

WIN 2000/26

A WORLD

**ACCELERATING
THE WORLD
REVOLUTION!**

**Revolutionary Internationalist
Movement**

Millennium Statement

Interview with RIM Committee

WORLD & CAMPAIGN FOR THE
INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT



2000/26

Accelerating the World Proletarian Revolution

As the new millennium begins, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is uniting Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties that are waging or preparing people's war. RIM's Millennium Statement expresses its determination to make the new century one that will go down in history as the turning point in the battle to put an end to the millennia-old exploitation of class society and hasten the dawn of communist society. An interview with a member of the RIM Committee explores the situation of the world proletarian revolution today and RIM's role in advancing it.

Pages from the History of the Class Struggle

This photo essay gives voice in verse and image to the rebels of yesterday and today, from slaves like Spartacus, who dreamed and fought for a different life before such dreams could become real, to the wage-slaves of today, who dream and fight for a world revolution that is now very much on history's agenda.

The International Communist Movement: What Path?

The RIM Committee comments on resolutions from a recent conference of Marxist-Leninist parties, emphasising how the key to advancing proletarian revolution is the understanding that Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a new, third and higher stage of Marxism-Leninism.

On the Strategy for People's War in India

How should the Maoist strategy of people's war be applied to the second most populous country on earth? A provocative article dissects some erroneous views put forward there and offers some basic guidelines for the future.

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Forward towards the Victory of Socialism and Communism! For a Century of People's Wars!

Revolutionary Internationalist Movement – 1 May 2000

The following statement was formally adopted by the participating parties and organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

So, the imperialists and their lackeys want us to celebrate the coming of a new millennium. Very well, but whose? A millennium of these parasites or of the people who have created everything? And how should we celebrate? By waiting upon them in their banquet halls, as they gorge on the fruits of our labour and dance on floors strewn with skulls of their victims to the screaming accompaniment of war machines, even now spewing death and devastation? And should we forget their centuries of inhuman exploitation, wars of conquest, plunder, condemnation of billions to unimaginable misery, genocide, Auschwitzes and Hiroshimas? Should we stand in awe, as they wish we would, gaping at their gadgets, numbed by their shrill propaganda of promises for the meek?

History, for all oppressors, starts with their own reign of oppression. Thus they vainly try to immortalise their fleeting existence by freezing time and stamping it with their arbitrary wills. But the march of hu-

manity is relentless. History shows us how both crowns and calendars were unceremoniously swept aside by the necessary agenda of class struggle, inevitably imposing itself through twists and turns. This is how it was, and this is how it will be, until exploitation and oppression are eliminated once and for all.

So what does this calendar show? Heroic sagas, not of emperors or saints, but of the wretched of the earth. Rebellions and revolts, now here, now there, crushed and crucified, but nevertheless bursting out relentlessly. Ripping apart the lies of religious pacifiers. Shattering the peace of rulers. For centuries, the oppressed had dreamed and hoped for some end to their misery and suffering. In the very midst of abject existence and drudgery they cherished memories of long-gone societies free of exploitation. Lively expressions of art and music pulsed with their dreams of a new dawn. They rose up against oppression, fought the masters, and sought a new life. Let us not forget, it was this struggle, this ceaseless striving for an end to brutal exploitation and inhuman existence, that propelled humanity's advance. But the fruits of their struggles were never theirs. Appropriated by

new exploiters, the very winds of freedom became new chains of thralldom.

It took many millennia of struggle and violent reconstitutions of societies before the final answer was brought forth – the proletariat. Born of capitalism and destined to be its gravedigger. The last class, an internationalist class. A class which could liberate itself only by emancipating the whole of humanity. The emergence of the proletariat and its struggles also brought forth its ideology – Marxism. A masterful synthesis of struggles, ideas and experiences, all to serve this class and its historical mission. The tortuous course of human history now revealed itself in its logical grandeur, the history of class struggle. The claims to permanence of the exploiters stood exposed, as wretched pretensions of a dying order. The march of humanity could now become conscious, daring assaults on their bastions of reaction. Let us recall some of the red days in this calendar up until the end of the nineteenth century: the *Communist Manifesto*, the founding of the First International, the publication of *Capital* which laid bare the workings of the capitalist system and its inevitable doom, the heroic days of the Paris Commune, the founding of the Second International which declared May 1 as International Workers Day and March 8 as International Women's Day, the fight for the eight-hour workday. All this in a span of barely 50 years! Which class in history has achieved so much in so short a span of time? And these were just the opening shots.

What about the imperialists and their lackeys who, just as they do today, were arrogantly celebrating the birth of their twentieth century? The imperialists looked around them and saw a world held down by their jackboots. Their bayonets for the rapacious thrusts of finance capital were tearing up Africa, Asia and Latin America. War had disappeared from the face of Europe. The revisionists in the Second International were busy fixing deals with the masters and leashing in the rage of the working class. An unparalleled period of super-profits and growth was heralded. So this was how the world looked to the imperialists in 1900.

Less than two decades later it was to blow up in their faces. War ravaged Europe. Crowns were rolling in the street. The October Revolution gave birth to the socialist Soviet Union and its salvoes brought Marxism-Leninism, the second stage of Marxism, to

the oppressed peoples of the world. The Third International rose up tearing down the maze of class collaboration built up by the revisionists. With political power in their hands, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union began building a whole new kind of socio-economic system, which unleashed an explosion of the growth of the productive forces. The factories and fields were no longer chains on the working masses but tools in their hands to transform society. Socialist construction in the Soviet Union started to reveal the road to a society free from exploitation.

The imperialists succeeded in stamping out the flames of revolution and national liberation in most countries. They boasted of containing revolution. But there was no lasting peace for them. Instead what they got was depression, fascism, another world war and more revolutions. The victory of the Chinese revolution liberated one-fourth of humanity, charted the road to achieve new-democratic revolution in the oppressed nations and gave the proletarians throughout the world their developed military science – people's war. The socialist camp emerged with one-third of the world's population. Despite all attempts by the imperialists and their lackeys to crush the liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and deceive them with the drama of granting "independence", the oppressed nations continued as the storm centres of world proletarian revolution. Under the leadership of Mao Tsetung an unprecedented revolutionary upheaval took place, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in which tens of millions of workers, peasants and revolutionary youth beat back the capitalist-roaders and took great strides in transforming the society in the direction of the communist future, when all class distinctions and the vestiges of class exploitation will be completely eliminated.

"But that is all old stories", imperialism, reaction and revisionism howl in unison. First we grabbed your Soviet Union and then we recaptured Red China too, they say. Look, the imperialists tell us, now the world is surely theirs and the coming centuries belong to them. Well, we've heard their arrogant swaggering before. Didn't they say this after butchering the Communards of Paris, only to scurry, just a few decades later, from the battlefields of Red October in Russia? Didn't they say this when the revisionist curs usurped power in the socialist Soviet Union? And didn't they run, bloodied from head to foot, when the powerful storms of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China spread Marxism-Leninism-Mao-

ism, the new, third and higher stage of proletarian ideology, all over the world and sparked off a high tide of revolutionary upsurges and rebellions?

Even now as the imperialists and reactionaries arrogantly boast of their victory, Maoist people's wars are delivering sharp blows, advancing through twists and turns. More people's wars are in the making. Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, are marching forward to impose Maoism as the commander and guide of the emerging new wave of world proletarian revolution. Maoism is being embodied by Communist parties to drive and lead this new great wave. The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is present through participating parties and organisations, candidate organisations and supporters in the four corners of the earth—from Iran to Colombia, from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to the United States and Italy, from Turkey and Afghanistan to India, as well as in parts of Africa, the Caribbean, Central America and Europe. In Peru and Nepal the proletariat, led by Maoist vanguard parties united in RIM, has once again established red political power of the masses in vast rural areas.

Remote? Insignificant? Certainly not for the class conscious proletariat and the oppressed and exploited throughout the world. These inspiring victories in Peru and Nepal are only as remote as Yenan was. They were won through fierce struggle to uphold, defend and apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, shedding blood in the cause of the people and defeating brutal campaigns of encirclement and suppression by the enemies. The battle of "restoration/counter-restoration" has been joined in Peru and Nepal as the reactionaries try to stamp out the people's red political power and the people's wars are fighting to defend and expand the base areas where the rule of the people prevails.

The guns roaring in the hands of the Maoist-led peasant guerrillas of the TKP(ML) striving to establish red bases in Turkey. The formation and strengthening of Maoist parties united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in the oppressed nations. The revolutionary armed struggles led by Maoist and revolutionary forces, outside as well as inside RIM, in the Philippines, India, Bangladesh and other countries. The "revolutionary mole" digging away in the bellies of the imperialist monsters through the building and strengthening of Maoist parties in those countries.

The signs are clear for those who want to see.

The future is bright. But, of course, the path is tortuous. We Maoists are not afraid of this. We are disciples of Mao Tsetung who has taught us, "Nothing is hard in this world, if you dare to scale the heights." The glorious achievements of our advanced detachment in Peru are a vibrant testimony to his words. The Communist Party of Peru (PCP) faced a difficult situation following the capture of its Chairman in 1992. But the joy of the enemies was shattered by Chairman Gonzalo himself through his powerful and inspiring speech of 24 September 1992 delivered from prison. Demonstrating the materialist strength of revolutionary optimism and communist morale, he pointed out that this blow was nothing more than a "bend in the road" and declared "The road is long and we shall arrive. We shall triumph!" The PCP has persevered on the path of people's war, in the face of the enemies' suppression; it has smashed the vicious attacks of a Right Opportunist Line which collaborates with the enemy and calls for ending the war through a "peace accord" as well as the enemy's propaganda that Chairman Gonzalo has himself called for "peace accords", a claim for which there is no proof and which the PCP has denounced as a hoax.

In the continuing situation of the harsh and absolute isolation of Chairman Gonzalo, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, in its Call of March 1995, "Rally to the Defence of Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" rejecting the Right Opportunist Line, pointed out, "...one cannot accept indirect and unverifiable communications attributed to Chairman Gonzalo as representative of his thinking...the fight must continue for an end to his isolation." The revolutionary masses all over the world know well enough that the Fujimori regime, denounced by the PCP as fascist, genocidal and country-selling, is notorious for its genocide, fabricated lies, etc.

Following the red line of Chairman Gonzalo the PCP has defended, persisted in and developed the People's War and today in the face of the capture of Comrade Feliciano, Comrade Julio is heading the PCP Central Committee. It has announced that the People's War is now coming out of the "bend in the road" within the stage of strategic equilibrium and continues its relentless march towards the conquest of power in the whole country. The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has mobilised world-wide

campaigns in support of the People's War in Peru, to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo and repudiate the Right Opportunist Line. In view of reports on the increased danger to his life, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement joins the PCP and Peruvian people in demanding that the Fujimori regime present Chairman Gonzalo before the international and national televised press, that he be allowed to make a statement, live. It reaffirms its determination to carry forward the struggle to support the People's War and defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo – and linked to that, now, the life of Comrade Feliciano as well.

If the imperialists and their lackeys dreamt that the People's War in Peru could be contained, they now have another spectre: the Himalayas are aflame. The People's War initiated by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) under the leadership of Comrade Prachanda is sweeping forward confronting the enemy head on in fierce battles. All the monsters and their lackeys have desperately clubbed up to stave off the doom of the reactionary regime in Nepal. US imperialism and Indian expansionism are playing a particularly sinister role in assisting the Nepalese regime in its genocidal campaigns of suppression. The reactionary states of Israel, Sri Lanka and Peru are also involved. Yet the People's War advances. Already two million people are beginning to build a new future in vast areas in which the enemy's grip has been broken. Led by the Party they are building new organs of power, defending and expanding them with guns snatched from the enemy. No doubt, the path ahead is not smooth. No momentous historical advance has been smooth. Armed with the weapon of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism the People's War will persist and win, in its turn inspiring the people of other countries, particularly in South Asia, to wage war against imperialism and reaction.

So where did we leave the imperialists and their lackeys? Yes, their future, their promises. Their bragging that Marxism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism and the communist party have been defeated with the collapse of the social-imperialist Soviet Union. Their assertion that Western-democracy and capitalism are leading to a new age of prosperity. But can they deny the fact that what disintegrated in the social-imperialist Soviet Union was nothing other than bankrupt revisionism, that the promise of capitalism has delivered nothing more than misery to the millions who were already being ground down by

social imperialism? What has come about is not peace but wars unleashed by reactionaries and fanned by imperialist rivalry. What is emerging is not world peace but new imperialist centres of rivalry.

Between the two trends of revolution and world war, revolution is the main trend in the world today. The principal contradiction is between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations. In the midst of instability, wars and rebellions, the imperialists are busy staking out claims and counting profits. But we communists see new opportunities for the proletariat and the masses to reclaim their socialist legacy by forging new Maoist parties which will initiate, develop and lead people's wars to victory. We will do this in both kinds of countries, the countries dominated by imperialism and in the imperialist citadels, in accordance with the specific conditions of each country. It will happen.

What about their pious claims that the free market is leading to a new era of peace and prosperity? Let's look at facts. At the start of the nineteenth century the average standard of living in the richest countries was only about three times higher than in the poorest countries. In 1900 it was about six times higher. Now it is about 20 times higher. Imperialist spokespersons point to improvements in healthcare and life expectancy. While the most advanced and costly treatments are available to the wealthy in the West, 40,000 children die every day in the Third World countries from preventable diseases. In the United States itself more than one child in ten lives in extreme poverty, and more than 35 million people suffer from varying degrees of hunger.

And what about their hi-tech revolution? Has it given results? Well, yes, one individual, Bill Gates, has amassed wealth equivalent to the GNP of dozens of the world's poorest countries combined. Consider the Internet. Many had illusions that it would lead to a new era of global people-to-people democracy. But today it is increasingly clear that overwhelmingly it is a means to connect together a vast high-speed capitalist marketplace. Under this system, the technology and knowledge that humanity has built up over countless generations is not used to liberate humanity, but to enrich those who appropriate such technology. The wealth and knowledge produced by the world's peoples can never be used to serve the people themselves so long as a minority owns and controls the world's resources, so long

as this minority of exploiters wield political power.

There's an old poem by an Irish revolutionary – "We Only Want the Earth". That's it. That's all the proletariat and toiling masses demand. Is that unjust? Look at the blind forces of imperialism – shredding humanity, laying to waste the whole globe, in greedy pursuit of profits. Look at the reactionary rulers in the oppressed nations – selling out the people and the land to imperialist masters so they can fill their bank accounts and wallow in filthy luxury. Look at the state of humanity – class, national, gender, racial, ethnic, caste oppression, chauvinism, religious bigotry, child labour, trade in human flesh, brutal forms of feudal servitude, lives ground into unbelievable misery. Look at the creative power of the people, at the immense capacity of the productive forces straining on the leashes of an irrational, inhuman system. Enough. We want the world, all of it, and that's just. We, the Maoists, united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, resolutely declare our determination to rise to the responsibilities posed by this just demand of the exploited and oppressed masses all over the world. Yes, together with the people, relying on them and serving them, we will lead in making the twenty-first century a century of people's wars, marching ahead to the glorious future of communism.

Long Live the Proletarian World Revolution!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Long Live the People's Wars!

Move Heaven and Earth to Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo!

Establish the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in the Hearts of the Oppressed!

Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist) • Communist Party of Afghanistan • Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD(ML)] • Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) • Communist Party of Peru • Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist [TKP ML] • Maoist Communist Party [Italy] • Marxist-Leninist Communist Organisation of Tunisia • Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla [PBSP] [Bangladesh] • Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia • Revolutionary Communist Party, USA • Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran)

(In addition to the above list of participating parties and organisations of RIM there are candidate participants of RIM in a number of countries struggling to form vanguard Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties.)

Interview with the RIM Committee

Accelerating the Pace of World Proletarian Revolution

The following is an interview conducted with a member of the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in the early part of 2000.

AWTW: How does the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) see the current world situation?

CoRIM: We believe that the international situation is generally favourable for the advance of the revolutionary struggle.

While we are not yet experiencing the same kind of high tide of revolutionary struggle on a world scale that we have witnessed in the past and will surely see again, we can speak with confidence of an emerging new wave of the world proletarian revolution.

It is true that some of the imperialist powers, notably US imperialism, have enjoyed some respite as a result of the partial re-division of the world that accompanied the collapse of Soviet social-imperialism and its bloc. But despite their talk, there has been no world-wide robust recovery, and new waves of crisis and dislocation have

appeared in areas such as East Asia that were trumpeted as the beneficiaries and motors of capitalist renewal.

There is no doubt that imperialism has not and cannot remove the material basis for proletarian revolution. Even today, when US imperialism is boasting of its successes, the conditions of huge sections of the masses of people in much of the world are sharply deteriorating. The new waves of imperialist penetration carried out under the signboard of globalisation have brought gadgets to sections of the middle classes, but basic necessities such as food, medical care and housing are more and more out of the reach of the basic masses. Even in the most advanced imperialist countries, hopelessness grows. Furthermore, today's situation can only worsen for the masses, and new waves of crisis will inevitably sweep the imperialist system.

AWTW: Mao taught that in every process one contradiction is principal; although all the contradictions are interrelated, the principal contradiction is that which most influences the development of all of the other major contradictions. Does RIM have a unified assessment of the principal contradiction in the world today?

CoRIM: Yes. The contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations is the principal contradiction in the world today. Revolutionary armed struggle under Marxist-Leninist-Maoist leadership is being waged in a number of the oppressed countries. Furthermore, in the last six years powerful mass upheavals have taken place in a number of countries such as Mexico, Korea, Indonesia and Zaire (today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo). While these upheavals could not go over to proletarian revolution for lack of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist leadership, they illustrate the sharpening of the principal contradiction. The storm centres of the world proletarian revolution remain the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, as our Movement has held since our formation.

AWTW: Does this mean that revolution is only possible in the oppressed countries?

CoRIM: No. The whole world is full of contradictions and volatility and all of the major contradictions in the world

are sharpening. This includes the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie within the imperialist countries, which is expressed through various kinds of struggle, including rebellions such as Los Angeles in 1992. Significant mass movements directed against the ruling class and its reactionary institutions are developing in a number of imperialist countries.

The eruption of full-scale warfare in the Balkans area of Europe, despite the reactionary character of those armed conflicts, shows that no region of the world, not even the imperialist countries themselves, is immune from violent upheaval and dislocation and the accompanying revolutionary possibilities.

AWTW: How does RIM see the two trends of revolution and world war in the present international context?

CoRIM: The danger of imperialist world war has temporarily receded in the past period as a result of changes in the world situation, and revolution is the main trend in the world today. However, only when proletarian revolution finally destroys imperialism will it be possible to definitively rid the world of the danger of world war.

AWTW: If the conditions are generally favourable, what, then, is holding back the further advance of the world revolutionary movement?

CoRIM: It is clear to all that we have not resolved the gap between the growing discontent and even revolt of the masses on the one hand, and on the other, the ability of the class-conscious forces, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, to lead this struggle forward as part of a revolutionary challenge to the existing regimes. Too often, in too many countries, the struggling masses are leaderless; they are fighting blindly, without the liberating ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). Our advances have been real and increasing, but they are still not commensurate with our declared ambitions of winning the world. In most countries, there is still no vanguard proletarian party nor any clear prospect of its emergence.

Without a vanguard party based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the scientific ideology of the international proletariat, revolution will either fail or be hijacked by new exploiters. Holding high our red banner of MLM and

building vanguard parties in the face of the imperialists, reactionaries and opportunists is key to transforming the potential of today's situation into real revolutionary advances. Today the existence of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is a major factor in making it possible to achieve these objectives more rapidly.

