important because they can be influenced by the militancy and struggle at the places of work and we should not lose any opportunity to do so.

The greatest mistake that could be made, however, would be to allow these union-based committees to assume overall leadership of a struggle.

The experience of the Minority Movement which flourished after the 1914-18 war shows that a movement that is independent of the trade unions in an organisational sense can build up support and influence. But if its objective is simply to influence the trade unions and seek positions in them, it becomes absorbed in the trade union establishment and ceases to be a potentially revolutionary force.

This is the question on which the reformist and the revolutionary part company.

The opportunists, as well as those who are genuinely unconvinced, will be in favour of 'integration' with the trade union movement, because, if powerful enough, it could well provide a vehicle for their ambition, but it would be the death of the movement.

What kind of movement do we want?

There is a growing number of workers who are vaguely aware that the trade unions are not all they should be, and who themselves take an extremely good class line when dealing with practical problems. They find this class feeling is blunted by the general approach of 'old hands' who in one way or another have been influenced by either the reformist ideas of the Labour Party or the revisionist ideas of the CPGB.

(concluded on inside back cover)

WHY WE WON'T VOTE LABOUR

A Reply to Dick Jones by the Brent Marxist Industrial Group

IT CAN HARDLY be disputed that Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism' is the work most frequently quoted by the revisionists when they seek to excuse or cloak their betrayal of Marxism. We are not of course implying that it is in itself a revisionist document, or that the author of the article 'As a Rope Supports a Hanging Man' is a revisionist.

We maintain that although the tactical principles outlined in Lenin's work are still valid conditions have so changed that most of the specific tactics advocated have outlived their usefulness. This is to be expected with the passage of time. It is not the fault of Lenin if we insist on using old tactics in new and different conditions.

The main purpose of 'Left-Wing Communism' was to encourage the adoption of correct tactics by the Communist Parties in order that they could more speedily destroy the influence of the reformists.

As far as Britain is concerned the whole issue centres around the question of who shall be in the effective leadership of the working class. In this respect, how different is the situation now from what it was in the early 1920's?

Then, the more politically conscious workers were in the main strongly influenced by the reformist ideas put forward by the Labour Party and readily accepted its leadership. It was also widely believed that the necessary changes in society could be brought about by getting legislation passed through Parliament.

Lenin expressed the opinion that the best way to assist the workers to overcome these reformist illusions would be to encourage them to achieve the aims which they had set themselves, namely the return to parliament of a Labour majority and the formation of a Labour Government.

The sole reason for this tactic was to hasten the situation in which the working class would reject the leadership of the reformists and come over to a more revolutionary position.

The success of the tactic depended upon the existence of a mass movement fighting for working

class demands, so that the failure of the parliamentary leaders to implement these demands would hasten their own exposure. It also required that the revolutionary elements should persistently explain the reasons why these leaders inevitably betray the working class. This involves a consistent exposure of reformist ideas in such a way that they are replaced by revolutionary ideas as part of a continuous process of development.

The newly formed CPGB failed in this task, with the result that the short term, immediate demands of the movement came to be seen as ends in themselves that, given patience, could be obtained peacefully by means of legislation enacted by a future Labour government.

As a result, the energies of the movement became primarily directed towards obtaining a Labour majority in Parliament and the tactical demands came to be adopted as the strategy of the movement. The CPGB formalised this position in 'The British Road to Socialism'.

As long as this attitude continues to dominate the movement it is inevitable that the mass struggle will be regarded only as auxiliary to the manoeuvres of the parliamentarians, instead of parliamentary tactics being subordinated to the needs of the mass struggle outside.

This creates a situation in which mass struggle is frowned upon and even actively discouraged in case it may lose electoral support. The classic example of this was the official of the AEU (as it then was) who advised some strikers to go back to work in case it prejudiced the chances of a parliamentary candidate. The rub is that he was a prominent member of the CPGB and it was their candidate that he was concerned about.

As long as this attitude predominates, the effective leadership of the movement remains in the hands of the parliamentarians.

The betrayal by the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 were excused on the grounds that they were hindered from carrying out Labour policies because they depended upon the parliamentary support of the Liberals.

