Terror could not be so total in rural areas, and it was there that the first waves of future revolution began to well up.

The Comintern Executive increasingly came round to the view that struggle by the Party for power throughout the country in the prevailing circumstances was utterly futile, and that the Party ought first to win a springboard—an area that it could hold under its control. During the years of revolution the actions of urban workers had stirred the peasant movement. And now, after the defeat of the revolution, there were still several "troubled areas" in the vast Chinese countryside. The peasants had not forgotten that it had been the Communists more than anyone else who has defended their interests. Wide sections of the peasants, insofar as they were informed of the communist movement, accepted it as a movement opposed to landowners' dominance, in favour of peasant power and of organising independent peasant armed forces.

The Comintern Executive tirelessly oriented the Party leadership on re-establishing and strengthening the proletarian nucleus of the Party. But the task turned out to be unachievable. The reason lay not simply in the savage anti-worker terror campaign and not simply in the reformist worker legislation of the Kuomintang. Non-proletarian elements put enormous pressure on the Party. Historical experience has shown that re-education of the non-proletarian masses in the spirit of genuine Marxism-Leninism is an exceedingly complex and responsible task whose resolution is possible only by an ideologically tempered and politically experienced vanguard of the working class.

The Comintern insistently recommended Chinese Communists to see that the Party was led by proletarian revolutionaries; it oriented the Party on setting up a worker-peasant Red Army. Yet more and more leaders of lumpen sections of the peasants and officers from militarist detachments, scattered during revolutionary years, were coming into the Party leadership. Naturally, they did not have experience of proletarian struggle and had no intention to learn from it. The historic responsibility for the Party's internal change lay with its "new leadership" which not only did not stop the slide towards petty-bourgeois ideology, but itself came to be its vehicle and disseminator.

The Comintern condemned the leftist deviation of Li Li-san who, together with Mao Zedong, was trying to incite an armed conflict between Japan and the USSR so as to turn it into a world war; only decisive intervention of the Comintern forced them to give up these intentions and saved the Communist Party of China from being wiped out (Li Li-san and Mao Zedong had planned in 1930 to carry out reckless actions in several major cities with the aim of seizing power in the country); the Comintern firm line obliged the Maoist leadership of the Party to favour the establishment of an anti-imperialist front; thanks to the Comintern, the Communist Party of China was able to strengthen its positions; the Comintern was taking measures to prevent the Communist Party of China from being diluted by petty-bourgeois and exploiter elements.

6. COMINTERN AND SOME QUESTIONS OF THE COMMUNIST AND NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE ARAB EAST AND AFRICA

Practically all the oppressed countries of Asia and Africa in which liberation movements developed during the 1920s and 1930s came within the purview of the Comintern. The scope and forms of these movements, the composition of their participants differed. They all, however, had an anti-colonial bias; the Comintern regarded them as important factor of the world anti-imperialist struggle.

In working out recommendations for Communists and national-revolutionary forces of a particular country and region, the Comintern relied on fundamental Leninist tactical and strategic principles and took full account of local conditions. "Diversity in unity" and "unity in diversity" were typical of Comintern policy. Confirmation of that are the theoretical conclusions of the Comintern in regard to the revolutionary process in such varying parts of the oppressed world as the Arab East, South Africa and Tropical Africa.

The anti-imperialist movement in the Arab countries considerably came to life in the first half of the 1930s. Spontaneous uprisings of the lower stations of society took place in Egypt in the period 1930-1931, aimed mainly against the British oppressors; in the mid-1930s the strike movement also acquires wide scope there. Forces opposing British rule consolidated themselves in Iraq. The democratic party, named Neo-Destour, advocating national independence and better conditions for the peasants, came into existence in Tunisia in the early 1930s. In Algeria the demand for independence was advanced by the North African Star national liberation organisation; and the Popular Front formed in France in 1935 had its organisations
here among Europeans and Algerians alike. These organisations fought against local fascists and opposed Italian aggression in Ethiopia. The anti-imperialist struggle came to life in Syria in the mid-1930s in which workers, peasants, students, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie all acted in a united front. A general strike of workers supported by peasant actions shook Damascus in January-March 1936.