AWTW: How has RIM itself been developing in the past period?

CoRIM: No one should underestimate the accomplishments of RIM in the sixteen years since its formation. It has established itself as the embryonic centre of the world's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces. Participating parties and organisations of RIM have made advances in the revolutionary struggle and this has propelled the whole Movement forward. Among these advances we want to call particular attention to the Communist Party of Peru and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which are leading people's wars that are illuminating the path for the oppressed all over the world.

In Turkey, our comrades are pursuing armed struggle against the reactionary regime, and the further advances of the TKP(ML) in ever closer unity with RIM will surely help bring about a mighty revolutionary upsurge of people's war in Turkey.

In Bangladesh, the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PPBP) has, for three decades, persisted in carrying out armed struggle in different forms in the face of tremendous difficulties and enemy repression. Today comrades in that country are debating how to develop the struggle to the stage of waging a sustained people's war.

In countries where there are participants or supporters of RIM, serious efforts are being made to build and strengthen Maoist vanguard parties and to prepare for the launching of people's war.

But no advances in the communist movement are ever a straight-line affair. Advances are hard fought and come about through struggle on all levels. RIM has been developing through twists and turns. Like all new things, it faces new problems.

AWTW: What is the situation with the People's War in Peru?

CoRIM: Our advanced detachment in

Peru, the Communist Party of Peru, forged under the revolutionary line of Chairman Gonzalo, which has played such a crucial role throughout the whole history of our Movement, has written another glorious chapter in the world revolutionary struggle. In his masterful speech of 24th September 1992 from the prison of the enemy, Comrade Gonzalo pointed out that his capture was only a "bend in the road" and not the great defeat the enemy was claiming. With proletarian revolutionary optimism, sacrifice and hard struggle, the Party has confronted the difficult period following the capture of Chairman Gonzalo. It has defended and maintained the People's War and the Central Committee of the PCP has announced that the People's War is now coming out of the "bend in the road".

The PCP has also had to beat back the vicious attacks of a Right Opportunist Line which emerged from within the Party and which is arguing for peace accords to end the People's War. RIM has participated in the fight against the Right Opportunist Line, for example through issuing the Call "Rally to the Defence of Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" and the publication of a major article written at the request of CoRIM.¹

AWTW: How do you see the claim of the Fujimori regime and leaders of the Right Opportunist Line that Chairman Gonzalo himself has called for the peace accords?

CoRIM: It is true that the Fujimori regime and the supporters of the Right Opportunist Line make this claim. Our investigation and study has shown that there is no proof that Chairman Gonzalo was behind the call for peace accords to end the People's War. This remains the case today six years after the call for peace accords was first issued from within the Peruvian prisons. The PCP continues to denounce Fujimori's claims as a "hoax".

RIM's 1995 "Call to Defend Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" states clearly and correctly: "Chairman Gonzalo remains in extreme conditions of confinement at the hands of the reactionary regime, denied contact with lawyers, kept in isolation, refused the visits of five distinguished international delegations and placed upon what the regime boasts is an 'information diet'. The Fujimori regime is notorious for its murder, lies, manipulations and physical

and psychological abuse of prisoners of war. Under these circumstances, one cannot accept indirect and unverifiable communications attributed to Chairman Gonzalo as representative of his thinking, and the fight must continue for an end to his isolation.

"It is clear that the negotiations line runs contrary to the basic line of the PCP which has led the People's War forward and which was forged under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo. It is important to continue to try to determine Chairman Gonzalo's current views. The key question, however, is the line, not its author."

AWTW: What about those who claim that it is wrong to talk about "a two-line struggle" that emerged from within the PCP?

CoRIM: Again RIM's basic position is clear. It is reflected in an important article which appeared in AWTW [1996/22] entitled "On the Maoist Conception of the Two-line Struggle". Marxism-Leninism-Maoism teaches us that two-line struggle is an inevitable feature of all communist organisations and that this struggle will give rise to occasional fierce battles over the very line and colour of the party.

This does not mean that we are arguing for liberalism, for "allowing" a revisionist line or headquarters to remain in the party. To recognise and fight revisionism is by no means to grant it legitimacy.

AWTW: Some have suggested that CoRIM and the Central Committee of the PCP are at loggerheads over these points.

CoRIM: Our whole Movement is united with the comrades of the CC of the PCP in fighting the Right Opportunist Line, in pursuing the People's War in Peru and in struggling to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo, including demanding an end to the isolation of Chairman Gonzalo and his live appearance before the Peruvian and international press. And linked to that, we are defending the life of Comrade Feliciano as well. We are united in defending the line that Chairman Gonzalo forged for making revolution in Peru. This unity is strong and will withstand any test. At the same time, there is no doubt that there are often differences of opinion among the Maoists internation-

ally. And this question is no exception. Through the process of discussion and struggle among the Maoists differences are resolved and give rise to a higher and increasingly solid level of unity. Sixteen years of RIM's history prove this to be true.

Enemies of the Movement have tried hard to speculate on differences, real or imagined, between the PCP and the Committee of RIM or other parties and organisations of RIM. The statement on the occasion of the new millennium, "For a Century of People's Wars, Forward towards the Victory of Socialism and Communism!", which the parties and organisations of RIM formally adopted, shows the futility of such speculation.

An important principle is for differences to be discussed internally within RIM, that is, privately among the parties and organisations, and to avoid the public airing of internal disputes. The RIM Committee itself made some serious mistakes in this regard, including encouraging the publication of some articles in AWTW that addressed a number of questions that were really not appropriate for a public journal.²

CoRIM is determined to avoid any such mistakes in the future that strain the unity of the Movement. We are also confident that any others who may have made similar mistakes will also correct them and learn from them. In the recent period the whole Movement has reached a higher level of unity and is determined to safeguard this achievement and advance it to a higher level still.

AWTW: How does RIM look at the Peoples' War in Nepal?

CoRIM: One of the most significant developments in the last few years in the life of our Movement and indeed in the development of the world-wide revolutionary struggle more generally has been the outbreak of the People's War in Nepal in 1996. The tremendous outpouring of revolutionary energy unleashed by the courageous initiation of the People's War by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has been a source of great encouragement for the comrades in all the parties and organisations of our Movement.

Our whole Movement has, from its very foundation, benefited from its living links with our comrades in Nepal. Just as the comrades there had to fight to repudiate the rightist line of M.B.

Singh, the leader of the Nepal Communist Party (Mashal), so too our whole Movement had to combat Singh, who was the only force in RIM who argued strenuously *against* the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1993.

The CPN(M) has played an active role in our Movement, and an increasing one, despite the tremendous pressure and responsibility of leading the People's War forward. These comrades had closely followed and studied the experience of the People's War in Peru to assimilate its lessons, while Singh always denigrated this experience. The CPN(M) actively took up the criticism of the Right Opportunist Line that emerged in the PCP and were able to apply the lessons to the struggle to initiate the People's War. This is an important illustration of the principle that participation in the international communist movement does not hinder but rather greatly helps the struggle to implement an MLM line in one's own country. The expulsion of the NCP (Mashal) from the Movement in 1998 for its opposition in theory and practice to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, following a long period of struggle with Mashal, was an important victory. It underscores again the interconnection between the struggle in any one country and the problems posed to the Movement as a whole.

In the course of this process the Committee has learned a great deal and deepened its grasp of the laws of people's war. The interaction between the Movement and the comrades in Nepal has meant that it has been possible for the whole Movement, through the efforts of CoRIM as well as by other means, to be part of this exciting process and assimilate the experience and the lessons that the comrades are acquiring. In this process, as well as by continuing to strive to assimilate the experience and lessons accumulated by the comrades in Peru in applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to waging people's war there, and also through our study of the positive and negative experience of others in waging revolutionary warfare, our overall understanding of the laws of people's war has been increasing.

AWTW: How does RIM understand the question of proletarian internationalism?

CoRIM: We have been emphasising

Lenin's famous definition of proletarian internationalism:

"There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is - working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) *this struggle*, this, and only this, line in *every country* without exception."

Lenin's instruction is deep in meaning. It means we can never reduce proletarian internationalism to a kind of benign "solidarity" that leaves out the task of making revolution in "one's own country". We also call attention to the second part of Lenin's definition, the requirement to support a proletarian revolutionary orientation in every country and not settle for less.

The party in each country has the fundamental responsibility for developing the line for revolution there, including in resolving issues of two-line struggle in that party. But the struggle between Marxism and revisionism is never a "national" affair. Responsible communists cannot sit by idly as comrades in other countries debate life-and-death questions of revolution.

AWTW: Readers of this magazine often ask how they can play a role in helping RIM develop.

CoRIM: AWTW, which is regularly published in English, Spanish and Farsi, plays a crucial role in disseminating Marxism-Leninism-Maoism throughout the world but this needs to expand even further. It is particularly important to make the journal available in more languages, to increase its distribution and to spread it to new countries. We hope your readership will play an active part in helping to accomplish this. We are happy to learn that a Hindi edition will be appearing soon and that the Turkish edition will be appearing more regularly in the future.

We hope readers of AWTW will contact the participating parties and organisations of RIM or candidate participants in countries where they exist. In countries where RIM does not yet have a presence we hope your readers will make contact directly with RIM.

AWTW: How does RIM see the question of forming a new Communist International? Will this involve Maoists outside of RIM?

CoRIM: From the very formation of RIM we have stressed the need for a new communist international. Clearly the struggle to form a new communist international will necessarily involve other Maoist forces outside RIM. This new communist international must be composed of the great bulk of genuine Maoist parties, and the understanding and experience acquired throughout the world in making revolution must become part of the synthesis that will be reflected in its line and programme.

We have repeatedly stressed the need for a new communist international. RIM, while an important step in the direction of a new communist international, cannot fulfil this role. This is true in both its quantitative and qualitative features. We are still not present in enough countries of the world, and there are some very important struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed led by genuine communist organisations outside RIM. It is also true that our level of collective unity and understanding, while a very great accomplishment and one that has advanced over the years, is still not adequate for a new communist international. In short, a new communist international will represent an advance, a leap, beyond the level of unity and understanding that we have achieved up to now.

AWTW: What is the main obstacle in the way of uniting the Maoist forces internationally?

CoRIM: The biggest is the still uneven and partially contradictory understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism among the forces that claim the Maoist banner. This is very much linked to the problem of establishing a general line and programme for a new communist international. Some of the key questions on which there are uneven or opposing understandings between RIM and other Maoist forces include: the universality of the path of people's war, the full appreciation of Mao's teachings concerning the continuation of the revolution under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the lessons of the struggle against modern revisionism. This is clearly expressed in different interpretations of the history of the international communist movement, particularly the coup in China, and the question of whether the international communist movement reached its high

point during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as RIM has consistently held, or has been more or less in a state of decline since the time of Khrushchev's coup in the Soviet Union. This latter view not only fails to recognise Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism to a whole new and higher stage, it also ends up undermining the great struggle against Soviet-led modern revisionism.

In addition, some of the communists outside RIM do not accept, in principle, the need for a "centre" for the international communist movement. This also means that they have not yet been convinced of the need for a new communist international.

AWTW: What about other initiatives in the international communist movement?

CoRIM: RIM follows very closely the developments among all those forces who are claiming the Maoist banner. We are now present in debate and discussion within the broader international communist movement and will be increasingly so in the future. For example, our letter to the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations is one case in point. [This letter is reprinted elsewhere in this issue - AWTW.]

In the period ahead we must struggle hard, not out of any narrow organisational interests, but for a correct line to grow stronger, win out and serve as the basis of uniting the genuine MLM forces the world over.

AWTW: What has RIM summed up about the process of building new Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties?

CoRIM: We are happy to note that the Maoist Communist Party has just been formed in Italy and is a participating member of RIM. The recent publication by the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) of a draft programme for a vanguard communist party in Iran represents one of the final steps in the process of party formation in that country as well.

The formation of a genuine vanguard party will vary in different countries and according to the conditions prevalent during any one period in the revolutionary process in a given country. Nevertheless, it is possible to ascertain some of the key and universal

features involved in party formation.

The MLM party must be based upon a correct line and programme. This means the universal principles of MLM must be applied to analysing the particularities of a given country and to developing the basic approach to waging revolution. In order to accomplish this it is necessary that, in the words of the *Declaration*, party building be linked to addressing "the pressing political questions which must be resolved in order for the revolutionary movement to advance". This implies consistent effort to apply the mass line to leading the masses forward while learning from them. And it presupposes efforts to develop at least the skeleton of an organisational structure capable of carrying forward revolutionary practice based on the party's correct line.

Moreover, a correct political and ideological line can only be forged in the course of fighting revisionist lines on both the national and international level. While it is necessary to combat both right and "left" errors, to struggle against both revisionism and dogmatism, the main danger is revisionism. The party must be built in the course of the class struggle, including the two-line struggle.

There have been misunderstandings associated with this process in the past. Sometimes there have been arbitrary quantitative goals established which, when not met, become arguments to unnecessarily postpone the formation of the party. While the formation of the party implies a certain basic "quality" as mentioned above, the quantitative expression of this same quality (number of cadre, influence among the masses and so forth) will vary considerably.

An important task of RIM is to aid in the building and strengthening of Maoist parties throughout the world. The existence of RIM means that this process can develop more quickly and successfully.

AWTW: How has RIM's understanding of people's war developed in recent years?

CoRIM: Our starting point is Chairman Mao's teaching that, "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of the revolution holds good universally, for

China and for other countries."¹⁴

When the proletariat and the people do not have state power, it must be seized through people's war waged in accordance with the different conditions in different countries. It is thus completely normal that the work of the whole Movement and that of the Committee will necessarily be concerned with the thorny problems of preparing and initiating people's war and advancing it toward victory.

When our Movement adopted Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1993, an important discussion took place concerning the different ideological, political and organisational problems that make it difficult, even for parties and organisations of our Movement, to initiate and maintain genuine revolutionary warfare of the masses.

Since then important progress and breakthroughs have been made by parties and organisations of our Movement in preparing for and carrying out the central task of seizing political power through revolutionary warfare, most notably the initiation of the People's War in Nepal. Important experience and understanding has been accumulated and our understanding of some of the questions involved has grown stronger.

We have also had the opportunity in the past period to study more of the positive and negative experiences of others who are waging revolutionary armed struggle, including those who are struggling to do so from a Maoist perspective.

AWTW: How is RIM's understanding of people's war different from the armed struggles waged by non-MLM forces?

CoRIM: Mao's theory of people's war was, and is, *qualitatively different* from those armed struggles waged by oppressed peoples that lacked the leadership of the proletariat and a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party. Only with the advent of the proletariat and only under the leadership of the MLM party does it become possible to actually build a society (through the necessary stages, of course) in which the misery of the masses can be finally eradicated and even exploitation itself and the very division of society into classes are targeted for destruction.

In today's world there are a number of non-Maoist forces waging revolutionary guerrilla wars, sometimes very

powerful ones. The essential difference between the armed struggle waged by these non-proletarian forces and that waged under the leadership of a genuine MLM party has to do with the kind of society to be created through war and which class (or class alliance) will hold political power.

The goal of non-proletarian forces stops short of wiping out class exploitation and inevitably results in these kinds of forces seeking to be integrated into the exploiting classes, or at least into the ruling structures of essentially the same system. The goal of the people's war led by the MLM party is to put power into the hands of the proletariat and the masses, power that can be used to reshape and transform society in the interests of the people in the country and world-wide.

But it is not enough simply to proclaim such a goal; indeed, we have seen that revisionists and opportunists can sometimes try to confuse the people by adopting our slogans. The difference between the "war aims" of the genuine MLM forces and those of other classes is expressed not only in programmes and declarations, but also very much in the conduct of the fighting itself. It is absolutely necessary for the long-term aims of the proletariat to find their appropriate expression in the policies and methods used by the MLM forces to advance the war from one level to another.

AWTW: RIM has been emphasising the importance of base areas in waging people's war.

CoRIM: Yes, Mao's writings stress — and the experience of our own Movement bears out — that the development of base areas plays an essential role in waging protracted people's war. Advancing along the path of building base areas is key for increasingly incorporating the masses into the process of war, including developing the military strength of the revolutionary army. This Maoist path, with its reliance on the people, especially the poor peasantry, stands in sharp contrast to other strategies that would replace reliance on the masses with the aid and/or "sanctuary" of one or another reactionary state (for example, Kurdistan, where both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes have funded and armed different Kurdish guerrilla groups). Failing to rely on the masses of the oppressed

inevitably interacts with the nature and aims of the war itself and brings with it the danger that the struggle of the people will be manipulated and/or betrayed by one or another reactionary power.

Without a policy of working toward and building up base areas step by step, it will be impossible for the party to carry out the kinds of transformations, even if limited and partial, that can unleash revolutionary energy among the people and serve as a spotlight on the more thorough transformations to be carried out upon the seizure of power country-wide. If this basic path is not followed, there is the danger that the armed forces of the people will degenerate into "roving rebel bands" divorced from the peasant masses. This would mean that the people's armed forces are not only weak militarily, but are no longer able to play their role as the main form of organisation of the masses.

Of course, the realities of fighting a stronger and well-armed enemy make the establishment of base areas no easy matter. In most cases, the MLM-led forces will begin with a relatively low level of guerrilla warfare, which can open the way for a later development into base areas. Here we can learn from what Chairman Gonzalo told comrades at the very beginning of the People's War in Peru: "We carry political power in our knapsacks." In other words, even when the revolutionary struggle is still at an early stage and the level of military activity is still low, through their ideology and the expression of this ideology in concrete policies, through their ever-increasing integration with the masses of the people, the communist-led fighters embody the future rule of the workers and peasants. Viewed in this way, guerrilla warfare does not lead to "guerrilla-ism", and the establishment of guerrilla zones does not become an end in itself but rather paves the way for base areas and the deepening participation of the masses in the struggle.

AWTW: Some comrades outside RIM have argued that the realities of the world today make the establishment of base areas impossible, except under highly exceptional circumstances.

CoRIM: The difficulty in creating "relatively stable base areas" has sometimes been used to unnecessarily prolong the period of guerrilla zones and

delay the stage of building base areas. It is true that with modern methods of fighting and especially the enemy's ability to rely on helicopters and other means for the quick transportation of troops, there is no area of any country that is completely impenetrable to the enemy's forces. (Of course, in China the base areas were only *relatively* stable, and Mao had to abandon Yenan at one point. Nevertheless, it seems that in today's world, base areas, even in large countries, will be even less stable than those in China.)

However, this expresses only part of the truth. It is still the case that even if the enemy is able to invade or attack base areas, it does not have the strength to permanently occupy and control the vast countryside of the oppressed countries. When confronted with the development of people's war, the enemy can be forced to "hole up" in strong points and people's power can take on concrete expression in gradually expanding areas where new laws, practices, culture and even some new production relations can begin to be established. In particular, the policy of "land to the tiller" can become more than just a slogan but rather a living reality and a clarion call to the whole society.

AWTW: So is RIM's understanding the same thing as calling for establishing "dual power" in the countryside?

CoRIM: No. The concept of "dual power" can imply that the power of the masses and that of the reactionary state will be "intertwined" and "coexist" in the same geographical area of the country.

Lenin, of course, used the term "dual power", but in a different way, to describe an inherently unstable and temporary situation in which neither the reactionary state nor the forces of the people were able to exercise country-wide power. In our opinion, this idea does not best describe the dialectical development of people's war.