This was of course only an excuse, not a reason. The 1945 and 1950 Labour governments, backed by a Labour majority, were not able to use this excuse when they too failed to carry out their election promises.

It is important to note that after a period in office, when the Labour party reverts to the role of 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition' there always appears to be a shift to the left and a growth in the influence of the left wing of the Party. The general object of this exercise is to try to prove that the Labour Party has learned from the 'mistakes' of the previous Labour governments, and if re-elected will resolutely oppose the monopolies, redistribute the national income in favour of the poor, repeal anti-trade-union legislation etc.

Thus the role of the 'Left' (and this includes the CPGB) is to keep alive the illusion about the Labour Party moving to the left, so that support can be obtained for the return of yet another 'right wing' Labour government which will inevitably carry out essentially the same policies as its predecessors.

Following the experience of the 1945 and 1950 Labour governments, enthusiasm for Labour leadership was wearing thin and it was only when 'left-winger' Harold Wilson came into the leadership that illusions began to grow again and another Labour majority was obtained in Parliament.

The deepening crisis of British imperialism and the consequent restriction which it placed on the freedom of the ruling class to manoeuvre made it inevitable that disillusionment would be rapid, and it is significant how quickly support for the Wilson government evaporated.

Our contention is that the tactics advocated by Lenin have achieved their purpose, that masses of workers have recognised the treachery of the Labour leaders and are now actively engaged in objectively opposing their leadership.

In the period of the first two post-war Labour governments the leadership of the Labour Party was generally accepted and it was able to carry out the temporary suppression of the Malayan national liberation struggle, play a leading part in the establishment of NATO, support German rearmament, and institute a wage freeze without encountering active, widespread opposition. Support for struggles in defence of living standards was weakened by the desire of workers to avoid 'embarrassing' the Labour Government.

This is no longer the case; workers are now prepared to fight for things that are in direct opposition to those desired by the Labour government and the majority of the trade union leaders.

This struggle results in an intensification of the contradictions between 'left' and 'right' trade union leaders, between trade union leaders and the Labour government, and between the Labour Party membership and the Labour government.

These contradictions arise from the conflicts of interest between them when they consider the most effective ways of attempting to contain the growing struggle. They are an indication of the extent to which social democracy has already been discredited.

In view of this, the question needs to be asked, how long must the policy of 'voting Labour to smash Labour' be carried on?

There will never be a time, as long as capitalism exists, when everyone has rejected the leadership of the Labour Party, therefore acceptance of this policy as a permanent tactic can lead to an infinite number of variations, each leaving the leadership of the struggle in the hands of social democrats of one shade or another.

For instance a Labour defeat at the next General election would again provide the motive for a 'shift to the left'. As it would be unlikely that such a move within the existing Labour Party would cut much ice with many workers it is possible that 'Unity of the left' as advocated by the CPGB might well provide the basis for a new alliance.

Would we then be expected to assist such candidates into parliament in order to expose them?

This whole concept is outdated because, for one thing, it fails to take into account the development of political consciousness of large sections of workers who refuse to give their loyalty to any of the existing political parties, but who judge people by their actions, not their promises.

It is extremely likely that large numbers of workers will continue to vote Labour at the next election. The fact that they do so, yet actively oppose Labour policies shows that although they may regard a Labour government as the lesser of the two evils, they certainly do not accept its leadership. That is the point.

Participation in Parliamentary elections

Whatever our attitude towards Labour candidates, it may be argued that Marxists should themselves participate in Parliamentary elections in the sense of putting forward candidates.

Lenin made the important distinction between the obsolescence of capitalist parliamentary democracy in an historical sense, and whether it is obsolete in the shorter term political sense. He posed

the question, 'Is it obsolete for the masses?' In our opinion a further question needs to be asked, 'Is it obsolete for those monopoly sections of the capitalist class which are becoming more dominant in Britain?'

In the 19th and the early part of the 20th century parliamentary democracy provided the best political framework for the development of capitalism in Britain. It allowed the fullest democracy within the capitalist class, and also provided a means whereby demands for the vote put forward by other classes could be conceded with actual benefit to the ruling class in terms of the political stability of the system.