In connection with the stepping up of the anti-imperialist struggle in Arab countries, the Comintern paid more attention to the development of the communist movement in the Arab East. The Executive Committee Secretariat under the chairmanship of Georgi Dimitrov gave careful and comprehensive consideration of the question on 29 February 1936.

The most important document adopted by the Secretariat as a result of the discussion was the detailed resolution “Tasks of Communist Parties of Arab Countries in the Fight for a Popular Anti-Imperialist Front”.

The ECCI Secretariat noted that despite the growth in the national liberation and labour movement in Arab countries, the communist parties of those countries for a long time remained isolated groups divorced from the masses. That was due, the document said, above all to the fact that in their tactics the communist parties were “extremely sectarian” and “standing aloof from the Arab national liberation movement”. The Comintern drew their attention to the need unswervingly to follow Lenin’s propositions on backing the national liberation movement and national-revolutionary in particular. “The people have not seen in our parties organisations fighting above all for the national independence of Arab peoples,” said the Comintern Executive’s resolution. “They have regarded them as organisations striving for remote goals related to socialist revolution and expressed in abstract slogans which the people cannot understand. Our parties have tried to impose communist slogans on national-revolutionaries and, sharply attacking national-reformists, denying their influence among the people, precluding the possibility of joint action with them against the onslaught of imperialism have lumped them all together with the imperialists.” The communist parties underestimated work among Arab working people. Only in Syria did Communists pursue a policy of “Arabisation” (i.e., winning the support of the mass of Arab working people) of the communist movement, took certain positions in the trade union and strike movement and played an active part in the popular struggle for national liberation.

“Communist parties of Arab countries,” the resolution went on to say, “must appreciate that the campaign against imperialist tyranny and for national independence is the dominant question in the whole of their activity and an indicator of their political standing in the country, and that the fate of the communist parties in Arab countries and the strengthening of their positions among the Arab working class depend on a proper approach to that question and activity in the struggle for national independence. Communists in the Arab countries must profoundly comprehend that they are responsible for the destiny of their people and their country, that they have a responsibility for the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the contention for national independence and social emancipation, that they are the inheritors and protectors of the best national and cultural traditions of their people.”

The resolution also listed partial demands which parties were recommended to support: elementary political rights and freedoms, establishment of self-governing bodies, national schools, abolition of extraordinary laws for Arabs. The Comintern Executive counselled the parties vigorously to fight to draw the peasants into the national liberation movement.

The communist parties “must create all the conditions for organising an Arab popular front in each country. To do this they must radically change their attitude to national-revolutionary organisations and parties and their tactics and approach to national-reformists. Communists of Arab countries need to ensure close cooperation with national-revolutionaries and joint action with national-reformist organisations, to support demands of those organisations directed against imperialism, to penetrate those organisations and encourage movements for a popular anti-imperialist front within their ranks. Simultaneously they need to promote an ideological campaign against national-reformism as an ideology and practice of collaboration with imperialism, and a campaign against any manifestation of opportunist distortion of the popular-front tactics in the sense of collusion and conciliation with imperialism”.

Referring to the resolution of its Seventh Congress on the report read by Georgi Dimitrov, the Comintern Executive advised Arab Communists to work within the existing reformist labour unions and to encourage their conversion into class organisations. Comintern recommendations orienting them on the anti-war struggle were of great importance to Arab Communists. The resolution noted that by opposing imperialist actions in converting Arab countries into their military strategic bases, into sources of cannon fodder, and consigning Arab peoples to starvation...
and deprivation, the communist parties could and had to mobilise the widest united front against the imperialist war. At the same time, they had to mobilise the Arab peoples to back the struggle of the Abyssinian people for their independence against Italian fascist aggression.

The resolution contained recommendations for individual Arab countries as well. So, Syrian Communists were recommended to campaign for concerted action of all forces and parties opposed to imperialism, and to organise a broad non-partisan movement in the form of a far-flung network of organisations giving voice to the urgent demands of various sections of the working people. In Palestine the Communist Party was advised to conduct work also among Jewish working people as well as among the Arab population. The Comintern Executive saw the major objective in Iraq as setting up a mass national-revolutionary movement, uniting national-revolutionary elements into a mass legal party with a broad democratic programme. In the opinion of the Executive, the most salient condition for the Communist Party's successful work in Egypt was to have a correct, realistic policy in relation to the Wafd, the party led by the national bourgeoisie. The Wafd was very broad in its makeup and was “the most powerful national party in the country with an enormous impact on the people”; Communists were recommended to support the Wafid's anti-imperialist demands and be vigilant about attempts by leaders of the Wafd to compromise with imperialism at the expense of Egyptian people's interests.