In contrast, the comrades of the Communist Party of Peru often correctly refer to people's war as being a process of "restoration and counter-restoration". In other words, areas under the control of the people can be seized back by the armed might of the enemy and then the people's forces should seek to recover them once again. (Of course, not necessarily in a

linear way—a war of encirclement and counter-encirclement will always involve “making feints to the east to attack in the west” and giving up one area temporarily while concentrating on others.)

The reality is that it is impossible to defeat the enemy at a single stroke, but it is possible and necessary to begin to build up the political power of the people based upon revolutionary armed strength. The “dual-power” model, as well as our understanding, are both attempts to develop a line to respond to this reality. But there is a fundamental difference between them.

In the former (“dual power”) model, the proletariat and the people do not seek to exercise complete power. The extent of the political power they exercise is self-limited and the power of the reactionary state is only partially challenged even in areas of the people’s strength. The idea of “restoration and counter-restoration”, however, implies that the struggle should aim to suppress the enemy, to exercise dictatorship, whilst recognising that the other side will inevitably attack and seek to violently re-impose its rule and that this is sure to be a protracted back-and-forth process. People’s war means seizing power bit by bit.

AWTW: What about the goal of nation-wide victory of people’s war?

CoRIM: We need to master the dialectic between continually directing the movement toward the final goal of the struggle that we represent (both in the sense of fighting for country-wide victory and also advancing toward socialism and communism), while also recognising that the concrete measures we take at any point will inevitably be limited by objective constraints. We cannot set our goals and policies subjectively, based solely on our own desires, but we must also always be straining against the limits of the objective situation and be seeking to transform it in accordance with our MLM understanding of the future of the struggle. We must preserve our ranks, but we can never make self-preservation the highest goal. The course of the war and the circumstances of its final victory are impossible to predict and also depend on developments in the region and internationally. But Mao pointed out that communists must “hasten and await” favourable developments on a world scale, and our most powerful form of

“hastening” is carrying forward the revolutionary war itself.

AWTW: Have changes in the world in the last several decades modified the possibilities for waging people’s war in the oppressed countries?

CoRIM: It has been correct to argue, as RIM has, that the further growth of bureaucrat capitalism does not negate the semi-feudal nature of these societies or the basic road charted by Mao Tsetung in these countries. Still, this basic understanding will need to be applied to the study of concrete realities, which in many countries have undergone significant changes in the past 20 or 30 years, including, for example, the growth of “mega-cities” in a number of Third World countries, further penetration and new forms of imperialist domination, etc. Here also the challenge will be to hold firmly to the basic principles of our MLM science and ideology, whilst not failing to investigate and understand new phenomena.

AWTW: What has RIM been summing up about how to prepare to launch people’s war?

CoRIM: It is possible to identify two common errors. One error, and the biggest danger historically, has been to construct a whole stage of accumulating strength by carrying out various forms of mass struggle. This line imagines that people’s war will grow spontaneously out of leading this kind of struggle and downgrades the necessity for active and specific preparation for a qualitatively different and higher form of struggle. It would amount to making a whole separate stage of “preparations”, which would never lead to the actual initiation of people’s war.

On the other hand, we have also seen the error of trying to build the party in seclusion, divorced from class struggle and revolutionary practice. We should guard against the tendency to be drowned in the day-to-day and partial struggles, with the temptation of growing fast on an incorrect foundation. At the same time, we should guard against the line of building our forces in a “hot-house” because of the fear of catching a disease. In the first case the party will lose the purpose of preparatory work, and in the second case the forces of the party will shrink or become demoralised and the party

itself will become irrelevant. In neither case will the party be built as a Maoist party with tested revolutionary leadership and cadre capable of initiating people’s war as soon as possible.

AWTW: Would you like to make any concluding remarks?

CoRIM: Our Movement has accomplished a great deal in the 16 years of its existence. But given the magnitude of the tasks before us, we can never rest content with a few successes.

The participating parties and organisations of RIM are determined to increase our Movement’s capacity to respond to the many pressing tasks and promising situations in the world as a whole today, despite the ever-increasing burden of leading revolution in their respective countries. Any momentary difficulties caused by taking up these internationalist tasks are more than compensated by the heightened enthusiasm of the masses for revolution, in their revolutionary optimism about the eventual triumph of our cause and in their confidence that the struggle they are waging in a particular country has the support of revolutionary masses all over the world.

We very much hope that, in addition to the participating parties and organisations of RIM and the candidate participants, other parties, organisations, circles and even individuals from countries all around the world will join in the effort to develop RIM and advance together towards a new Communist International.

By grasping ever more deeply our scientific proletarian ideology, by advancing forward along the lines indicated in the *Declaration of RIM* and *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!*, RIM will make new and bigger contributions toward accelerating the pace and the ultimate victory of the world proletarian revolution.

FOOTNOTES

1 “It’s Right to Rebel” by the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) AWTW 1995/21.

2 This was especially the case of the article, “A Hard Look at the Dangers and the Opportunities in the Two-line Struggle in Peru”, in AWTW 1996/22.

3 V.I. Lenin, “Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22.

4 Mao Tsetung, “Problems of War and Strategy”, *Selected Works*, Vol. II.

The history of society is a history of class struggle. It is not made by millionaires and generals, although it is the victors who tell the tale. The real makers of history are the masses, in their unstinting refusal to accept the way things are, and their heroic struggle against oppression and exploitation. The brief portrayal of this millenia-old saga offered in this photo essay is of necessity schematic and can only give a hint of the countless dramatic struggles that have taken place in different epochs on different continents, and much, unfortunately, had to be omitted. We hope these glimpses help illustrate Engel's observation that the working people in every corner of the earth are indeed each other's distant kith and kin, that their hearts beat as one, that our class, the international proletariat, is a single class with a single interest, of putting an end to class society and bringing into being a communist world.

Pages from the History of Class Struggle



Primitive Society and the Rise of Classes

For tens of thousands of years mankind lived under primitive communalism, where, though classes did not yet exist, people were nonetheless dominated by the forces of nature. As the productive forces developed, a social division of labour arose, and with it, private property, classes and patriarchy.

[Together with the first appearance of classes came] ... the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also, the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.

— Frederick Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*

Inset above: Long houses, North America.

Right: People of the Tundra, in the Arctic. In early society extended families lived in communalistic households often headed by women.



Slavery at one point or another characterised societies around the globe. Most slave revolts disappeared into the dust of history. A few, like the massive one led by Spartacus, which rocked the Roman Empire, and in which 100 000 slaves lost their lives, survived both time and censorship.

Slave Society

An unusually frank scene from an ancient Egyptian wall painting, which depicts the ruling Pharaohs crushing the slaves underfoot.



I am a worker: one grain of the sands
that fills up the ruts, but also builds the temples.
Perhaps I owe my life to God,
I know the law: "Man, from your own sweat
you will earn your daily bread."

I erected Greece and Rome,
I destroyed arrogant Troy:
my hands are hammers, weapons to create
and destroy at will.
If you see before you any products of labour,
It was I who shaped them, gave them birth.

I am the monarch without throne or crown,
a master who must always obey another.
How many lucky men have I helped enrich,
while I myself remained hungry?
How many stood upon my shoulders?
My orphans have become Mammon and Nabob...

To deprive my person of dignity
was the work of scheming minds;
but gold will indubitably remain gold,
fragrance of earth will elude concealment;
and if I am negated by the corruptors,
who will deny the final judgement of history?

— Amado V. Hernandez,
Filipino poet,
excerpt from *The Worker Hero*



The Roman Empire was erected
on the basis of slave labour.



A depiction from revolutionary China of a peasant rebellion.

England, 1381 - The Year of the Peasants' Revolt

"You who seek equality with Lords are not worthy to live...Serfs you were and serfs you are still; you will remain in bondage, not as before but incomparably harsher. For as long as we live and rule by God's grace over this kingdom we shall use our sense, our strength and our property to suppress you, so that your slavery may be an example to posterity."

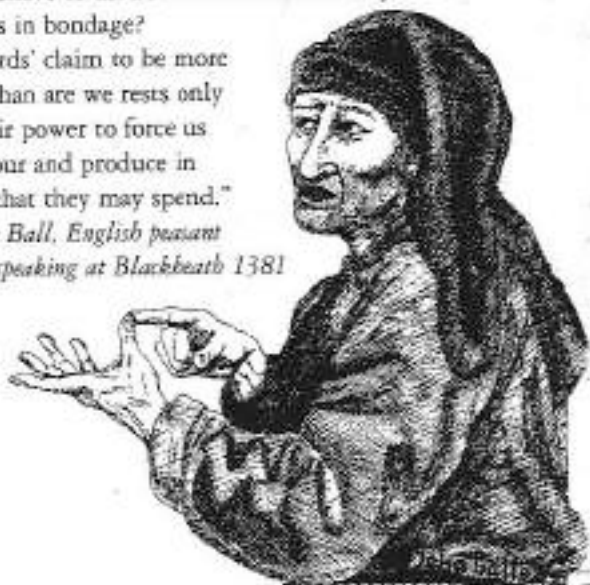
- Richard II,
King of England
1377-99



"Ah, you good people, things cannot go well in England until all property is in common and there are neither serfs nor gentlemen but one united people. How ill they behave to us. For what reason do they hold us in bondage?"

The lords' claim to be more lords than are we rests only on their power to force us to labour and produce in order that they may spend."

- John Ball, English peasant leader speaking at Blackheath 1381



Feudalism generally superseded slavery: the labourer was no longer the possession of the owning class, but was bound to the feudal lord's land. Peasant revolts periodically shattered the rulers' peace. Sometimes these struggles were titanic in scale, such as the Taipei Rebellion in China, which rocked the nineteenth century Ching Dynasty to its foundations. Especially before the rise of the proletariat, the peasant revolts were marked by the limitations of the times. Some peasant movements were co-opted, others were brutally suppressed. Yet even those that failed left burning the embers of hope for a new way of living.



Peasant revolt in Spire, Germany, 1502. The peasant banner features a simple boot, in symbolic opposition to the elegant leather footwear of the nobility.

Rosy Dawn of Capitalism

"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production" — Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I

EAST INDIES.



WANTED

A few spirited young Men, to complete the Regiments of *Artillery* and *Infantry* in the above Service. The Commissariat is supplied exclusively from the *Artillery*, and daily promotions occur in the native Troops, in the Service of the Honourable Company; affording constant openings to young Men of Abilities, Enterprise, and Steady Conduct.

Pensions allowed for length of Service.
MEN MAY ENGAGE FOR A CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS.

At the Honourable East India Company's Orderly Room,

35, Soho Square.

An East India Company poster to recruit British soldiers. It promises reward, adventure and victory. (East Indies refers to what we now call South Asia and South-East Asia).

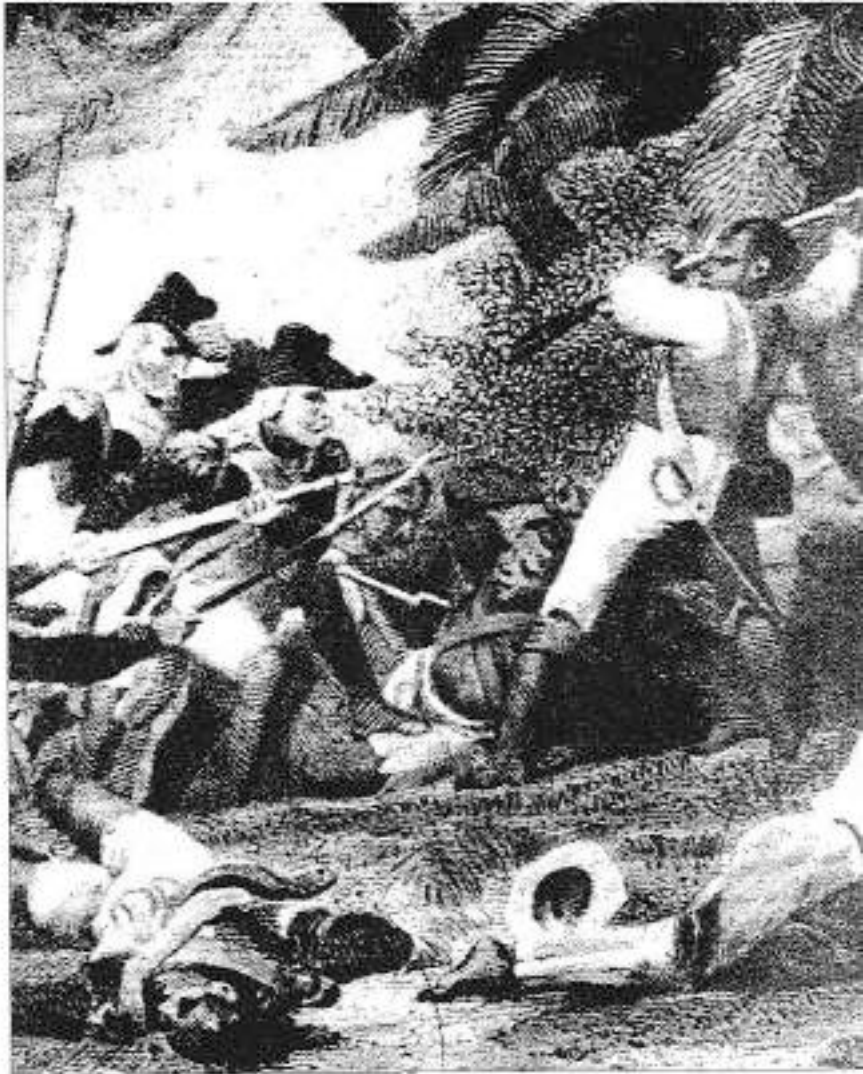


Aztec painting of warriors attacking a troop of Spanish conquistadores entrenched in a building (in what is now Mexico).

Las Casas, a young priest who participated in the conquest of Cuba in the 1500s, reported that the Spaniards "thought nothing of knifing Indians by tens and twenties and of cutting slices off them to test the sharpness of their blades".

Atahualpa the Inca chief declared: "I will be no man's tributary... As to the pope of which you speak, he must be crazy to talk of giving away countries that do not belong to him."

Painting inspired by the slave
revolt led by Toussaint
L'Ouverture in the French
colony of Haiti.
1801.



Captured slave.

"Those who profess to favour
freedom and yet deprecate
agitation are people who want
crops without ploughing the
ground: they want rain without
thunder and lightning, they want
the ocean without the roar of its
many waters... Power concedes
nothing without demand, it
never has and it never will."

- Frederick Douglas, an ex-slave, in
defence of an armed anti-slavery
revolt just prior to the outbreak of
the US Civil War in 1861.

The Birth of the Proletariat

The expansion of trade, the growth of science and technology, the concentration of production into increasingly larger units in modern industry, and the expropriation of peasant land led to the rise of a new class of owners, the bourgeoisie, and a new class of labourers, the proletariat. First established on a large scale in England, the proletariat was characterised by the fact that it no longer laboured on individual parcels of land, as the peasantry had, but was forced to sell its labour power in order to survive. It was, as Marx declared, a class with "nothing to lose but its chains".



"What the bourgeoisie, therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." - *The Communist Manifesto*



In nineteenth-century England children as young as four were employed in the coal and iron mines.



The first generations of proletarians had been driven off the land and forced into the cities into "workhouses" like this, in conditions of urban squalor scathingly depicted in 19th-century novels like those of Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo and Emile Zola.



Child miners in France. Late 1800s.



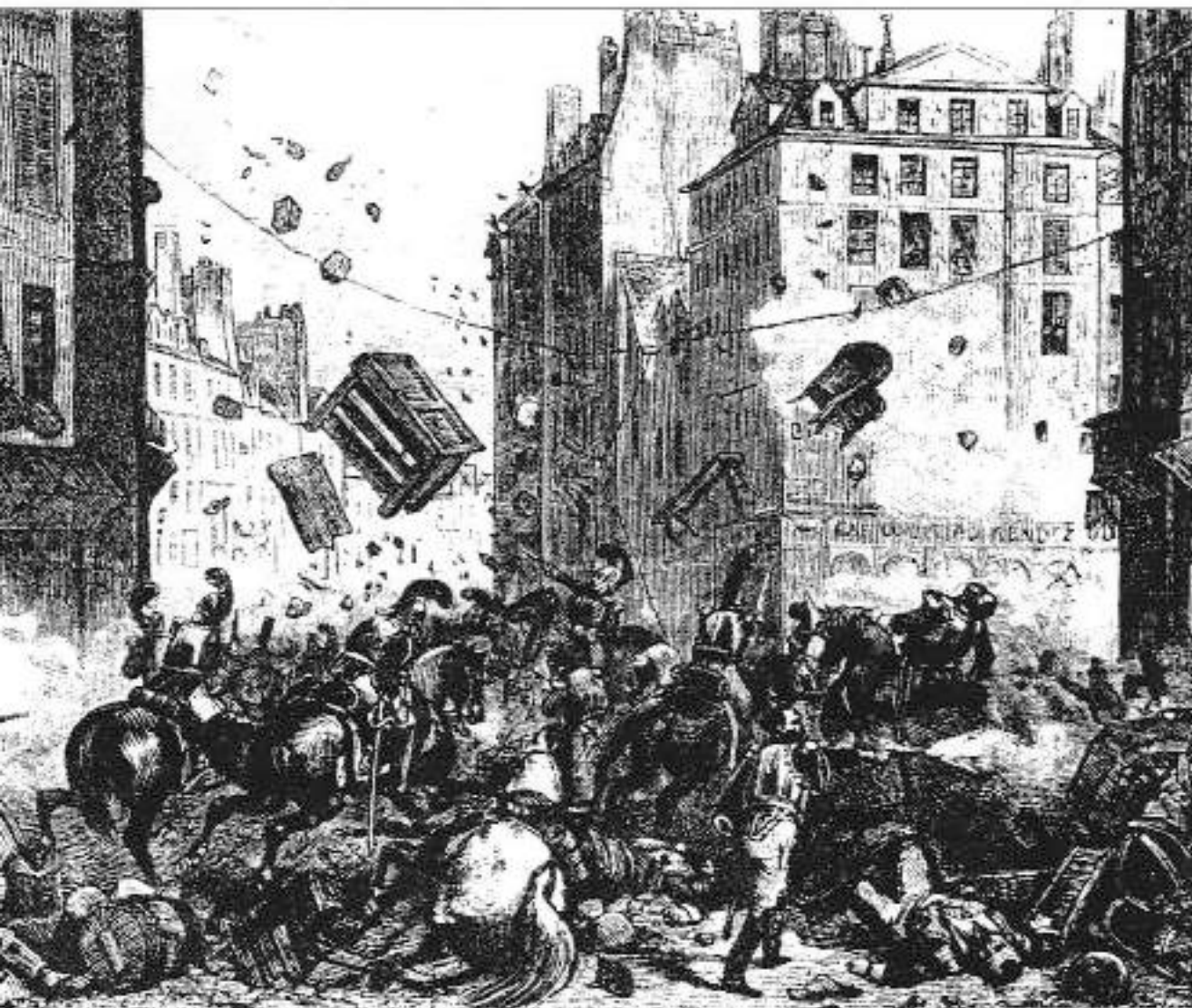
The Potato Eaters. Painting by Vincent Van Gogh, done while he was living among the coal miners in Belgium. 1885.

**The
Bourgeoisie
Seizes Power,
the
Proletariat
Takes the
Stage**

The bourgeoisie expanded and gained strength over several centuries, and increasingly contested power with the feudal classes, first in England in the late 17th century, and then most dramatically a century later in the French Revolution of 1789. But even as the bourgeoisie seized power for the first time, the forces of the new-born proletarian class burst onto the scene, and soon were to establish themselves as the implacable enemy of capitalism.