Since that time the general crisis of capitalism has deepened and the concentration of economic power into fewer hands is inevitably leading towards a corresponding concentration of political power.

For these sections of the capitalist class parliamentary democracy has outlived its usefulness and is proving to be an obstacle to its further development.

Government decisions on all important questions are taken in consultation with the main power groups involved, and only then are MPs informed. The monopolies and the Banks have a great deal more influence over Government decisions than those MPs who are supposed to represent the interests of the people.

Parliamentarians may complain, but they cannot prevent this development because it derives from changes within the capitalist system itself.

Increasing numbers are coming to realise that parliament is ineffective, and are understandably losing interest in it.

This is shown in the declining proportion of the electorate which exercise the right to vote in parliamentary elections.

1950	1951	1955	1959	1964	1966
84%	82.5%	76.8%	78.7%	77.1%	75.8%

Voting in by-elections during the past twelve months shows that this trend is continuing.

In our opinion the lack of belief in parliamentary activity is more widespread than the voting figures show.

In this respect the principle contradiction appears to be between the widespread distrust of people who occupy positions of influence and authority within the establishment on the one hand, and, on the other, an almost superstitious belief that they cannot be dispensed with.

It is a contradiction between people's experience, which tells them that the system absorbs any individual who becomes involved in its administration and does not rely for his living on taking part in productive work, and the body of ideas instilled since childhood, which makes them feel, in a vague sort of way, dependent upon some higher authority.

This contradiction cannot be resolved by claiming that candidates belonging to a new political party would behave any differently from the existing ones. This flies in the face of all experience.

It must be remembered that the British people have had an additional fifty years of experience of parliaments and parliamentarians since the days of Lenin, and although the mass of them do not yet see the alternative, it should not be assumed that they lack the capacity to understand what is taking place.

The present situation can be summarised as one in which the old party influences and loyalties are breaking down, but no new leadership has yet emerged to take their place.

Because of the absence of a unifying proletarian ideology and leadership the anger and frustration of the people are expressed in spontaneous outbursts against this or that aspect of capitalist exploitation.

This is a positive feature in that it contributes to the instability of the system and the militancy of the industrial workers stimulates other strata to take direct action on their own behalf.

Its negative aspect is that in the absence of a strong proletarian leadership the way is left open for these non-proletarian classes to be misled by capitalist propaganda into believing that the militancy of the industrial workers is going too far, and that a strong impartial government is necessary so that law and order can be restored.

As the General Election approaches the whole of the capitalist propaganda machine will be working overtime to convince people that they will be really shaping their own destinies by using their vote.

We should not get involved in a campaign to get mass abstentions; this is not important at this stage. What is important is that we use the opportunity to point out that the capitalist state machine will continue to function whether people vote or not.

The failure of Parliament to promote the interests of the people effectively must be explained in a class way, that is to say we must combat the conception that it is all a question of 'the weakness of human nature', for if we do not do so we open the

way to the fascist idea that a strong government or superman is needed in order to exercise control over lesser mortals — for their own good, of course.

We should be able to help people to draw the conclusion from their own experience that all governments in capitalist society are for the express purpose of maintaining the privileged position of all those who own the wealth.

The class attitude towards Parliament should be extended to cover all forms of capitalist authority because it is only in this way that we shall bar the way to that ultimate form of capitalist authority, a fascist dictatorship.

In order to weaken and finally defeat this kind of authority it is necessary to cultivate contempt for it based on an understanding that it is unjust, against the interests of the majority of the people, and as a result is doomed by history.

'All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful' (*Mao Tse-tung*).

The movement towards fascism is taking place as the monopoly sections of the capitalist class come to the conclusion that parliamentary democracy, notwithstanding its usefulness in previous stages of capitalist development, is now proving an obstacle to their drive to establish complete dominance over the rest of the population, including the smaller capitalists.

In the face of this growing power of the monopolists the CPGB and its 'left' allies take the view that the masses of the population must be encouraged to use Parliament as a rallying point for all the anti-monopoly forces. The theory behind this is that in this way the mass of the people will unite around parliament, establish a progressive government, and isolate the reactionaries. This is the core of 'The British Road to Socialism'.