French Communists were advised to follow the resolute line of Arabising the communist movement in Algeria and Tunisia. As the resolution put it, “French comrades must remember Lenin's words addressed to Russian Communists of the Transcaucasia, that they were helpmates, not leaders or nannies”. The Comintern Executive felt that Algerian Communists should join the North African Star national-revolutionary organisation, which had “undisputed influence among the Arab people” and to unite the people around the slogans of that organisation. Through the North African Star the Communist Party was to work on establishing committees of a united Arab popular front embracing such Arab national parties as the Ulem Association, the Federation of Elected Muslims, League of Arab Schoolteachers, all student associations, etc.

In Tunisia, said the resolution of the ECCI Secretariat, Arab national personnel of the Communist Party should join the existing mass revolutionary national party Neo-Destour to work within it. Tunisian Communists were advised to encourage the building of organisations of that party in town and country, actively to support left-wing elements in the organisation's leadership, mobilise the people on the basis of its slogans. By concentrating their activity within the Destour, Communists should at the same time retain the independence of their organisation, shoring up and extending their ranks, so that their prestige increased among Arab working people. The Comintern Executive stressed that attempts by Tunisian Communists to impose leftist slogans upon the national party, for understanding which the people following it were not yet ready, could only lead to strengthening the right and isolating left Destourists and Communists from the people.

The ECCI Secretariat adopted yet another resolution—“On Ties and Interrelations Between Communist Parties of Arab Countries”. In the Secretariat's opinion, ethnic kinship, the common language and the solidarity of Arab peoples in the struggle against imperialism and for national independence presented communist parties in the area with the task of ensuring well-organised contacts for the purpose of mutual information, exchange of experience, mutual assistance, concerted campaigns issuing of appeals and cooperation in publishing political literature and periodicals.

Speaking at a Secretariat meeting, Dimitrov stressed the importance of firm links between communist parties of Arab countries, but did not approve the idea of forming a united general Arab party organisation and spoke against premature advancement of the slogan of establishing a united Arab republic, against taking the tendency of Arab peoples towards unity for already established unity. He thought that this idea was mere wishful thinking. Dimitrov was supported by Eastern Secretariat leader Otto Kuusinen and by D. Z. Manuilsky.

Comintern documents referring to the liberation movement of Arab peoples were based on Lenin's idea of the need for every possible support by Communists to national-revolutionary movements in the East while retaining the independence of the communist movement. Another important thought—in relation to Arabisation of the communist movement—was most closely bound up with Lenin's notion of Communists working among the people. The Comintern Executive Committee Secretariat thought that a prerequisite of Arabisation was the communist parties' struggle for political rights for Arabs, for drawing them into the political liberation movement.

On 17 March 1936 the ECCI Secretariat discussed the question of the work of the Communist Party of South Africa and
basically approved its draft programme of action. The final text of the action programme “Tasks of Communist of South Africa” noted the “profound discontent” of the native peoples of South Africa. The programme was patently internationalist. Only the common struggle of all exploited, oppressed working people was capable of improving the unbearable position of the peoples of South Africa, the programme said. It called for unity of native peoples, of all workers without distinction by race and all White working people for a common struggle against imperialism. The document focused attention of South African Communists on everyday, urgent demands of the working people.

The first part of the programme was entitled “Bread and Work for All Workers, White and Coloured!”. In particular it put forward demands of equal pay for equal work, without favour to race or sex, without reducing the existing level of wages of Whites; higher wages in line with depreciation of the pound; the right of the local population to obtain skilled work; the payment of unemployment benefit to all the unemployed. The second part contained slogans reflecting the demands of peasants and farm labourers. “Only confiscation without compensation of the land of the big land barons, ... the religious missions and crown possessions, and the transfer of that land together with the land of the big land barons, ... the financial and all similar constrictions; for freedom of movement; for freedom of residence for Africans and Whites; for the extension to Africans of existing liberties in establishing associations—trade union, cooperative, political, for granting freedom of the press, assembly, demonstrations and strikes. They demanded the urgent disbandment of fascist organisations whipping up national and racial hatred in the interests of capitalists and landowners. The campaign for equal political rights and liberties for natives, like the campaign for improving working and living conditions, for a higher cultural level, was assessed as the most powerful means of defending living conditions, wages, the rights and freedoms of White working people.