"The great men who in France prepared men's minds for the coming revolution, were themselves extreme revolutionists. They recognised no external authority of any kind... everything was subjected to the most unsparing criticism: everything must justify its existence before the judgement-seat of reason or give up its existence.... We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealised kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that this eternal Right found its realisation in bourgeois justice; that this equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason ...came into being, and only could come into being, as a democratic bourgeois republic." - Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

French Government forces are bombarded from above in the time-honoured fashion on the streets of Paris in 1830.





Karl Marx and Frederick Engels at the founding congress of the First International, the first time the working class brought together its forces internationally against the bourgeoisie and reactionaries.

“The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win! Proletarians of all countries unite!”
— *The Communist Manifesto*

Louise Michel, a prominent Communeard.



Women at the barricades of the Paris Commune in 1870. The proletariat seized power for the first time, but was murderously suppressed after 90 days. Remarking on the revolutionary women, one frightened bourgeois observer proclaimed: “If France were a nation of women, what a terrible nation it would be.”

Capitalism Expands: Colonisation and Resistance

As capitalism expanded around the world, it took sovereign power in the areas it conquered, establishing outright colonies. Britain's King George II, for instance, was proclaimed Emperor of India. Indigenous cultures and languages were ruthlessly suppressed, their histories rewritten, their economies subjugated to the colonialist country's needs. Everywhere this met resistance, from a variety of class forces.

"I have heard your words, but I do not see any reason why I should obey you. I should rather die. I have no relationship with you and I cannot recall that you have ever given me a pesa or a quarter-pesa or a needle or thread. I search for a reason why I should obey you and I cannot find even the smallest... If you want to fight, I am prepared, but never shall I be your subject. ... Since I was born I have not set foot on the coast; shall I now go there because you call me? I shall not come. If you are strong enough, come and get me. I should rather lose your respect than surrender to you."

A cry of defiance from Machemba, a tribal chief from southern Tanganyika (Lindi) [present-day Tanzania] to the German District Officer at Lindi who had ordered him to give himself up at the coast.

— Quoted in *The Scramble For Africa*, Robin Brooke-Smith



Mural by Mexican artist Orozco depicting the revolutionary upsurge there in the early 1900s.



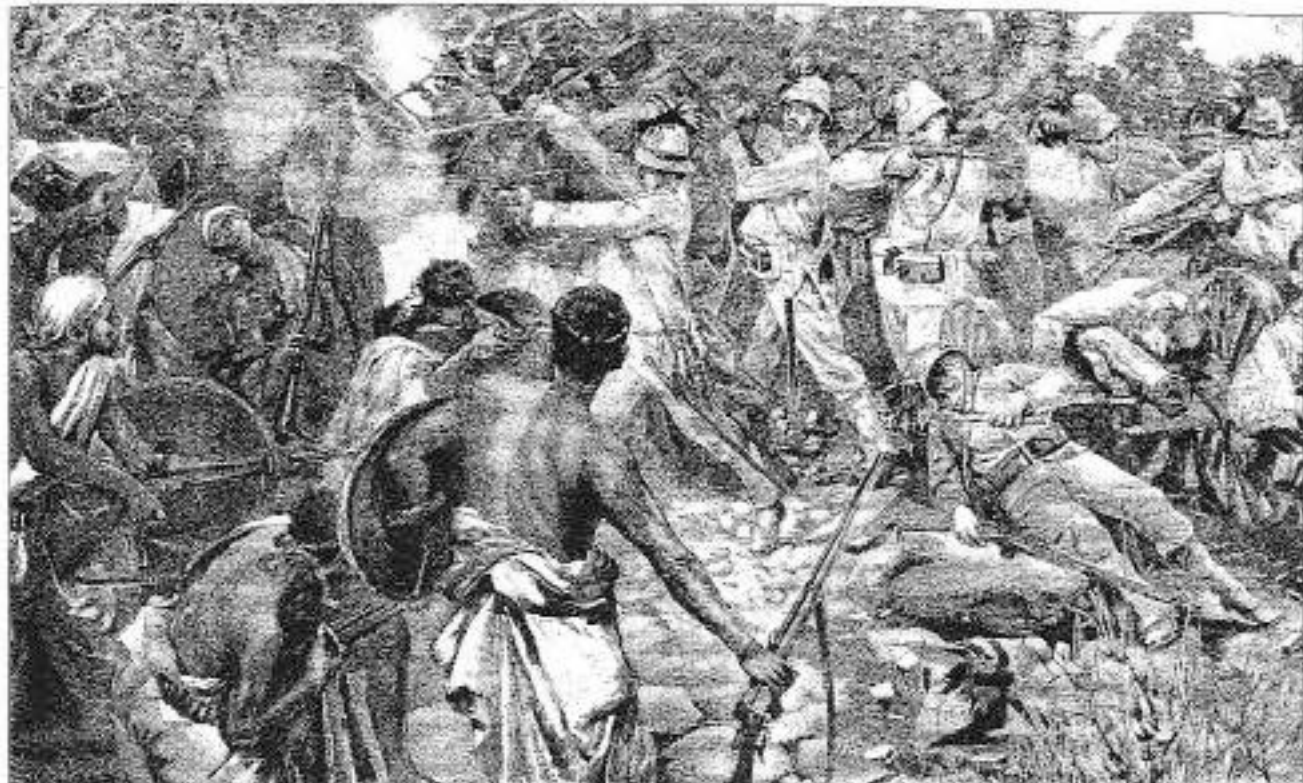
Laxmi Bai, who had ruled a small kingdom in what is now Uttar Pradesh, India, strapped her child to her back and went off to war against the British colonialists, as part of Tantia Topi's war for independence in 1857. She was eventually killed in the fighting.

The United Fruit Co.

When the trumpet sounded, it was
all prepared on the earth,
and Jehovah parceled out the earth
to Coca-Cola, Inc., Anaconda,
Ford Motors, and other entities:
The Fruit Company, Inc.
reserved for itself the most succulent,
the central coast of my own land,
the delicate waist of America.
It rechristened its territories
as the "Banana Republics"
and over the sleeping dead,
over the restless heroes
who brought about the greatness,

the liberty and the flags,
it established the comic opera:
abolished the independencies,
presented crowns of Caesar,
unsheathed envy, attracted
the dictatorship of the flies,
Trujillo flies, Tacho flies,
Cartas flies, Martinez flies,
Ubico flies, damp flies
of modest blood and marmalade,
drunken flies who zoom
over the ordinary graves,
circus flies, wise flies
well trained in tyranny.

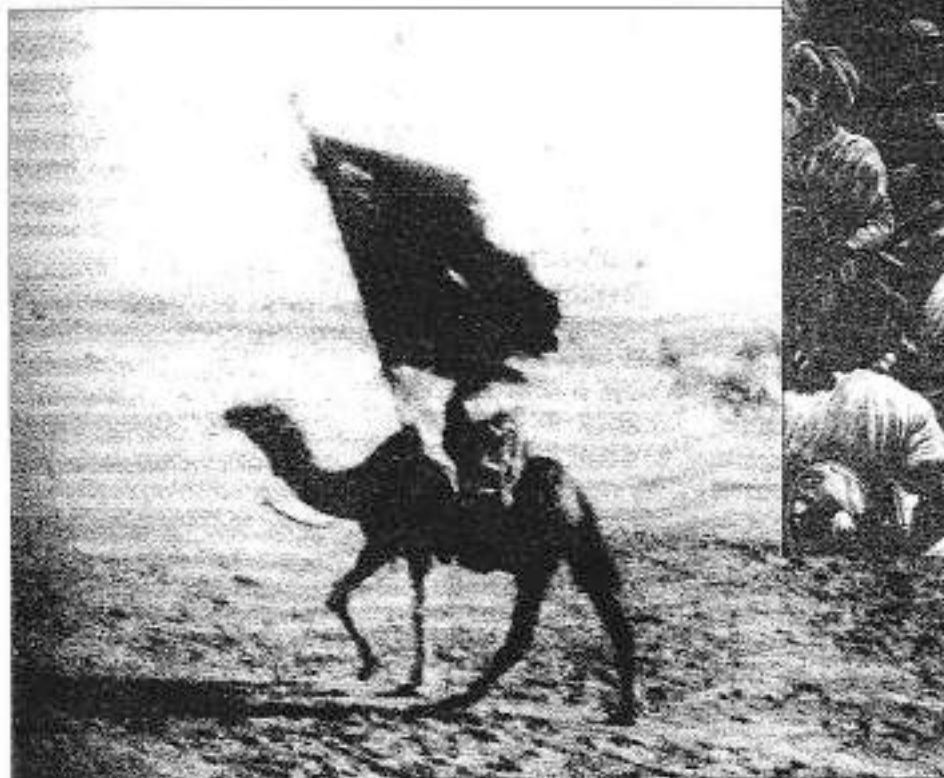
Pablo Neruda, Chilean poet



The Battle of Isandhlwana in 1879. 20,000 Zulu warriors surrounded and obliterated a British colonial force of 1700 men in South Africa.

Right: Afghanistans fighting the British.

Below: The Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, itself under attack from the European powers. Arab forces near the port of Akaba, July 1917.



Imperialism – An Era of War and Revolution

By the dawn of the 20th century, capitalism had divided up the entire world. Monopoly capital had emerged. A handful of wealthy imperialist nations now dominated the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Mankind had entered the era of imperialism, an era marked by wars of colonial plunder and world war, with the imperialist countries mobilising their armies to slaughter the soldiers of other imperialist countries in order to redive the world. But it is also the era of proletarian revolution.

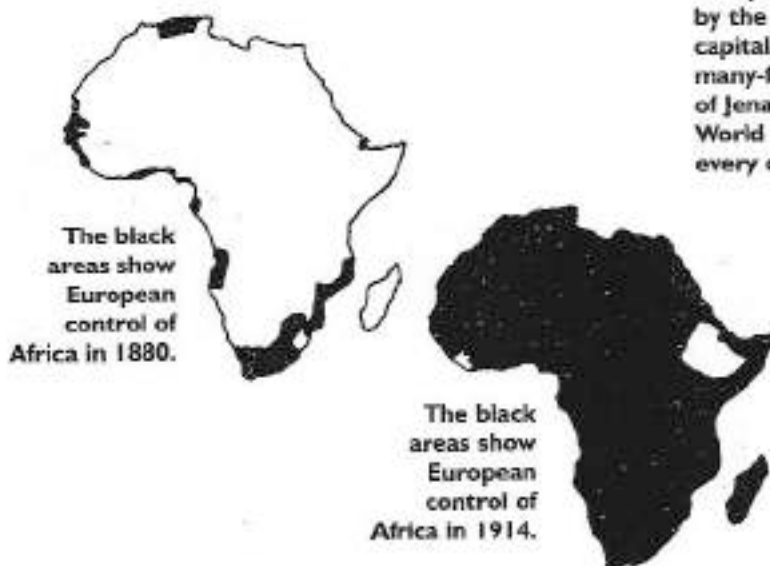
"For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future only redivision is possible, i.e. territories can only pass from one 'owner' to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an 'owner'.

"Hence, we are living in a peculiar epoch of world colonial policy, which is most closely connected with the 'latest stage in the development of capitalism', with finance capital."

— Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*



A depiction of the horrific devastation of World War I by the progressive German painter Otto Dix. The capitalist nations' destructive capacity increased many-fold: in 1806 Napoleon won the decisive Battle of Jena using 1,500 rounds of artillery; by the end of World War I, France was producing 200,000 shells every day.





1898 – The US war against Spain to take possession the Philippines and its other colonies marked the birth of imperialism. The US writer and satirist Mark Twain summarised the war as follows:

"We have pacified some thousands of the islanders and buried them; destroyed their fields; burned their villages, and turned their widows and orphans out-of-doors; furnished heartbreak by exile to some dozens of disagreeable patriots; subjugated the remaining ten millions by Benevolent Assimilation, which is the pious new name of the musket..."

"And so, by these Providences of God – and the phrase is the government's, not mine – we are a World Power."

– from *A People's History of the USA*, Howard Zinn

To Answer

It roars and it rattles, the war's big drum,
demanding live meat to be spitted on iron.
Slave after slave
from all countries come
to handle the steel their fellows die on.
What for?
The earth trembles,
unclothed
unfed;
man splashes in the bloody bath like a zany.
Only that somebody
somewhere
should get
his pocketful of Albania.
Human packs grapple with bloodthirsty yells,
slash after slash the earth's hide flay,
just
for somebody's ships
to pass the Dardanelles
free
of pay.
Soon
the earth
won't have a rib left whole.
They'll tear out her soul, too,
mauling and maiming her
for the only purpose that somebody should
haul

in
a netful of Mesopotamia.
In the name of what,
roughshod,
boots through the cities crash?
Who's in the sky of battle?
Liberty?
God?
Cash!
You, whose life is their sacrifice,
when will you rise,
upright and mighty,
and fling your query right in their face:
WHY
ARE
WE FIGHTING?

– Mayakovsky, Russian poet, 1917

Revolution in Mexico rocked the feudal aristocracy. 1912.



Out of the Horror of World War - Revolution & the World's First Socialist State



The Spartacist revolutionaries in Berlin, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, rose in 1919 under the inspiration of the Bolshevik Revolution, but were bloodily suppressed by the German social-democratic government.



In 1916, Irish revolutionaries seized on the difficulties the British imperialists were facing in the midst of World War I to launch an uprising for power - they were brutally crushed, their leaders hanged.



Above inset: Lenin, the Bolshevik Party leader in disguise - in 1917 the secret police of the Russian government had placed him at the top of their Most Wanted List - but the Bolsheviks went to great lengths to protect their revolutionary leaders.

Above: Sailors on the Aurora were a key force during the Communist-led insurrection.

Lenin analysed how world war shattered the normal functioning of imperialism, stretched the ruling classes thin, and awakened the masses to political life, and how a determined party of revolutionary internationalists could seize on all this to advance the revolutionary cause and seize power. Upsurges shook the world, but it was only in Russia that a revolutionary party would lead the proletariat to power and go on to build socialism.



Below: Building socialism in the USSR, the world's first socialist state. A political education team takes the revolutionary programme to villages in Turkmenistan.



The Russian empire is dying
There are neither the silky sounds of skirts at the Winter Palace
Nor the tsar's prayers at Easter
Nor the cry of chains on the road to Siberia...
Dying, the Russian Empire is dying...
No longer will the yellow mustaches of pomechiks get wet in vodka glasses
No longer will the copper beards of mujiks dying of hunger
burn on the black soil like a handful of blood
And Today

The death

that is approaching the Russian Empire

Has neither a yellow head

Nor a pitchfork

In his hands is a lively red flag

And on his cheeks the blood of youth

Nineteen hundred seventeen

The seventh of November

With his soft and deep voice

Lenin said:

"Yesterday was too early tomorrow too late,

The time is today."

The soldier coming from the front

said "today!"

The trench that killed death out of hunger

said "today!"

With its heavy steel black

cannons, the Aurora

said "today!"

said "today!"

And so wrote the Bolsheviks in history

the date of history's most profound turning point:

Nineteen hundred seventeen,

the seventh of November.

— Nazim Hikmet, Turkish poet. 1925

In This Deadend

He who knocks on the door at
midnight
Has come to kill the light.
We had better hide the light
in the closet...
Those there are butchers
stationed at the crossroads
With bloody clubs and cleavers.
These are strange times, darling...
they excise smiles from lips
and songs from mouths.
We had better hide joy in the closet...

- Ahmad Shamlou, Iranian Poet

"For forty-eight days there raged an unprecedentedly bitter battle, unparalleled in the history of mankind - from August 23, when the entire German force crossed the bend of the River Don and began the all-out attack on Stalingrad...the news of each setback or triumph from that city gripped the hearts of countless millions of people, now bringing them anxiety, now stirring them to elation".

— "The Turning Point in World War Two",
Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-tung

Worldwide economic crisis in the 1930s propelled millions into struggle, and the Communist Parties grouped in the Third International grew in influence. Less than two decades after the slaughter had ended in Europe's trenches, the contradictions of the world imperialist system led to the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain, heightening inter-imperialist rivalry and sharpening attacks on the socialist USSR and the oppressed nations. The world once again exploded into war, on an even greater scale than World War I. The socialist USSR was forced to take the brunt of the German war effort, as 15 to 20 percent of its total population died fighting the Nazi invaders.



Above: German revolutionaries defy the Nazis' ferocious repression in the streets, 1934.

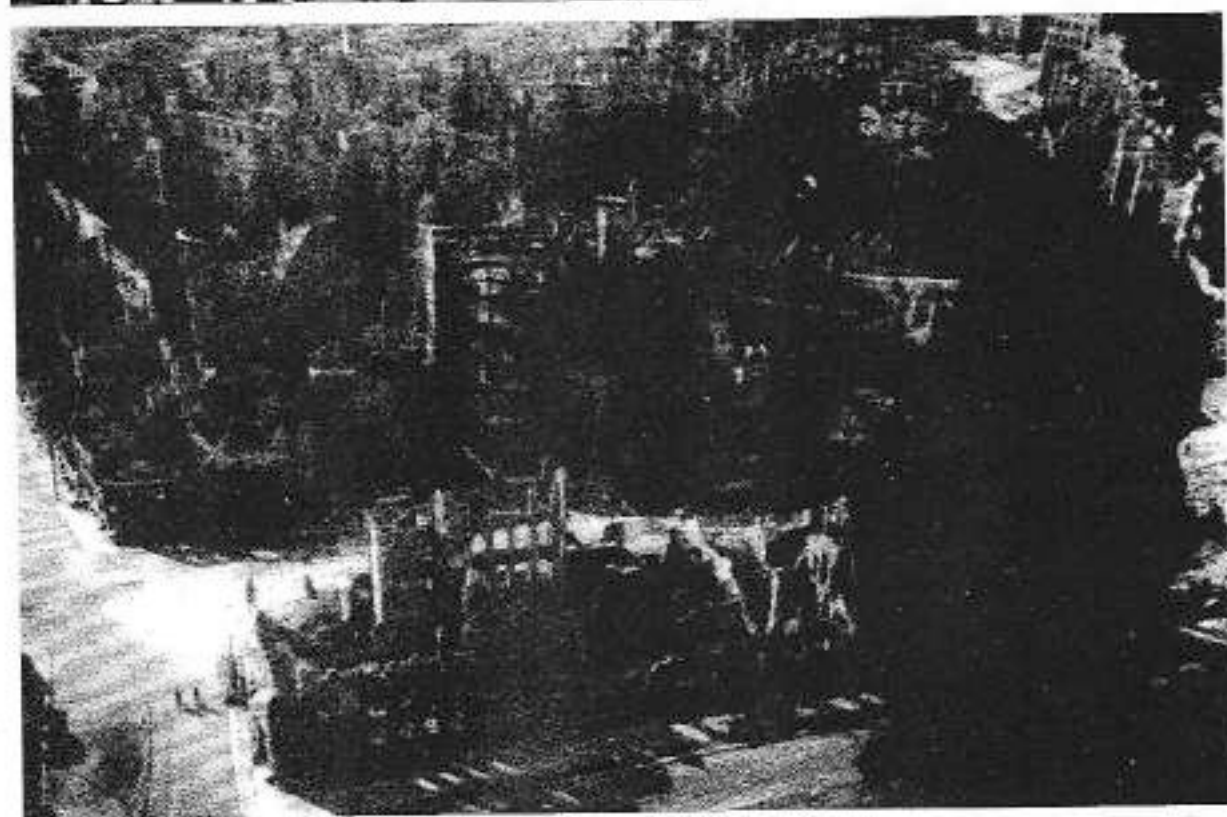
Below: Soviet Red Army soldiers at Stalingrad, 1943.