It has more in keeping with the theories of Herr Duhring than those of Karl Marx.

These revisionists who lay out blueprints for people to follow, are so reformist in outlook that they cannot conceive any other way of advance than through Parliament. Consequently, when people insist on going their own way and disregard the blueprint, these revisionists blame the apathy of the people rather than acknowledging their own inability to understand the workings of the dialectical process in society.

They choose to ignore the fact that the British people have learned many lessons since Lenin wrote his articles on Britain, and imagine that their revisionist ideas will continue to hold back class struggle by diverting discontent into parliamentary and other constitutional channels.

When we say that the CPGB is essentially reformist, we mean that it distorts the Marxist dialectical approach and teaches that socialism will be brought about by a simple accumulation of progressive forces which will, when numerically strong enough, tackle the monopolies.

This is undialectical because it does not regard unity as a process of development through struggle, but simply as the result of a series of compromises between the industrial workers and other classes.

If widely accepted this would condemn the industrial workers to tail behind other classes instead of leading them.

It also fails to take into account the fact that the reactionary forces too will continue to grow and develop, resulting in an increased polarisation of forces, with the centre becoming weaker and more ineffectual. As it is these centre forces which form the bulwark of parliamentarism it is plain that Parliament will become less important to the main forces involved, the working class and the monopoly sections of the capitalist class.

In 'The British Road to Socialism' there is the underlying assumption that the reactionary forces will lay dormant until such time as parliament can become 'the sovereign will of the people'.

The Marxist proletarian line must be based on Mao Tse-tung's teachings on dialectics. It must be based on the understanding that the interests of the working class and those of the capitalist class are mutually exclusive, that they form two separate aspects of the fundamental contradiction in present day society, that each aspect contains its own internal contradictions and is subject to its own process of development, and that reactionary forces on the verge of extinction display a viciousness, born of desperation, which they have not seemed capable of hitherto.

In present circumstances, when the revolutionary upsurge throughout the world is increasing in scope and intensity, the British people are already showing signs that they will not lag behind, and we must take into account the effects on the mass struggle of any flirting with Parliament.

We have already expressed our opinion that Parliament is becoming obsolete as far as the two main

contenders for power are concerned. It is also our opinion that in view of the increasing militancy of the industrial working class and its positive effects on the activities of the white-collar and professional workers, even the slightest danger of diverting this militancy into parliamentary or other constitutional channels must be resolutely opposed.

The whole of our (at the moment) very weak and divided forces must be concentrated on building the fighting unity of the industrial workers, and, with them as the nucleus, a broader unity of all the anti-monopoly forces on the principle of unity against the main enemy and of struggle against non-proletarian ideas amongst our allies.

The monopolists will pursue the struggle, not only by using their considerable economic strength to 'win friends and influence people', but also by obtaining more direct control of the organs of state, particularly the armed forces, police, etc.

Our present task is to prepare the ideological and political groundwork for creating mass resistance to these reactionary forces whilst at the same time fostering all forms of day-to-day struggle on issues which concern the livelihood of the people.

TRADE UNIONS & MASS STRUGGLE

(continued from p. 20)

If these workers are brought into contact with other workers who have a similar class approach to problems and who are not burdened with ideas about 'procedure' and other management-union set-ups, there will be a basis on which a strong movement can be built.

During the course of exchanging experiences and taking part in joint activity, the problems thrown up must be dealt with in a political way.

An example. At a certain stage in getting a factory organised, a union official can be an asset and is usually brought in. As a result of his involvement there are two negative possibilities: he will be relied on whenever a new problem arises, thus weakening or stifling at birth the spirit of self reliance; and any likely lads will be drawn into the union machine via the District Committee, etc.

For people with a purely trade union outlook this will seem a very positive development, therefore the politics of the situation must be explained in such a way that the negative aspects of trade unions as class weapons are understood as well as the more obvious positive ones.

The reason why the trade union movement can swallow up militants by the thousand and still pursue a policy of class collaboration will need to be explained in a class way. This will involve discussion of the workings of the capitalist state and society, and how they are changing.

In other words, politics enables a person to see an immediate local problem in its correct perspective.