The document clearly spelled out the tasks of Communists in South Africa. The main one was to campaign for a united anti-imperialist popular front. The Communist Party was not only to support the liberation movement of African peoples, the strike movement of workers, the “movement of poor Whites” and the Boer republican movement, it was also to campaign for closer contact and agreement with existing mass organisations, and in particular with the reformist African National Congress “on the subject of organising joint action”. It especially emphasised the task of uniting the entire South African proletariat.

The programme underlined that the slogan of an independent native republic advanced by the Sixth Comintern Congress was only a long-term objective of the national liberation struggle in South Africa, summing up all the specific economic and political slogans of the people. What sort of state organisation the peoples of South Africa would choose would depend on the specific internal and international conditions.

The Comintern ratified the draft “Programme of Action of the Popular League for Liberation of the Congo (PLLCL)” on 27 April 1932. The programme stated that the PLLC was an organisation of Congolese revolutionary workers and peasants; it was leading workers and peasants in a fight against starvation, low wages, onerous labour, and full and complete indepen-
dence of the Congo. The programme called upon the Congolese people to support the struggle begun by workers on the plantations in Kwango and peasants in the villages who were rising against the Belgian colonialists, and to come to their assistance, to organise themselves, to refuse to load and transport weapons and troops: "Not a single boat, not a single train bearing death to freedom-fighters must leave the towns."

The PLLC programme proclaimed slogans of freedom of assembly, speech and organisation, the right to move from village to village and from province to province, free access to work and freedom to leave it. It also advanced demands to confiscate all lands and forests seized from the Congolese people, railways, mills, mines, plantations and for "their return to the people of the Congo". The programme contained a special appeal to the Congolese workers, saying that capitalist companies had been forcing Congolese workers to labour in stifling heat for many long hours, were keeping them on starvation rations and, besides, were feeding them rotten food. It was Congolese workers—because they were strong, because there were hundreds and thousands of them working in big centres, because they were fighting every day against oppression—that had to head the struggle of the Congolese people. Workers in the Congo were recommended to unite in trade unions. The Congolese people were not alone in their struggle, the programme said. Throughout the African continent, in India and China, in Germany, France and Belgium, across the world, millions of working people—"black, white, brown and yellow"—"joined in fraternal union, were waging the war of the poor against the rich, of workers against bosses, of the oppressed against the oppressors".

At the height of class battles within Europe, at a time when the most complex tasks associated with the mounting revolutionary movement in Asia were being decided, the Comintern was paying utmost attention, too, to the struggle of peoples of Africa, fully assessing its prospects and significance, and helping to form national-revolutionary organisations there.

Many traits inherent in the entire activity of the Third International were typical of the relations of the Comintern with communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonies.

In all circumstances the Comintern felt it necessary to unite communist groups so that at a certain stage they could form parties, relying primarily on workers and led by a proletarian nucleus. The idea of a working-class party which was to work "wherever the masses are to be found", to campaign for leadership of the liberation movement and to combine Marxism-Leninism with the struggle of the oppressed was invariably put in the forefront.

The Comintern did a great deal of work in affirming the main, determining, universally important Marxist-Leninist principles among communist parties of the East; if they followed those principles they would achieve victory, if they underestimated them they would lose. Of course, it always took account of the specific conditions of each country.

In its recommendations and advice to communist parties of the East the Comintern tried to take universal account of both the views and the level of political awareness of a particular party and its leaders, as well as the viewpoint of Communists from other sections. Decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International were the result of studying the experience of struggle and the practical application of conclusions of Marxist-Leninist theory to the specific conditions of a particular country. Comintern decisions contained such proposals as, for example, creation of a working-class party, communist parties' alliance in anti-imperialist struggle with non-proletarian forces whose economic and other