"And should we forget their centuries of inhuman exploitation, wars of conquest, plunder, condemnation of billions to unimaginable misery, genocide, Auschwitzes and Hiroshimas? "

— RIM Millennium Statement



Imperialist crimes of World War 2:

Top: Jews on their way to Auschwitz, where three million were executed as part of Hitler's "final solution" to the "Jewish problem".

Above, second photo: The devastation after British and US warplanes bombed Dresden, Germany. As many as 80-100,000 people were killed, the overwhelming majority civilians.

Right: Mushroom cloud over Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 after the US dropped the atomic bomb in an effort to terrorise the people of the world.



Left: By the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), about 40,000 volunteers from 50 countries joined the Communist-led International Brigades to fight the fascist General Franco.

The Chinese People Stand Up!



Graduates of the red military academy, where proletarians and peasants were trained to lead the people's war and the new revolutionary political power being built in China's countryside.



Mao in Yanan, 1936.

World War II shook the structures of colonial rule world-wide; in China the revolutionary peasant army, forged under Mao Tsetung's leadership, first turned their guns against the Japanese imperialists, and, upon the war's end, against the attacks of the US-backed Kuomintang regime. People's war proved stronger than the imperialists' high-tech war machine, and on 1 October 1949 the Communist revolutionaries led their victorious troops into the capital, Peking. Twenty years later, Mao again led a revolutionary upheaval, this time against top Party leaders who were taking China down the same capitalist road as Khrushchev had taken the USSR, in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The revolutionary leader Chiang Ching, during the Cultural Revolution.



The Storm Centres of World Proletarian Revolution

A mighty tide of struggle swept the world in the 1960s and early 1970s, leading Mao Tsetung to identify Asia, Africa and Latin America as "the storm centres" of the world proletarian revolution.



Asia

Above: Philippines.



Right: Vietnam.



Above: South Africa.

Africa



Latin America

Left: Chile.



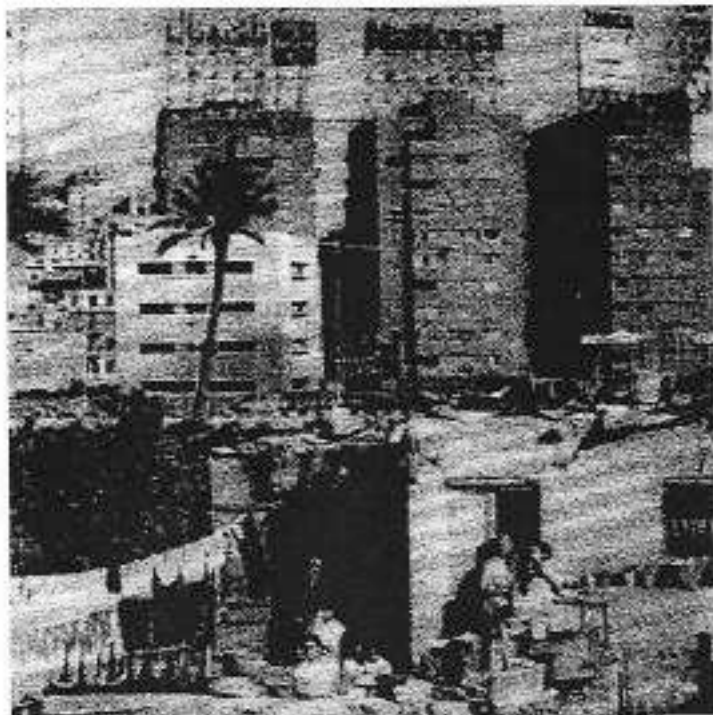
Above: Algeria.

"Lenin analysed long ago the division of the world between a handful of advanced capitalist countries and the great number of oppressed nations comprising the largest part of the world's territory and population which the imperialists parasitically pillage and maintain in an enforced state of dependency and backwardness. From this reality flows the Leninist view, confirmed by history, that the world proletarian revolution is composed essentially of two streams - the proletarian-socialist revolution waged by the proletariat and its allies in the imperialist citadels and the national liberation, or new-democratic revolution waged by the nations and peoples subjugated to imperialism. The alliance between these two revolutionary currents remains the cornerstone of revolutionary strategy in the era of imperialism."

— *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*

The World We Have

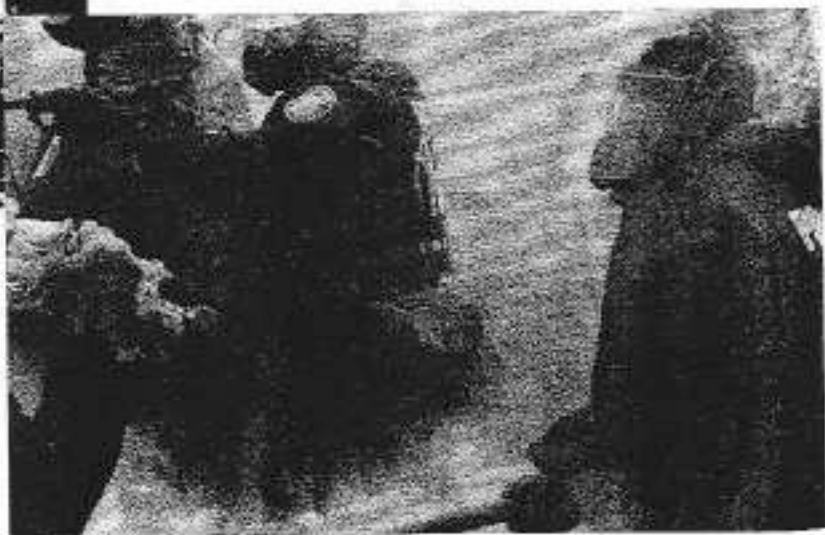
Under capitalism, the technology and knowledge that humanity has built up over countless generations is not used to liberate humanity, but to enrich those who appropriate such technology and to suppress their enemies, in particular the revolutionary movements of the oppressed. Imperialist globalisation has intensified the oppression of hundreds of millions, but it has also swollen the ranks of the international proletariat, drawn their struggles into closer union, and laid the basis for new more powerful upsurges. As the RIM Millenium statement concludes: "Look at the state of humanity - class, national, gender, racial, ethnic, caste oppression, chauvinism, religious bigotry, child labour, trade in human flesh, brutal forms of feudal servitude, lives ground into unbelievable misery. Look at the creative power of the people, at the immense capacity of the productive forces straining on the leashes of an irrational, inhuman system. Enough!"



Cairo: Wretched slums against the backdrop of modern high rises for the wealthy typify many of the world's large cities.



Technology: World War I (above) and today (right).



Despite the enormous increase in productive forces since the nineteenth century, (below) as many as 80 million children are still exploited as child labour.



VALUABLE SLAVES,
(On account of departure)

The Owner of the following named and valuable Slaves, being on the eve of departure for Europe, will cause the same to be offered for sale, at the NEW EXCHANGE, corner of St. Louis and Chancery streets, on Wednesday, May 16, at Twelve o'clock, viz:

1. **ALAN**, a male, aged 21 years, a good cook and accustomed to house and garden work, and a fine specimen of a man.
2. **JOHN**, his son, a male, aged 14 years, a fine tall man and very well adapted for agricultural work, and a good specimen of a man.
3. **JOSEPH**, a male, aged 18 years, for his excellent knowledge of the English language, and his ability to read and write.
4. **JAMES**, his daughter, a female, aged 14 years, speaks French and English, a fine specimen of a girl, and a good housemaid.
5. **DAVIDSON**, a female, aged 16 years, a fine tall specimen of a girl, and a good housemaid.
6. **MARY**, his wife, aged about 30 years, a substantial house-keeper, and a good specimen of a woman.
7. **MARY ANN**, her daughter, a female, aged 1 year, speaks French and English, and is a fine specimen of a child.
8. **JAMES** and **FRANCIS**, a male and a female, aged 12 years, in a fine tall man and woman, and very good specimens of their race.
9. **DEBRA**, a female, aged 10 or 12 years, speaks French and English, and is a fine specimen of a girl.
10. **FRANK**, a male, aged about 14 years, speaks French and English, and is a fine specimen of a man.

The above named Slaves, and the above named children, are all of the most valuable and useful kind, and are offered for sale at a very low price, on account of their departure for Europe.

Quality, Industriousness and Reliability Is What El Salvador Offers You!



Rosa Martinez produces apparel for U.S. markets on her sewing machine in El Salvador. You can hire her for 55 cents an hour!

With it, she can just about do the work of a machine. They make El Salvador one of the best buys in the world. El Salvador has excellent roads and sea transportation, producing Central America's most important exports... and there are no quotas.

Quality, Industriousness and Reliability Is What El Salvador Offers You!



Rosa Martinez produces apparel for U.S. markets on her sewing machine in El Salvador. You can hire her for 33 cents an hour!

With it, she can just about do the work of a machine. They make El Salvador one of the best buys in the world. El Salvador has excellent roads and sea transportation, producing Central America's most important exports... and there are no quotas.

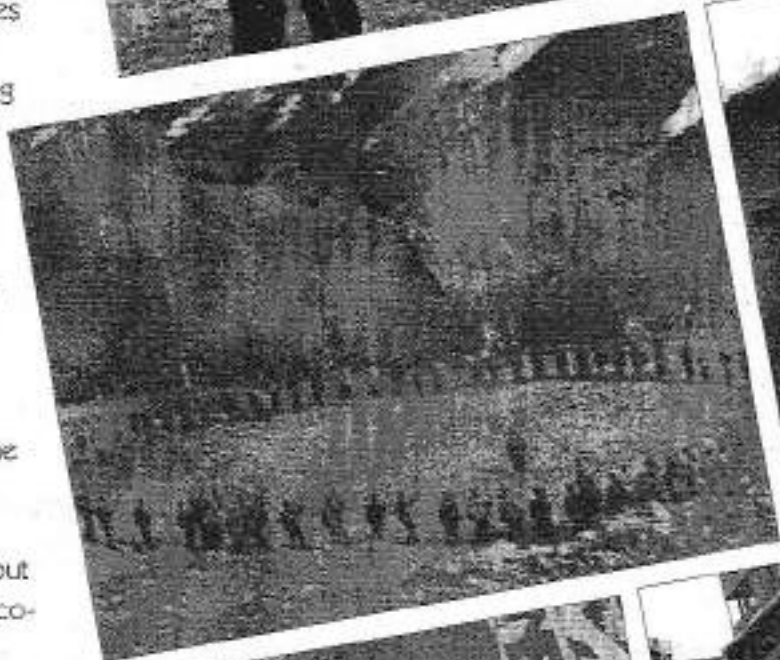
Advertisement for the sale of slaves in 19th century America, followed by ads for the labour power of wage slaves in El Salvador, touting their low hourly wages, which fall by almost half from the 1990 ad to the next year's ad in 1991 (57 US cents to 33 US cents).



Hundreds of millions have been brought into the ranks of the international proletariat since World War II, large numbers of them women.

Toward a Century of People's War!

From India to Berlin, from the Himalayas to the Andes, revolutionary struggle against imperialism rages. It takes many forms, depending on the type of country, but everywhere revolutionaries seek to lead it in accordance with Mao Tsetung's dictum that ultimately "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun". In Peru and Nepal, participating parties in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) are already leading people's war, and everywhere, from Afghanistan to the Americas, from Sri Lanka to the old colonial powers of Europe itself, they are preparing for it. RIM, which groups the core of the world's Maoists, is working towards forging a new communist international, so as to bring about a mighty advance in the world proletarian revolution and hasten the advance to a society without classes, without war, without exploitation, where all humankind co-operates in every field of human endeavour – communism.





Photos, left to right: Row 1: Peru, Iran, Bangladesh. Row 2: Turkey, Nepal. Row 3: Italy, US, Colombia, Germany

Me and our corner grocer,
we're both mightily unknown in America.

Nevertheless,
from China to Spain,
from the Cape of Good Hope
to Alaska,
in every nautical mile,
in every kilometre, I have
friends
and enemies.

Such friends that we haven't
met even once
yet we can die for the same
bread, the same freedom
the same
dream.

And such enemies that they
thirst for my blood --
I thirst for theirs.

My strength
is that I'm not alone in this big world.
The world and its people are no secret in
my heart,
no mystery in my science.

Calmly and openly
I took my place
in the great struggle.

Nazim Hikmet,
Turkish poet

Free Trade - Engine of Growth or Plunder?

FREE TRADE - ENGINE OF GROWTH OR PLUNDER?

For 50 years, the multilateral institutions that have monitored and regulated the functioning of the post-World War II international capitalist economy worked discreetly in the shadows. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the recently created World Trade Organisation (WTO) met in comfort and quiet, yet their decisions regularly sent shock waves around the world. Even a slight movement in interest rates or exchange rates could set in motion gigantic forces that jolted whole economies and shattered the lives of millions. Yet all this took place out of the sight of the people whose lives were so dramatically affected.

In the last year this situation has changed. The increasingly rapacious attacks of the imperialist countries on the economies of the oppressed nations and peoples, along with serious crises, such as in Russia and East Asia, have awakened a cry of resistance, including from a new generation of youth in the imperialist citadels themselves. Mass protests have rocked recent meetings of the lords of finance capital and cast a spotlight on their criminal deeds.

The counter-attack has been rapid and loud. Globalisation is good for you, lectures US President Bill Clinton. However bitter-tasting it may be, it is, as he proclaimed in his 2000 "State of the Union" address, "the central reality of our time"; taking the medicine of free trade and the free market is said to be the only way to growth and prosperity.

In fact, whether globalisation and the promotion of increased trade is "good for you" depends very much on who "you" are; while it has been excellent for a few wealthy owners, for the masses everywhere, particularly in the poorest countries, the last decade of imperialist globalisation has been

one long nightmare. This article will examine the argument that the promotion of "free trade" brings growth and prosperity, in particular the idea that the only way the oppressed nations can achieve growth is by hooking on to the "locomotive" of the imperialist economies, and it will look at the role of the World Trade Organisation in this process.

"DOING WHAT EACH DOES BEST"

At the heart of the conventional argument that trade liberalisation will give rise to widespread benefits and promote economic growth in the oppressed countries is the idea of developing economic specialisation, based on the concept that each country should do more of what it does best (called "comparative advantage" in bourgeois economic theory). The different countries will then trade what they each produce most efficiently, unrestricted by "unfair" tariffs and other protectionist practices, to the general benefit of all, with the most efficient sectors in each country in turn stimulating growth in other sectors.

The global reality concealed behind these egalitarian phrases is that a handful of multinational corporations in the imperialist countries own and control the vast majority of the world's productive forces and trade, whilst the oppressed nations serve essentially as sources of cheap labour and raw materials. In this situation, "doing more of what each does best" means that the oppressed nations should consolidate even further their subordinate role in the global imperialist division of labour.

Consider the impact for the oppressed nations of WTO-style trade liberalisation policies in the area of agriculture. These policies are aimed at strengthening integration into the global market place, reducing tariffs on agricultural products, encouraging specialisation and production for export and easing restrictions on mas-

sive investment flows. The result is the increased penetration of global markets by Western agribusiness corporations, greater trade in food products and, most especially, the ruin of so-called inefficient production units, which basically means small and medium-sized farmers, particularly those growing food for local markets. Some farmers shift to producing for export, others are driven off their farms; every week around the world one million people migrate to the cities. Removing trade barriers to open the floodgates to cheap US grain, for instance, has a particularly ruinous effect on the oppressed countries, where a much greater percentage of the labour force is dependent on agriculture. (While spending on food in the US accounts for only 0.5 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the corresponding figure in Tanzania is 18 per cent, amplifying the effect of rapid changes in the foodstuffs market.)

Take the case of a single country, the Ivory Coast, long hailed as a development model for Africa. Based on capitalist trade logic, agriculture there shifted from local food production to export-oriented cocoa production, until the country came to grow almost one-half of the world's total crop. When the government price stabilisation programme was eliminated, as part of the global process of reducing trade barriers, this, combined with the general trend towards lower raw material prices, led to a 40 per cent fall in the prices the country's small farmers received. Many went under. For the big multinationals, however, this was a welcomed opportunity. Led by the US giant Cargill, they launched a storm of mergers and acquisitions: When the dust settled, the number of big cocoa companies had fallen from 50 to 10, and now it is the companies that set the prices, not the government's stabilisation programme.²

This is typical of the trade-led economic development model. First, re-

moving trade barriers and encouraging specialisation inexorably leads to the concentration of production in ever larger units, internally and internationally; in other words, trade fuels the growth of the big global monopoly corporations. The brisker pace of world trade has in fact been accompanied by an unprecedented wave of corporate mergers and acquisitions in sector after sector.

Indeed, "free trade" is itself a hollow watchword today – this is the era of imperialism, where big monopolies bestride the globe and dominate every major sphere of economic life. The 500 top multinational corporations, most of them based in the US, control 70 per cent of all cross-border trade, and 60 per cent of trade in agricultural products is controlled by US agribusiness firms.³ In practice, expanding trade strengthens the ability of those able to take advantage of world-wide production and marketing networks by stripping away the mechanisms different countries have set up to protect the smaller home-grown industries and agriculture. Bringing small enterprises in particular in the Third World into more direct unfettered rivalry with the Western-based giants is a guarantee that the larger firms will gobble up the smaller ones and extend their penetration and domination of the oppressed countries.

Second, whether a country produces mainly raw materials, like the Ivory Coast, or has a few export-oriented enclaves of industrial production, like parts of East Asia, the dynamics of trade-led development generally strengthen the dependence of the oppressed countries on the global market-place, the imperialist countries and the big multinationals. The growth of the multinationals goes hand in hand with the deepening dependence of the oppressed countries. These countries become increasingly vulnerable to sudden changes in the prices of one or a few products or even to calculated imperialist blackmail, should the imperialist powers decide to use their domination to bring a recalcitrant comprador regime in the Third World to heel. This is exactly what they have done to the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, by closing off the Iraqi oil tap.

This situation is especially alarming with regard to food security. When, as in the Ivory Coast, substantial numbers of farmers are ruined or shift

production to export-oriented cash crops, the country becomes more dependent on food imports. Unlike the imperialist countries, however, where the more highly developed and balanced character of the economy means that fluctuations in the global market-place can be absorbed more easily, in these countries changes in the global market can spell disaster and make it difficult, if not impossible, to pay the food bill. The result is increasing debt and poverty, and the looming spectre of famine.⁴

MODERN ENCLAVES - LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF DEPENDENCE

Proponents of free trade argue that, however wrenching it may be, this kind of development nonetheless puts the country on the path to modernisation, that these modern enclaves will pull ahead other sectors in the economy. But there is a qualitative difference in the impact this kind of development has in the oppressed countries compared with what has taken place in the imperialist countries. In the semi-feudal and backward conditions that generally characterise the former countries, the development of larger, more modern agricultural farms is not linked to the development of an integrated national economy. The big modern enclaves of agricultural production (such as the banana plantations in Central America; see the accompanying "Banana Wars" article) are almost exclusively oriented for export, to serve foreign, mainly imperialist, markets. In addition, they are built on, and conditioned by, larger areas of semi-feudal agricultural production. The attractiveness of cheaper inputs, like labour, in the oppressed nations is dependent on the perpetuation of these semi-feudal conditions. For instance, Central American banana plantation workers are lowly paid in part because much of the cost of maintaining and reproducing future generations of these workers is based on semi-feudal subsistence agriculture. Developing commodity production in these imperialist-sponsored "modern" enclaves does not set the oppressed nation's economy on a path that will lead to the kind of relatively more integrated and balanced development seen in the capitalist countries. Instead, it binds the country even more firmly to imperialism, with these modern enclaves func-

tioning as an integral but subordinate part of the world imperialist market, links chaining the country to imperialism, while semi-feudal relations are simultaneously propped up in large sections of the economy.