Abstract politics may seem worthwhile to arm-chair students of philosophy. They are useless to the working class.

We must try in this way to assist the growth of groups of workers who are not necessarily Marxists, and who indeed may consider themselves to be uninterested in politics, but are close to the people and capable of interpreting their desires and needs.

As long as the general orientation is objectively against capitalist exploitation we should not try to lay down other guidelines.

As the class struggle intensifies it will give rise to contradictions within this movement. It will be at these times that Marxists will have to demonstrate their understanding of dialectics by formulating policies which will resolve contradictions among the people in such a way that the general orientation of the struggle remains correct.

If we are to be successful we must, above all, have a correct revolutionary theory to guide us.

There is no doubt that the person who has developed and raised the theory of Marxism to its highest level to date is Mao Tse-tung.

His writings, such as 'On Practice', 'On Contradiction', 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', and the documents relating to the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, are indispensable guides if studied with specific, practical problems in mind.

A great deal of lip service is paid to the Thought of Mao.

It is time we put it into practice.

National liberation struggles

A communication from Tusher Sarkar

ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL problems in the Marxist-Leninist movement is the failure to assign to the movements for solidarity with national liberation struggles their proper role in the general struggle for socialism. On this question, there are two diametrically opposed views:

- 1 The strategy of the British revolution has to be framed solely around movements in support of national liberation struggles of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and L. America. This is basically the economic and political struggles of the industrial workers.

(Understandably, the 'International Marxist Group' holds that in the present situation in Britain solidarity movements should be the main form of political struggles and are 'models' for workers who are to be aroused by the example of these struggles! In fact this Trotskyite organisation looks upon such struggles as mere sources of recruits.)

- 2 As the contradiction between national liberation struggles and U.S. imperialism is an external contradiction, therefore solidarity movements are a matter of 'secondary' importance. This view is advocated mainly by the industrial comrades.

(The same conclusion is drawn by the 'International Socialism' group which considers that the struggles of the peasants and workers of the semi-feudal countries are insignificant and far less important than the struggles of the workers of the metropolitan capitalist countries.)

Both these views are erroneous and reflections of petty-bourgeois subjectivism.

On the basis of the inter-relationships of the four major contradictions and on identification of the principal contradiction (which influences all other contradictions) in the world, the Communist Party of China correctly pointed out in 'A proposal concerning the general line of the International Communist Movement' that the whole cause of the world proletarian revolution to-day hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Asia, Africa and L. America. Such struggles are "not merely a matter of regional significance but one of overall importance for the whole cause of proletarian world revolution", the

document stated. The strategy of the revolution in any country therefore will have to establish, in concrete terms, its relationship to this central struggle in the world arena.

It would, of course, be ridiculous to demand that the struggles between capital and labour in each country have to be subordinated to the solidarity movements. Doubtless, the basis of struggles for socialism in any country lies in the internal contradictions of the given country. What is then the role of solidarity movements?

Solidarity movements are direct political struggles and are needed in addition to continuous exposure of Monopoly Capital in daily economic struggles. In the conditions of to-day these are to help the workers to recognise the root and nature of the present crisis of imperialism. The wage-freeze, devaluation of the pound, curbing the democratic rights of the workers, racialism, parochial nationalism are all measures by which British monopoly capitalism is trying to survive in the days of a renewed general crisis of world imperialism (resulting from its conflict with the national liberation struggles). It is also necessary to point out here that revolution in Britain is intimately connected with the revolutionary struggles in the British colonies and neo-colonies.

It is impossible to recognise these truths only in daily economic struggles — and here is the role of solidarity movements which without directly taking part in the 'chemical reaction of revolution' help to accelerate the revolutionary process. Thus we see to-day that Vietnam has aroused a complete new generation of activists and has given birth to a widespread new political consciousness which will go down in history as the main catalyst in the revolutionary struggles in the late sixties all over the world.

Thus, treating movements in support of national liberation struggles merely as matters of relative importance is purely subjective. Their proper role can only be understood in the dialectical relationship between national liberation struggles and struggles of the British workers for socialism, both fighting the common enemy. While internal causes are the basis for change, the external causes are the conditions for change. Which one is secondary?