The same basic dynamics characterise trade-led growth in sectors besides agriculture, such as the high-tech sector in India's Bangalore. Globalisation advocates like to tout Bangalore as proof of the "success" of the trade-led model, India's "Silicon Valley" – yet, is it a harbinger of the coming modernisation of India? Not at all. The tens of thousands of software engineers working there are overwhelmingly linked to, and serve, giant Western corporations, rather than the all-round development of the Indian economy. Moreover, their labour greatly depends on the existence of the same kind of impoverished semi-feudal conditions that underpin the development of the modern agricultural enclaves described above.

Consider what goes into a situation where, as one Swiss computer executive boasted, it is possible to buy three Indian programmers for the cost of one Western programmer. While the globally-minded Swiss computer executive is a happy man, his hiring of the Bangalore computer programmer needs to be situated in the context of average wages there, which are not one-third of those in the West, but more like *one-thirtieth* (GDP per capita in the Indian state of Karnataka, where Bangalore is located, is roughly US \$1 per day). The computer programmer's ability to work is ultimately linked to his family's ability to hire even lower-paid labour, thereby "freeing" the programmer to obtain an education and later to work. Virtually every computer programmer in India has domestic servants to cook, clean, shop and do childcare. In other words, as in the case of agriculture, the functioning of this modern hi-tech enclave not only serves imperialism, but makes use of, and props up, the more exploitative conditions of semi-feudal servitude in the broader Indian economy.

Liberal critics of globalisation often point to the poorer areas of the world and complain that they are being "left out" of the process of globalisation. While it is true that certain areas, such as sub-Saharan Africa, are largely written out of imperialist investment plans, it is also true that

the impoverishment of the oppressed countries does not mainly result from their being "left out" of the imperialist economy, but more fundamentally reflects the very way that they are *integrated* into it. Expanding trade does not change this dynamic, but heightens the distorted, uneven and fragmented character of the economies of the oppressed nations. But this is hardly surprising—after all, when Western corporations like Compaq and Microsoft set up operations in places like Bangalore, their goal is profits, not development.

WHO OWNS THE INVENTION OF FIRE?

WTO-sponsored trade liberalisation strengthens the commodity system throughout the world and extends its embrace to include new fields of human activity. Everything has a price, everything is now up for sale on the global market-place. At the cutting edge of this ugly trend is the recently intensified reinforcement of "intellectual property rights", including such examples as:

- One US company has attempted to patent the DNA of a Guatemalan woman who is thought to have immunity to cancer, to be used in marketing a medicine.
- The US multinational, W.R. Grace Corporation, has patented the use of a key part of the neem tree (*azadirachtin*), even though Indian farmers and doctors have used neem tree products for centuries in home remedies. This raises the spectre that they would have to begin paying the US company for the right to continue this age-old practice that their own ancestors developed!
- In 1997, over a million Indian small farmers and peasants rallied against a similar threat, that large agribusiness corporations were going to patent seeds indigenous to the Third World countries and then force the peasant farmers to pay for the very seeds that they themselves had used and developed over the centuries, as well as against the threat of "terminator technology". This refers to a genetic engineering technique used to create sterile plants with infertile seeds, so that farmers would be forced to purchase seed every growing season, instead of using the age-old practice of saving seed from one harvest in order to plant

the next.

The expansion of intellectual property rights under the WTO is thus legitimising obvious cases of the private appropriation of the collective labour and knowledge of the masses, in what has come to be called "patent piracy". Indeed, intellectual property rights bear the unmistakable stamp of the workings of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, between private appropriation and socialised production: a complex division of labour has arisen under capitalism that combines mass labour with the machine system, in a profoundly socialised production process, yet the fruits of this process are appropriated privately, by a small class of owners, the bourgeoisie.

With regard to ideas, no knowledge, from the invention of fire to the present, has ever been essentially an individual product but has always involved a complex interaction of individual effort, collective understanding and social interaction. With the development of capitalism, the production process, including the production of knowledge, was turned into a qualitatively more socialised act, and this is even more the case today. The production of a new computer software programme, for instance an operating system like Microsoft Windows, can involve the co-ordinated effort of thousands of software engineers. It is most definitely not the result of the "genius" of one or two owners like Bill Gates. Furthermore, the "graphical user interface" (GUI) upon which Windows is based, was pioneered not by Microsoft, but by countless other software developers, relying directly on the accumulated experience of an even larger number of users. As Lenin summarised in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, highlighting the immense concentration of technical progress and invention by the giant multinational "trusts", as they were then called: "...the development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when commodity production still 'reigns' and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, [but] it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the 'geniuses' of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialised production; but the immense progress of mankind which achieved this socialisation, goes to benefit...the

speculators."

The protection of intellectual property rights reflects and reinforces the basic social divisions marking the world, including between the class of owners and the class of labourers, as noted by Lenin above, as well as between the imperialist and oppressed nations. With regard to the latter, intellectual property rights are an effort to safeguard the imperialist countries' monopoly of science and technology, to reinforce their position as the "brains" of the global economic system. In this way, for example, the multinationals ensure that they can relocate production processes to the oppressed nations, so as to benefit from lower wages and production costs, whilst not risking their control of the technical know-how involved in the process. Of the 3.5 million patents held world-wide, only 200,000 of these, about 6 per cent, are held in the Third World, whereas multinational corporations directly hold 85 per cent of all patents. WTO policies will only reinforce this uneven and oppressive division of labour, wherein the imperialist countries seek to further centralise their control over the nerve centres of the world's economic activities.

The list of areas targeted by the WTO for trade liberalisation is extensive. Services like health care are a top priority: US "negotiating objectives" in Seattle included "encouraging more privatisation" and "allowing majority foreign ownership of health care facilities". Patent protection, an application of intellectual property rights, has already been indicted as being responsible, in part, for the criminal situation in the Third World, particularly southern Africa, with regards to AIDS victims. The exorbitant prices the pharmaceutical multinationals demand for their patent-protected AIDS medicines make treatment prohibitively expensive. This means that millions of Africans have died and are continuing to die without treatment and many thousands of HIV-infected mothers are transmitting the disease in childbirth, which can often be prevented by the proper drugs.²

The expansion of WTO regulations will also result in further degradation of the environment. It shifts the burden of proof with regard to health risks, rejecting the "precautionary principle" that the burden should be on the multinationals to prove their prod-

ucts are harmless, instead requiring consumers to prove that they are harmful. This logic underpinned the recent decision to require the European Union to accept hormone-treated US beef, even though an EU panel had found that some of the hormones could cause cancer. The WTO will also reinforce the existing policy of treating concerns like people's health as "externalities": since they do not directly enter into the commodity-producing process under the ownership and control of the

corporation, and are thus "external" to it, such concerns do not figure into "free trade" considerations. The anarchic process of trade-driven globalisation is fuelling the rise of sprawling, heavily polluted megacities in the Third World, like Mexico City and New Delhi, where it is estimated that one-third of the children are afflicted with allergic bronchitis—an "externality" for which of course no capitalist bears any responsibility, according to the rules of the "free market" system.⁶

Who actually benefits from expanded trade? While a full examination of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, a few facts are telling:

Global inequality has widened since the dawn of capitalism, along with the general rise in trade: the average standard of living in the richest countries was only about three times higher than in the poorest countries in

The "Banana War"

The so-called "banana war" illustrates some of the workings of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), what is at stake and whose interests it serves. This conflict pitted the US and its multinational banana producers against the European Union (EU) and its own banana production scheme. The WTO ruled against the EU, opening its markets and ultimately its former colonies further to the US banana-producing multinationals.

First, a quick look at the banana industry: the "dollar banana" accounts for 80 per cent of the fruit eaten in the imperialist countries, and is controlled by 3 companies, Dole, Del Monte and Chiquita. "Dollar banana" production tends to be concentrated in large plantations in more industrial conditions, with greater reliance on techniques like chemical treatment. The industrial plantations in Central America apply more than ten times as much chemical treatment as the average for intensive agriculture in the imperialist countries. According to the *New Internationalist* magazine, one of these chemicals, used to kill a parasitic nematode worm that plagues bananas, resulted in the mass sterilisation of tens of thousands of plantation workers from Central America and the Caribbean to the Philippines and West Africa.

Chiquita is a direct descendant of the United Fruit Company. Latin Americans used to call this company "*el pulpo*", because like "an octopus" its tentacles stretched into every corner of life. In 1949 United Fruit owned 3.5 million acres of land in Central America and the Caribbean, but its heart was in Guatemala, where it owned every mile

of railroad. In 1954, when the Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz threatened to nationalise almost 200,000 hectares of its land, United Fruit promoted a US-backed coup. Military juntas continued to reign for several decades, and were behind the infamous "dirty war" there, which killed and "disappeared" tens of thousands of dissidents, most of them poor Indians. These puppet regimes repressed any challenges to US domination, including from foreign or native rivals and the workers in the fields, guaranteeing a situation of low wages, cheap transport and unrivalled domination. Today, like Nike (the US manufacturer of shoes and sports equipment), Chiquita has tried to distance itself from the slave-like conditions existing on the banana plantations by operating through a network of smaller companies that are formally independent but practically dependent on it (for example, the smaller "independent" producers sell all their fruit to a single multinational year after year). Carl Lindner, head of American Financial Group, which owns Chiquita Brands International, made a half-million dollar donation to Clinton's US Presidential campaign shortly before the US issued its complaint against the EU banana scheme. While of course Clinton is not a simple stooge of the banana lobby, the US government, like other imperialist governments, protects the interests of its own multinationals.

The only rival to the "dollar banana" is the "euro banana", which depends on the complex system of quotas, licenses and tariffs set up by the Lomé Convention of 1975. This granted preferential EU status for bananas from 42 former European colonies in the African, Caribbean and Pacific areas.

"Euro bananas" tend to be produced on smaller farms and co-operatives. France still unapologetically treats its banana-producing former colonies as part of its empire; for instance, Martinique and Guadeloupe are officially still part of France itself, as was Algeria before its war of national liberation. While the European powers claimed the banana regime was to provide support for these poor, often newly independent countries as they made a transition to self-reliance, in practice most financial support never reaches the producers, but instead is siphoned off by traders and retailers in the European countries themselves. More than 90 per cent of what consumers in the imperialist countries pay for bananas remains in those countries, with the largest chunk (34 per cent) going to the large supermarket chains, with only 5 per cent going to the producers. Moreover, the countries' preferential status has ultimately worked against restructuring them in a more diversified manner. The result is that in many of these countries there are more people dependent on banana production than in the countries of their "dollar banana" rivals.

It was these two groups of predators, each with their own strengths and weaknesses, that confronted each other in the recent banana war. While the war touched on a variety of issues, at its heart was the ability of these imperialists to exercise their Mafia-style "protection" over their former colonies.

The information in this article was based on: the *New Internationalist*, October 1999; "Secret life of a banana", *Guardian*, UK, 10 November 1999; and Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, Verso, London, 1999.

1800; in 1900 it was about six times higher; and by 2000 it was about 20 times higher.

- 57 per cent of the world's population receive only 6 per cent of the world's income, living on less than US \$2 per day.

- In the period 1980 to 1996, as trade expanded at an unusually brisk pace, 59 countries experienced an actual decline in GDP per capita.⁷

- Within the imperialist countries, polarisation is also increasing. In 1995, four out of five male employees in the US earned 11 per cent less per hour in real terms than they did in 1973, and for the poorest third of the working population the fall was 25 per cent. During that same period, per capita GDP rose by a full third in real terms and the richest 1 per cent doubled their wealth. World-wide, wages as a share of national wealth have fallen, while the portion going to interest and corporate profits has risen.⁸

This correlation of trade expansion with the rise in polarisation globally and within countries is no mere coincidence. Over 150 years ago, Marx pointed out that the working of capital tends to produce the accumulation of impoverishment and misery at one pole and great wealth at the other. Bourgeois trade experts even expected this trend. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that Europe, the US and Japan would be the "big winners" from the new trade system, receiving two-thirds of the benefits, while *The Economist Intelligence Unit* (April 1995) agreed that sub-Saharan Africa would be "worse off". The *Wall Street Journal* (15 August 1994) acknowledged that the African countries would be driven "further into the trench" of starvation, debt and poverty.⁹

THE WTO - "FIX IT OR NIX IT"

The popular slogan of "Fix it or Nix it" refers to the thinking that the WTO should be either reformed or dumped. Many WTO critics argue that whatever happens, trade will continue to expand, so the only real choice is to make sure that this takes place under conditions that are as "fair" as possible for the world's poor. Many of their arguments focus on the way the WTO is organised, exposing how it is "rigged" against the poor countries, enabling the richer countries to more

easily bully them into submission. While the US trade delegation in Seattle, for instance, consisted of hundreds of corporate and legal experts, many of the poorer countries had trouble fielding any delegation at all, and thirty countries cannot even afford to maintain a representative at the WTO's Geneva headquarters.

It is also undoubtedly the case that despite all the WTO's talk of a "level playing field", the imperialist countries use their dominance to maintain double standards. While presenting themselves as fighters for free trade against national protectionism, they are the biggest practitioners of protectionism when it comes to sectors they consider vital to their economies. In 1996, combined US and EU domestic support for their farmers, who constitute less than 3 per cent of their total population, amounted to US\$110 billion (about US\$29,000 per farmer in the developed countries). In contrast, India's domestic support to its hundreds of millions of farmers worked out to a negative \$23.7 billion. In other words, India, through levies of various kinds on its agricultural products, taxes its farmers rather than subsidises them. The list of features characteristic of an uneven playing field, structurally biased in favour of the imperialist countries, could go on and on.

The point is that a serious look at the organisational structure of the WTO shows that it is indeed dominated by the imperialist countries - "the game is rigged". But is it true that if somehow the structure and policies of the WTO could be "unrigged", if the heavy hand of the imperialists could be lifted and trade regulations made more equal, trade could be made to function more fairly?

It is crucial to understand that even the most egalitarian trade rules under imperialism will inevitably work to the ultimate advantage of the imperialist countries and the giant monopoly corporations. Insofar as there is any equality under bourgeois law, it treats unequal things equally, as Anatole France, the French radical, sardonically pointed out over a century ago, when he quipped that the law, in its majestic equality, forbids the poor man and the rich man alike from sleeping under the bridges at night. Just so, even the most egalitarian liberalisation in the area of investment, for example, would only mean that US corporations and Bang-

ladeshi, Ecuadoran, Algerian and other oppressed country corporations would all have the right to purchase and exploit land, banks, hospitals, and the like in each other's countries - and just who is going to be dining on whom is only too apparent.

What else could it mean to treat even-handedly a world that has been so sharply divided for generations into imperialist and oppressed countries? At the very core of the WTO's functioning is the principle, common to every capitalist society, that all commodities are exchanged at their "equal value" (for instance, grain increasingly trades at one "global price"), thus covering over the fundamentally unequal position of the producers themselves (a grain farmer in the US produces up to 1000 times as much as their counterpart in the Third World). This inevitably allows bigger, more powerful capital - imperialist capital - to gobble up smaller capitals and further expand its sphere of operations.

One example of the way that this principle is applied by the WTO is its basic enforcement arm, the dispute settlement system. As the ultimate sanction, WTO rules allow for retaliatory tariffs in the case of unfair trade practices by one country against another. So to punish an unfair trade practice, large imperialist countries like the US and small neo-colonial regimes like Peru or Sri Lanka each have the right to use retaliatory tariffs against the other's products! The oppressed country will of course find it nearly impossible to make even the tiniest impact on US exports.

"NIX" THE WHOLE SYSTEM

The imperialist countries and their ruling classes have, through decades of global domination, accumulated vastly greater forces of production in their own lands, they control the purse strings of global finance and, ultimately, they control far superior military forces to ensure that any basic challenges to their mastery will be suppressed. Under these conditions, further trade liberalisation under the WTO baton will lead to the intensification of global competition, the growth of the multinational corporations and the heightened dependence of the oppressed nations. In every nation, the global monopolies will pit the proletarians in their enterprises against each other,

using intensified exploitation in one area to batter down wages and working conditions in others, in their never-ending pursuit of profit.

In such a situation, it is important to cast away illusions that one or another adjustment in the WTO could make for «fair trade», to go beyond trying to pressure the WTO and the other multilateral institutions and to target them squarely as representatives of a global imperialist system that itself must be fought and defeated. Capitalist trade is no more eternal than capitalism itself, and like all empires, it will pass into the pages of history. Arguing that the only «realistic» option is to try to reform imperialist institutions, like the WTO, is no more «realistic» than arguing that under the Roman Empire the slaves should have focused their struggle on getting the Roman Senate to improve the laws governing slavery. Slave Rome was overthrown, and so too will be the wage-slave US and the other imperialist powers. What is needed is not calls to reform the unreformable institutions, but to stand with the revolts of the modern slaves and work to put an end to the system of wage-slavery itself.

This revolutionary perspective is far more grounded in reality than the notion that the imperialist countries and their multinational corporations, which have for over a century now plundered the Third World nations and exploited their own proletarians, will suddenly have a change of heart and develop a soft spot for their victims. The oppressed nations are not poor because their economies are insufficiently linked to the imperialist «engines of growth»; they are poor because they are tightly bound to the imperialist engines of plunder. Breaking free of this network of dependency and oppression requires breaking free of imperialism and the embrace of the global market. And the way to do this has already been forged.

Mao Tsetung and the Chinese people showed how this could be done by making revolution, ripping the lifelines of the economy out of the hands of the imperialists and their comprador agents. Agriculture was collectivised and made the central focus of the economy – «take grain as the key link», Mao declared. Instead of «doing more of what they did best» within the existing imperialist division of labour, the Chinese revolutionaries did what was

best for the masses – they rejected the conventional wisdom of the specialisation and development of a few sectors for export to the global market and pursued all-round development, emphasising planned proportional growth between different sectors, so as to build a self-reliant economy that could stand up against imperialist invasion or blackmail and serve world revolution. The uneven, distorted character of the Chinese economy, a heritage of semi-colonial development, was reorganised to put people's needs first, in particular the needs of the peasants who formed the bulk of China's population. There were no enclaves like those in today's Guangzhou region of China, where a handful of capitalists benefit from the enslavement of hundreds of thousands of workers, mainly women, in modern sweatshops controlled directly by the imperialists. What was built instead was an economic system where the living conditions of the basic masses steadily improved. Revolution could do this only because it put political power in the hands of the masses.

As people's wars advance and more countries break free of imperialism, a new kind of trade will develop, in a way never before seen in history. Trade amongst countries where the masses hold power will reflect the planned, co-ordinated efforts of the people to use the products of their labour to advance revolution and «put right» a world that has been disfigured and scarred by the workings of imperialism. Instead of forging chains of dependence and subordinating some sections of the world to others, as now, trade will instead be used as a tool to help break down dependence, to serve the self-reliant efforts of the people and to strengthen the bonds of mutual solidarity between the labourers of every country. Instead of enshrining and expanding «free trade» – i.e. the law of the jungle – as the WTO does, in order to hide and reinforce the continuing plunder of the oppressed nations by the imperialist powers, trade will be organised in order to prioritise all-round development in those areas of the world that have been hit hardest by imperialism, as part of the effort of the proletariat in power to consciously combat the unequal and distorting legacy of imperialism and hasten the advance to world communism.

Those who hate WTO-sponsored

globalisation and everything it stands for need to ask the question: what is in truth the «central reality of our time»? Is it, as Clinton imperiously proclaimed, globalisation and free trade, or is it the power of the masses when they rise up in revolution?

footnotes

1. Arthur Dunkel's final report on GATT, cited in Pratap Chatterjee Aajkal, GATT, 1993.
2. «Bitter Cocoa», *Libération*, Paris, 13 April 2000.
3. Larry Elliott and Dan Atkinson, *The Age of Insecurity*, Verso, London, 1999, p. 223.
4. Obviously other factors are also involved. For instance, in the mid-1990s, 12 of the 16 IMF structural adjustment programmes in Africa led to cuts in education spending. This is in countries where millions of adults, particularly women, lack basic literacy skills, and despite the fact that bourgeois experts widely hold that education is the single most important factor favouring development. In one of these countries, Ethiopia, up to 50 million people face the spectre of famine. («The IMF on Trial», *Guardian*, London, 15 April 1999).
5. Here, in the area of health care, is another tragic example of the limitations of this formal equality – masking real inequality – with which WTO policy treats the imperialist and oppressed nations. While public health systems are key components of health care delivery in all the rich countries (with the exception of the US, where private health insurance plays this role), in South Asia only 20 per cent of drugs are dispensed through the public health care system, while 80 per cent are purchased directly by individuals. What will be the effect of the seemingly egalitarian WTO enforcement of patent protection and the consequent support for global drug prices? Not only will it become more difficult for South Asians to buy medicines because of their much lower incomes, but, in addition, unlike in the West, most of them have to pay directly out of their own pockets. Seemingly «equal» trade policies have a profoundly unequal impact. Even fewer South Asians will be able to afford life-saving medicines, while drug company profits are at an all-time high.
6. *The Global Trap*, Hans-Peter Martin and Haraki Schuman, p. 27.
7. Martin Khor, *Rethinking Liberalisation and Reforming the WTO*, The Third World Network Internet site, 28 January 2000.
8. *The Global Trap*, pp. 117-18.
9. Percy Barnevik, head of Asea Brown Boveri (ABB), the Swedish mechanical engineering giant, voiced his fear that: «If companies do not rise to the challenge of poverty and unemployment, the tensions between the haves and have-nots will lead to a marked rise in violence and terrorism.» *The Global Trap*, p. 231.

Contemporary Fiction

The two novels reviewed here, by Arundhati Roy from India and Barbara Kingsolver from the US share in different social contexts and historical settings the common theme of women's oppression. By introducing cultural reviews into the pages of AWTW, we are neither espousing the views of the authors nor implying that they uphold the political analysis contained in the magazine.

We hope to acquaint our readers with important progressive cultural works in future issues. Different class ideologies contend sharply in this sphere, which has an important influence on how large sections of people look at the world and their relationship to it. We encourage you to submit suggestions (and/or review proposals) covering any genre – theatre, literature, film, music, fine art and others. We are looking for art and literature that – like these two novels – unmasks the intolerable burden of the existing order with its diverse faces and features and stirs the imagination of people struggling to create a different one. We also count on you to help make known the rich material covering all regions of the world, about our class and its ambition, which is often ignored or suppressed by the imperialist culture industry.

The God of Small Things

by Arundhati Roy

Random House, New York, 1997

By J.R.

The widely acclaimed novel, *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy, is about anything but small things. It mounts a blistering attack on the degenerate moral system in which caste oppression and male domination are tightly intertwined, a situation that is familiar far beyond India's borders.

The scene is the verdant and lush state of Kerala in southern India in 1969, saturated with banana flowers, vine-covered trees, jackfruit, wild pepper, cormorants, purple herons, giant spiders, young rice fields and old rubber trees. It is a world seemingly at peace, while, in a scarcely-veiled reference to Vietnam, "further east, in a small country with similar landscape (jungles, rice fields, communists), enough bombs were being

dropped to cover all of it in six inches of steel". The intricately woven story shifts between past and present, and offers the reader alternative interpretations. While only slight reference is made to it in the book, during this period in India a group of revolutionary communists called Naxalites were sinking roots among the masses and challenging the so-called communists who had deserted revolution and taken the parliamentary road.

The story unfolds through the eyes of Rahel Kochamma. Rahel and her twin brother Esta are inseparable. They are seven years old. Whenever Esta has a dream or whenever he is molested by the Lemondrink vendor, Rahel knows it even though she wasn't there. Their view of the small things in their surroundings is constantly juxtaposed to the big things that unfold in the grown-up world where the social system dictates the oppression of women, where caste and class relations obscenely crush the people they love. "Other children their age learned other things. Rahel and Esta learned

how history negotiates its terms and collects its dues from those who break its laws. They heard its sickening thud and smelled its smell."

Ammu Kochamma, the twins' mother, is a Savarna Christian from an educated upper middle class, high caste family, who escapes the religious orthodoxy and beatings of her entomologist father by going off to Calcutta and marrying a Bengali Hindu. After having refused to become the mistress of the tea plantation manager in order to save the job of her drunken husband, who has begun beating her and their twins, she returns to Ayemenem in Kerala. Returning as a divorcee to her family's house and community, where women have neither property nor respect, is already an insolent act. She had one chance in life and made the mistake of marrying the wrong man. She and her children are thus looked down upon by the rest of the family, who also consider Ammu dangerous because of her evident inner rage at the stifling situation she is trapped in. Ammu quarrels with her fate as a woman. When she realises later that she has seen Velutha, an "Untouchable" working at the family pickle factory, at a demonstration in a nearby town, she hopes that despite his outward appearance of cheerfulness, he, like her, harbours a living, breathing anger against the smug, oppressive world they live in.

Velutha is a neighbour whose family have long been servants for the Kochammas. Velutha and Ammu grew up together. As a child, he carved little wooden toys for Ammu and held them out in his hand in such a way that she could accept them without touching him. He had recently returned to Ayemenem, after his brother had a crippling accident, to help his family survive. Without Velutha, an accomplished carpenter and machine operator, the Kochamma pickle factory could not run properly. Absent from the community for four years during the period of the Naxalite rebellion, people said that in all likelihood he had joined them. He had a way of walking, a way of offering suggestions without being asked and a self-assurance undesirable in "Untouchables". After his long absence these characteristics were more pronounced.

The third child in the story is

Sophie Mol, daughter of Chacko, Ammu's inept Oxford educated brother, and his English ex-wife. After Chacko's divorce, he also goes home to Ayemenem to run his mother's pickle factory. He regularly pressures the women who work there to have sex with him. His Christian mother indulges what she calls his "men's needs", putting up a new door so that the women can come and go without embarrassing her, even though she also occasionally leaves a tip for them. When Chacko's ex-wife and their daughter Sophie Mol come to Kerala for a visit, the twins get a fresh appreciation of their own low status in the family. Two weeks later Sophie Mol drowns in the river.

The revelation of Velutha and Ammu's relationship coincides with Sophie Mol's drowning. To save the family's reputation, Baby Kochamma goes to the police, suggesting that Velutha is responsible for the drowning. This legitimises the manhunt and brutal murder of Velutha, although his real crime is "stealing from the Touchables' Kingdom", sharing intimacy with an upper-caste woman. When Ammu and Velutha cross into forbidden territory and breach these love laws, "laid down thousands of years ago", the three representatives of established tradition in society — the family, the police and the parliamentary Marxists — join forces to punish Ammu, kill Velutha and shatter the lives of her children. Those with power, the perpetrators, the ones "who have obliterated all connection with childhood [are the] men without curiosity, without doubt, [who] looked at the world and never wondered how it worked, because they knew. They worked it. They were mechanics who serviced different parts of the same machine."

Roy's depiction of the different layers of Kerala society chafes bitterly against traditional morality and its gatekeepers. Comrade Pillai is the local Marxist-in-office, who, when not printing labels for his client, the Kochamma pickle factory, tries to organise the workers there against the Kochammas. Roy describes communism as creeping into Kerala "insidiously", because, as a reformist brand of communism, it never overtly questions the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community and never really challenges the

communal divisions, yet tries to appear not to accept them. Her pen mercilessly exposes Pillai, the mis-leader for whom combating the class enemy doesn't seem to include defending an "Untouchable" falsely accused of Sophie Mol's disappearance, even though Velutha is a member of his own party, albeit a "troublemaker".

Roy concentrates her revulsion for Indian upper-caste hypocrisy in Chacko and Baby Kochamma (Ammu's aunt). Baby Kochamma is a manipulative, self-serving warden of reactionary tradition and caste privilege, who eventually threatens the seven-year-olds with sending their mother to jail unless they tell a police inspector that Sophie Mol was killed by Velutha (whom they adored and had frequently sneaked away to play with). This forced betrayal scars them for life, creating a bond shared with their mother of "a certain, separate knowledge that they had loved a man to death".

Velutha knowingly risks his own annihilation, as he puts it, to love a "Touchable". Through her different, but bitter life experiences as a woman, Ammu acquires the daring to break away from inhibitions and taboos and cross the divide from the other side. After the tragic ending of their affair and her aunt's foul complicity with the police inspector, Ammu insists on telling the truth and pleading Velutha's innocence. In turn she becomes further outcast from her family for this and for a myriad of past violations as a divorced mother with, in Roy's words, an "unsafe edge".

Yet beyond moments of wonder at small things shared with the children and beyond this illicit relationship that is their undoing, Velutha and Ammu's tunnel has no egress, little glimpse of what History might require of people like them to make things different — to break through its darkness. With Ammu's death, the book retreats inward.

One of the great strengths of Roy's writing is her ability to contrast the innocence and humanity of the children and her adult heroes who become victims of the social order they don't obey, with society's mundane, oppressive customs and feudal beliefs that wound or kill them. Her "edge", too, is refreshingly unsafe for the lords and masters, ancient and modern, under her scrutiny.

About the Author

After winning the United Kingdom's most important literary award, the Booker Prize, Arundhati Roy has become a celebrity in India, and her book has been translated into numerous languages. But she has expressed disappointment that this pride stems from Indian nationalism, as she sees it, rather than the impact of the novel itself. The revisionist leader in Kerala of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), E.M.S. Namboodiripad, was stung by the novel's crisp reference to him by name, alternately as "the Brahmin high priest of Marxist electoral politics in Kerala", and as "Running Dog, Soviet Stooze, who expelled all the Naxalites from his party and went on with the business of harnessing anger for parliamentary purposes". He tried to counter-attack in a critique of *God of Small Things*, which feigns shock at the morals of Roy's characters, as though Ammu's rebellion were neither necessary nor genuine. By refusing to differentiate between the moral values of the oppressed and the oppressor, he inevitably sides with the latter.

Roy also wrote a paper sharply denouncing the Indian and Pakistani governments' nuclear bomb explosions of May 1998. She ridiculed the celebration of the nuclear bomb in India's streets and the way in which, in an anti-Western mood, people emptied crates of Coke and Pepsi into the streets. "I'm a little baffled by their logic, Coke is Western culture, but the nuclear bomb is an old Indian tradition?" Also opening fire on "Western Hypocrisy" and the US "Masters of the Universe", she called them "the inventors of colonialism, apartheid, slavery, ethnic cleansing, germ warfare and chemical weapons".

In the last few years Arundhati Roy has become an activist and organiser against the Narmada Valley Development Project, which plans to construct 3200 dams on 419 tributaries of the Narmada River. Begun several years ago, the dams will forcefully displace 25 million poor people whose livelihoods depend on the river valley, a majority of whom are Dalits ("Untouchables") and Adivasis (tribal people). Too vulgar for fiction, as Roy says, the project reveals, "in relentless detail, a Government's highly evolved, intricate way of pulverising a people behind the genial mask of democracy". ■

The Poisonwood Bible
by Barbara Kingsolver
HarperCollins, 1998

By N.P.

It is 1959 in a small village in the Congo on the eve of that nation's independence from Belgium and the release of Congolese national liberation leader Patrice Lumumba from prison for exploratory "talks". Within two short years the CIA and the Belgian secret service will together brutally depose and assassinate Lumumba. Into this important nodal point of history, seething with undercurrents of political tension, walks bible-toting Reverend Price with a mission not short of bringing salvation and civilisation to the heathen "natives". His wife and four daughters begrudgingly follow him, in turn burdened less with God's word (which "weighs nothing", as one of the adolescents quips) than with the racial and cultural prejudices of the 1950s southern United States, streaked with that era's rank anti-communism and flush with their own ignorance of the world and their country's pernicious role in it.

The mother and daughters narrate the story, each with a distinct voice and interpretation of events, while voiceless Nathan Price towers in the forefront of their reflections on their new surroundings and presence in Africa. He is the overbearing and oppressive father and husband preacher, an unambiguous symbol of "cultural arrogance and misunderstanding" in the author's words, of the way the European and US imperialists have invaded and dominated Africa. So this work of epic fiction winds masterfully around the triple themes, and rebellion against them, of patriarchal tyranny in the family, religious missionary zeal as historical companion to colonialism, and the big powers' plunder of Africa and their establishment of neo-colonial regimes.

Although the Christian family is the microcosm for Kingsolver's exposure, some aspects of women's oppression might easily be echoed in other parabolical forms in religions and cultures throughout the world. Nathan Price, pondering the wastefulness of educating daughters, which he likens to "pouring water into shoes", asks rhetorically whether it is worse to waste the water or ruin the shoes. Price

is extreme but not atypical, certainly no more extreme than the Western imperialists he symbolises in the realm of force-fed Christianity. His god-given male authority shapes the stifling relations in the family, which also reach their breaking point in the story around the time that the colonised Congo wins formal political independence.

The teenaged daughters gradually open their eyes, beginning to understand cultural differences and the terms of the struggle for survival in a country under the boot of their own. They come to see that "truth" in the Congo is not the same as in the white middle-class southern US, leading them also to question life under "Our Father", as one of the twins mimics him. Here the family are the outsiders, the intruders with the strange customs, discovering that they know little compared to those they came to "civilise", who in turn neither want nor have much use for their American righteousness. Their simplified but amusing reactions as they learn from the local people about survival become mixed with the bitter taste of reality as the story unfolds.

After Lumumba wins the first national elections and as Nathan Price rails against the Africans' "ignorance", their inability to decide their future and certainly to *rule*, the village chief — in a comical twist against the many programmes white men brought to try "to improve our thinking" — announces an election for or against Jesus Christ, in the "office of personal God". Jesus loses.

In church the reverend mispronounces the Kikongo word *bāngala*, screeching alternately Jesus is "precious" and Jesus is "poisonwood" to his congregation. His obsession with baptism, blended with his total ignorance and contempt of local life and customs, backfires at first humorously and then tragically as he blindly tries to force the people into the dangerous river where children have been eaten by crocodiles, in turn spreading the image of Jesus as a "child-eater". This ultimately leads to the turning point of the first part of the story, when his own child is "eaten", bitten by a snake placed by a local spiritual leader who is angry at the American preacher's incursion into his territory. The result is a spiralling loss of faith in the Reverend, whose continual mantra that "the Lord will protect me" proves pathetically inappropriate on

every level.

As the "drums in the forest" grow louder, beating a background rhythm of the Congolese masses' rising for political independence "against centuries of affliction", the Price family's contradictions are also coming to a head. Ultimately the mother decides to take the giant step of breaking loose from the affliction of an oppressive marriage and the powerful grip of her traditional role as unquestioning servant to husband and Lord.

Some 15 years later, reading the report of the US Senate's investigation of US covert operations in the Congo, namely Lumumba's murder in January 1961, the mother is awed at how a "roomful of white men who held in their manicured hands the disposition of armies and atomic bombs" could have considered a man like Lumumba, who wanted freedom for his people, so dangerous. She describes the now well-known facts of the US purchasing an army to carry out a coup under their hand-picked puppet, Joseph Mobutu, who overthrew Lumumba only four months after he was elected prime minister. Lumumba escaped from prison but was captured after giving a speech. He was then handed over to the reactionary secessionist movement in the copper-rich Katanga province, which was based on Belgian, French and South African mercenaries. Mobutu took control of the central government, marking a new period of domination by the United States, which lasted until he was finally run out of the country in 1997.

Kingsolver's characters recount at different moments of the story how the hated and corrupt Mobutu loyally sold the country's rich diamond and mineral resources to foreign powers, whilst politically carrying out their behest. He quickly built up a huge personal fortune, whilst the people of Zaire went hungry. He made a show of replacing colonial names with African ones, as his regime ruthlessly repressed thousands of liberation fighters and political opponents. One of the Price daughters, who "survives on outrage", describes the creation of debt-dependence on the West through phoney power projects like the failed Inga-Shaba, which used up a "loan" of a billion dollars, to be repaid in decades of cobalt and diamonds. She is sickened by the realisation that the US went on to "do it all over again" in

neighbouring Angola, spending \$30 million to arm opposition forces to try to kill pro-Soviet national liberation figure Augustino Neto and protect US oil interests in that country.

The last 30 years of Kingsolver's epic tale of the Price family – which brings us roughly to the end of the 1980s, a period of increased upheaval by the masses to bring down Mobutu – are told through the prism of each daughter's path of response to the Ordeal/Experience/Revelation of the prophetic implosion of their once all-American Christian family.

The eldest, Rachel, refuses deeper introspection, clinging to the small closed-minded and narcissistic material world that is her looking glass. Her first in a series of convenience marriages is to a mercenary who was most probably involved in the disappearance of Lumumba. The twins separately come to terms with their father and his debacle in Africa: the physically disabled sister, Adah, astutely ironic beyond her years as narrator but outwardly silent, successfully fights to conquer her handicaps and devotes her life to tropical medicine, side-stepping the Christian nuclear family. Leah, the daughter most loyal to their father as an adolescent, marries a teacher involved in the liberation movement and remains in Zaire, seriously grappling with the political dimensions and stakes of the people's right to a different future, not under the boot of Western plunderers. This in turn brings both a major transformation of her outlook and her renunciation of any claim on America as her "homeland".

The mother interjects retrospectively as she combs through the past, the depth of her adherence and obedience to her husband's Christian dogma which shaped and strangled so much of her life, her assumptions about truth as personified by President Eisenhower, and the safe happy homemaker's simplicity of her conception of the family: "I was his instrument, his animal... I was just one more of those women who clamp their mouths shut and wave the flag as their nation goes off to conquer another in war." Recalling the village congregation's singing of *Tata Nzolo!*, meaning in Kikongo, Father in Heaven or Father of fish bait, depending on how you pronounce it, she surmises: this was my quandary, not knowing whether religion was "a life insurance policy or

a life sentence". Her recurring guilt about the death of her youngest child in Africa (the daughter bitten by the snake) is the pivot of her anger and self-reproach for not being able to shield her daughters from the "scorching light" of her husband, for not herself awakening earlier to and overcoming her own submissiveness.

Kingsolver was trained as a biologist, and her novel argues that all forms of life are continually in motion. A tendency for a gradualist view to spill over into the conception of changes in the social realm, in which the species adapt "gracefully" to their dispossessed and "conquered" environment, is evident, especially in the Mother's perspective. Kingsolver portrays the rapacious predator in its entwined three-dimensional form with artful skill, but rebellion against him is like a rolling river, moving past. The mother has a vision that "his kind" will always lose in the end: "Whether it is wife or nation they occupy, their mistake is the same; they stand still and their stake moves underneath them."

People who like Kingsolver's books say they are challenged by the complexity of her characters coming to terms with a social reality very different to their own and to what they were taught. The Price women don't fit into simple categories of politically more and less aware, but rather reflect the fact that social consciousness is not gained through a single lens nor by taking a single step. In fact Kingsolver has engaged, and very poetically, in a battle against the consequences of

one's stand and ideas, both for the individual's choices in life, and for the social world they act upon.

Whilst a minority of Kingsolver's readers and a few rabid critics motivated by different politics than hers object to her bringing too much social content into her literature, she openly espouses the need for politicising her readership, for making the complexity of the world accessible to the broadest public imaginable. At the same time she thinks they deserve a good story. She says that, for her, writing is a form of political activism. She has told interviewers she aims to put the politics back into literature and has encouraged others to do so by establishing a literary prize (delivered on 1st May) to unpublished novels addressing issues of social injustice and change. In her preface, Kingsolver thanks US political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal for his critical reading of her manuscript of *The Poisonwood Bible*.

Kingsolver has chosen literary fiction to open eyes about history, whilst illustrating with both humour and depth in *The Poisonwood Bible* the social narrowness that helps keep them shut or partially shut. One of the reasons her writing is so appealing to read (and she has become extremely popular, with a number of her books now translated into several languages) is her optimism – the vital sense that humans can understand, change their world and rise above the ugliness of relations cast by the oppressor in various forms – which is inseparable from a clear conviction that her heart is with the people. ■

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Comments on the Resolutions Adopted by the Fifth Conference of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations

The following Comments on the Resolutions Adopted by the Fifth Conference of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations were written by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) Committee and distributed privately to participants in that Conference in the summer of 1998. The Resolutions are reprinted after this article.

COMMENTS ON THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MARXIST-LENINIST PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS

Dear Comrades,

It is with considerable interest that the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and the participating parties and organisations of our Movement have received the Resolutions of the Fifth Conference of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist (ICML) Parties and Organisations. Our Movement, which is based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, is always attentive to initiatives aimed at contributing to forging further unity among the genuine communist forces world-wide. Furthermore,

we note that on a number of crucial ideological and political questions there is a convergence between the positions expressed in your Resolutions and our positions of the *Declaration* of RIM in 1984 and *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!*, a document issued by RIM in 1993 on the occasion of the Mao centenary. We note that among the parties and organisations taking part in your Conference are several with whom our Movement has maintained close fraternal relations. Finally, we noted and appreciated the support expressed in your Resolutions for "the freedom and the democratic rights of thousands upon thousands of revolutionary fighters and leaders such as Abimael Guzman, and Jose Maria Sison."

We believe it is the obligation of all communist forces to examine and express their views on any serious international document concerning the process of unifying the genuine communist forces. For all these reasons we have decided to formulate an evaluation of your Resolutions and to circulate these comments to the parties and organisations that signed them, as well as to the participants in RIM (along with the Resolutions themselves, of course). These comments are limited in scope to the Resolutions and do not represent an overall evaluation of the ICML initiative to regroup the interna-

tional communist movement. Nonetheless we do believe that these comments will contribute to the process of discussion and debate in the communist movement, which is necessary for the further advance of the unification of the genuine communist forces.

OVERALL EVALUATION

We consider the Resolutions of the Fifth Conference as an overall positive advance, despite what we see as certain shortcomings and weaknesses. The Resolutions take the important stand of upholding the need for proletarian revolution, recognising the developments made by Mao Tsetung to the scientific ideology of the proletariat, criticising the most important forms of revisionism and calling for unity of the genuine communist forces.

The Resolutions stress that "the accelerated contradiction" between the productive forces and the relations of production leads to crisis of the world imperialist system and the intensification of the contradictions between the imperialist powers and the oppressed nations, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and amongst the imperialist powers themselves. We share both the optimism expressed in the Resolutions for the possibility of making revolutionary advances and the important observa-

tion that "however, there is neither automatic collapse of imperialism nor an unhindered and limitless capitalist growth."

World imperialism and all reaction can be defeated, but only through the tenacious and revolutionary struggle of the masses, led by genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. This means preparing and leading the violent overthrow of the existing state and establishing the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and allied classes. In the countries oppressed by imperialism, the new-democratic revolution is required and in these countries the conditions for revolutionary warfare are ripening. This orientation is, in the main, reflected in the Resolutions of the Fifth Conference and provides important common ground for striving to overcome the remaining differences.

At the same time, in many instances the Resolutions fall short of drawing a sharp line of distinction between Marxism and revisionism and thus leave the door open to conciliation with erroneous tendencies. Sometimes a sharply worded and correct point is undercut by deliberately vague wording on the same subject elsewhere in the documents. For example, the Resolutions discuss different types of struggles going on in the world today, but it is often not clearly indicated that only the revolutionary armed struggle led by the proletariat and its vanguard party can lead to genuine liberation. Similarly the importance of uniting the genuine communist forces and the task of uniting all who can be united in the struggle against imperialism are both mentioned. However, it is not always made clear that the former task, of uniting the genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces, is the necessary condition and driving element for accomplishing the latter task of uniting the people's struggles. In a general sense, the Resolutions sometimes suffer from not clearly distinguishing the main point from the secondary points, not firmly enough grasping the key link to advance the whole revolutionary movement.

Below we will comment in more detail on some of the most important points of the Resolutions, which we hope will further clarify both our overall evaluation, as well as our criticisms of what we see as their

shortcomings and weaknesses.

COMMENTS ON "THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORLD AS BASIC CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REVOLUTIONARY WORK"

This Resolution makes a number of correct and important evaluations. It emphasises that the present world situation is favourable for the advance of proletarian revolution. This analysis is particularly important in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East Bloc and the efforts by the imperialists and reformists to portray these developments as a defeat for communism and a source of new strength for the world imperialist system. As noted above, RIM also shares the analysis that the main contradictions in the world are sharpening, that the conditions of the masses are worsening and that possibilities for revolution are improving.

Furthermore, the Resolution correctly stresses that "the development of the world capitalist system has become more uneven than ever before." This is particularly important given the tendency by some forces within the international communist movement to claim that the current trends toward "globalisation" are in fact diminishing or even eliminating the qualitative distinction between the imperialist countries and the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that are oppressed and exploited by these imperialist powers.

When analysing the developments in the contemporary world situation it is important to base our understanding on Lenin's analysis of the imperialist era. Lenin gave great stress to the division of the world into two types of countries as a feature of our era having profound implications for the strategy and tactics of revolution in both types of countries.

COMMENTS ON "THE SITUATION IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES"

In this section the Resolution suffers from making no mention of the division of the working class into two hostile camps, the proletariat and the labour aristocracy. As we know, Lenin considered this development one of the important changes that had taken place during the era of imperialism. It is true

that the deepening crisis of imperialism can undermine the ability of the ruling class to bribe or pacify sections of the working class, but history has also shown that crisis alone will not eliminate this deep division in the working class nor eliminate the effect that several decades of relative social peace has had on the struggle, consciousness and organisation of the proletariat in the imperialist countries.

The "split in the working class" helps identify those sections of the working class that can and must be the solid bedrock upon which any revolutionary effort for power must be based.

The Resolution is correct in stating that, "in many countries, the monopoly capitalists' state is increasingly losing its ability to blunt class contradictions and has itself become the target of growing mass discontent manifested in latent and open political crises and in an upswing of mass struggles and protests." But the picture of the political situation, the class forces and the tasks of revolutionaries in these countries is incomplete and even, to an extent, misleading.

It is true that an important strike movement took place in France in 1995. However, by singling out this movement alone for mention in this Resolution, there is a tendency to imply that this movement, or movements like it, are the most important manifestation of the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries. For example, the 1992 violent rebellion in Los Angeles is also an expression, and a very important one at that, of the class struggle in this type of country. It is important to take adequate note of important outbreaks of struggle, as in Los Angeles, or the danger will exist of not recognising the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in the imperialist countries.

You conclude this section of the Resolution by saying that "this situation demands from Marxist-Leninists painstaking revolutionary work and support for the self-organising efforts of the masses." Our understanding is that Communists, in all countries, should persevere in holding high the banner of proletarian revolution. In describing the tasks of the Communists in the imperialist countries it is best to clearly state that they should not concentrate their attention on parliamentary politics or trade unionism.

Communists in the imperialist

countries must prepare for, and lead, revolutionary struggle. Like all Communists, they must be prepared to "go against the tide" and represent the long-term and international interests of the proletariat and not attempt to lower themselves to the level of the "average worker" nor still less the "average labour aristocrat". The current international situation is sure to create greater jolts, dislocations and hardships. The polarisation within the imperialist countries, and within the working class itself between its revolutionary and its reformist and revisionist poles, will continue to operate. By following Lenin's instructions to go "lower and deeper" amongst the proletariat, whilst resolutely supporting every struggle against the imperialist ruling classes and giving direction to all progressive sections of the people, the communists in the West will prepare to fulfil their historic obligations.

RIM also believes it is necessary to fully master and apply Mao's developments to revolutionary work in the imperialist countries, as well as in the oppressed countries. Mao's theory of people's war is applicable to waging revolutionary warfare in both kinds of countries, even if it is true that the course of revolution will follow two generally distinct paths in the imperialist and the oppressed countries.

COMMENTS ON "THE SITUATION IN THE NEO-COLONIES AND DEPENDENT COUNTRIES IN ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA"

The Resolution holds that, "In the current period, the struggle between armed revolution and armed counter-revolution is focused on the countries of the oppressed nations and peoples." This is correct and corresponds to our understanding that in the period since World War II the "storm centres" of the world proletarian revolution have been in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Any discussion of the tasks of communists in these countries must take Mao's teachings as its starting point. New-democratic revolution, the path of protracted people's war and the need for the proletarian party to unite and lead a broad united front of the masses, based on the worker-peasant alliance, are universal truths of Marx-

ism-Leninism-Maoism that need to be creatively applied to each of the oppressed countries.

However, there is a consistent problem in this section of the Resolution and elsewhere in not distinguishing the armed revolutionary struggle led by the proletariat and the armed struggles led by other class forces. It is necessary and correct to note that throughout this vast region various armed struggles against imperialism and reaction have been going on. These struggles, even when they are led by non-proletarian forces, often play an important role in dealing blows to the imperialists and reactionary ruling classes, and act as a barometer of the mood of the masses and in awakening their revolutionary enthusiasm.

However, we cannot fail to note that the hopes and aspirations of the masses in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have been repeatedly betrayed and perverted by non-proletarian revolutionary forces, who have proven incapable of carrying the struggle against the imperialists and reactionaries through to the end and have always ended up either capitulating to these enemies or being crushed by them. Given this history, it is better to be clear on the nature of revolutionary work and revolutionary organisation that is required in these countries. If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

In the discussion of the situation in Latin America, the Resolution speaks of a "new upswing in the people's struggle". But it is misleading to speak of the "armed struggle being launched in Chiapas and Guerrero (Mexico), persisting in Peru and developing in Colombia". This formulation blurs over the class nature of these "armed struggles". The struggle led by the EZLN (Zapatistas) in Chiapas, for example, is most definitely a just struggle and, in this sense, should be supported. But it is not an armed struggle for people's political power. Both the proclamations and the acts of the EZLN leadership show clearly that its armed activities have been seen as a pressure tactic to force the government and the imperialists to negotiate a "solution" that will leave intact Mexico's fundamental subor-

dination to imperialism and the rule of the reactionary classes in that country.

It is not our intention to fail to recognise the importance of struggles like that in Chiapas. But it is very important not to blur the distinction between such struggles, however just, and a genuine people's war led by a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard proletarian party, such as in Peru.

In speaking of South Asia, the Resolution says that "militant mass movements and/or armed struggles in varying degrees are on the rise in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal." Unfortunately this formulation has the effect of muddying the waters and making it harder for people to see who should be supported and who should be opposed, what line should be followed and what line should be rejected. It is necessary to draw sharp distinctions between the different struggles, whether they be armed or unarmed, and the different class forces that lead them. In Nepal, we must clearly and forthrightly uphold the People's War initiated by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in February 1996 as the highest expression of the people's struggle and the only path to liberation.

In India, for example, there is the revolutionary armed struggle being waged by Maoist organisations and there are also revolutionary struggles being waged by bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalist forces and even some counter-revolutionary armed struggles as well led by religious forces and so on. Here also, which struggles to support wholeheartedly, which struggles to support critically and which to oppose are important questions of line.

When discussing South-east Asia, the Resolution clearly states that "in the Philippines, protracted people's war is being waged under the leadership of a proletarian revolutionary party". It is correct that the proletarian nature of this struggle not be confused with that of other classes and strata, who may be carrying out armed struggle or "militant mass movements" in the Philippines. But the very sharpness of the Resolution's correct description of the situation in the Philippines underscores and highlights the inadequate and deliberately

vague descriptions concerning South Asia and Latin America.

COMMENTS ON "THE SITUATION IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND IN EASTERN EUROPE"

The Resolution correctly emphasises the need in the countries of the former East Bloc for a proletarian revolutionary party and that such a party must be able "to make a thorough and fundamental criticism of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration". This is a correct and important point. We feel it is important to point out that the analysis and criticism of capitalist restoration is only possible if we base ourselves on Mao Tsetung's teachings concerning the contradictory nature of socialist society, the class struggle under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and so on. The reason why the different attempts have failed, up to now, to build proletarian vanguards in the countries of the former East Bloc is due essentially to this point.

In the ex-Soviet Union, to take the outstanding example, it will not be possible to simply criticise the modern revisionists and uphold the accomplishments of socialism under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin. If we hope to win the masses of the former East Bloc, to a revolutionary position, we need Mao's revolutionary critique, which revealed the basic nature and capitalist essence of revisionist society. A line that tries to pose as the inheritors or defenders of the "good aspects" of a rotten revisionist regime will never arouse enthusiasm for revolution.

COMMENTS ON "ON TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE MARXIST-LENINISTS AND WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT"

This Resolution addresses a number of the tasks of the communists on a world scale. Importance is given to the task of fighting for the unity of the communists and promoting proletarian internationalism. However, there is a tendency not to indicate clearly and correctly the relationship between the different tasks that are referred to.

The Resolution states that the "first principal task" of proletarian internationalism is "solidarity with all the

struggles of the working class throughout the world". The Resolution then goes on to call for the world proletariat to take militant action against mass unemployment, deteriorating terms of employment and in defence of workers' rights. The Resolution thus blurs over the distinction between the conscious revolutionary struggle of the proletariat to establish socialism and advance towards communism and the various struggles that the workers all over the world do and must wage against the conditions of exploitation. It blurs over the distinction between the consciousness and tasks of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist revolutionaries and the task of simple international solidarity.

There is no doubt a role, and at times a very important one, for the kind of struggles called for in this part of the Resolution. But such building of concerted actions and solidarity can at no time be put on an equal par, and still less raised above, Lenin's well-known definition of internationalism: "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and this is - working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception." (Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", CW, Vol. 24, p. 75.)

We strongly believe that the above quotation from Lenin summarises well the correct understanding of proletarian internationalism. The heart of this internationalism is, as the RIM Declaration puts it, that the proletariat is a single class with the common historic task of wiping out imperialism and ushering in the era of communism. This understanding is also forcefully reflected in point 4 of your Resolution. From this truth flows a series of implications concerning the kind of internationalist propaganda, revolutionary tactics and international organisation that needs to be at the heart of our efforts.

Point 2 of Resolution 3 calls for the unity of the communist forces. So it is particularly important to be clear for whom such a call is intended and to avoid dangerously vague formulations such as "parties which have a positive attitude toward Mao",

which does not provide a basis to do what the Resolution calls for, namely "to confront and defeat revisionism". It is necessary to solidify the international communist movement on the basis of our science, as it has developed through stages to its current and highest level: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Of course, it is always necessary for the genuine Maoist forces to extend a hand of unity to other revolutionaries, who may be unclear on important aspects of our ideology, and help these forces advance. Through a process of interaction some such forces, especially newer ones who have not yet grasped Mao's all-round development, can be helped to do so and can be demarcated from those die-hard opportunists, who, today and in the past, have paid Mao mere lip service, whilst refusing to recognise, and even attacking, his qualitative development of the science of Marxism-Leninism. Some of today's neo-revisionists profess a "positive attitude toward Mao", even while they concentrate their efforts on attacking Mao's leadership of the struggle against modern revisionism, brand him as "sectarian" and so on.

The Resolution calls for giving all-out support to the armed struggles of the oppressed peoples "in the Philippines, Cambodia, India, Kurdistan, Mexico, Peru and others". Here again the Resolution suffers from putting struggles led by proletarian vanguard parties in Peru and in the Philippines on the same plane as struggles led by non-proletarian forces in Mexico, Colombia and other places.

Whilst it is correct to support all struggles that are directed against imperialism and reaction, we cannot forget what Lenin said, cited above, about the need to support "this line and no other". In other words, while we do support, and must support, all struggles against imperialism, our first and most important duty is to support the proletariat and the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces in every country "without exception". It is an important task of the international communist movement to reinforce the position of the communists all over the world, to help them strengthen their vanguard organisation or build it where it does not yet exist.

The resolution speaks of the necessity to "promote and help the re-

sistance of the peoples and nations of the third world against economic plunder, and oppose imperialist intervention be it under the UN banner or not as in the cases of Cuba, North Korea, Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and others".

The world proletariat must oppose imperialist crimes everywhere in the world. But how well the peoples and nations can resist imperialist plunder and intervention is directly linked to the problem of proletarian leadership, of a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist vanguard.

In Cuba or Iraq, for example, the leadership of these states has been unable to mount a consistent and consequential resistance to imperialist aggression. During the 1991 Gulf War the inability of the Saddam Hussein regime to put up any effective resistance to the US-led war machine was a source of great frustration and disappointment for revolutionary masses the world over. Similarly, for decades the Cuban leadership subordinated itself to Soviet social-imperialism. Now that the East Bloc has collapsed the Cuban leadership has been vigorously seeking accommodation with the Western imperialists as well. The Pope's visit to Cuba was but the most recent and telling example of this. Our main support must go to the proletariat and the masses in these countries and we cannot sow illusions as to the anti-imperialist character of the ruling classes of these states.

This point is all the more important with regard to those countries ruled by revisionists that posture not only as anti-imperialists but even as "communists". The Resolution can give a wrong implication when it argues that forging the unity of the genuine communists and opposing revisionism must not "negate the unity of all anti-imperialist forces". While it is important to oppose imperialist aggression and other depredations against these countries, it is vital to consistently expose their phoney communist nature and the consequences of revisionist rule for the masses of people, including in weakening their ability to resist imperialist domination and oppression.

We should not forget the problems the international communist movement suffered as a result of the "three worlds theory", proclaimed as doctrine by the

revisionist usurpers in China. One of the principal problems with this theory was the failure to correctly identify the class nature of the regimes of the third world countries, to falsely portray leaders of reactionary regimes as anti-imperialist and to liquidate the role of the masses, the proletariat and its communist vanguard in resisting imperialism. The damage done by the "three worlds theory" needs to be carefully summed up so that we can avoid repeating similar errors today or in the future.

Point 10 of this resolution is absolutely correct to insist on the need for a "vanguard party with revolutionary theory". The resolution goes on to say that "it is not mere self-proclamation that determines whether one is the vanguard or not. That is determined by the class struggle. First the party has to be the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat. Second, the revolutionary proletariat has to be the vanguard of the broad masses of people."

What determines a vanguard party is fundamentally a question of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This fundamental truth is not a question of "self-proclamation" or abstract theory. In the imperialist countries, it means that a vanguard party must represent the class interests of the revolutionary proletariat in that country and internationally, and not the interests of a small privileged sector that benefits from imperialism. In the oppressed countries it means, among other things, that the party must represent not only the immediate struggle of the masses, but also its goals of socialism and communism. Without this bedrock, no amount of influence among the masses can make a political organisation a genuine proletarian vanguard (and we have seen that revisionist and opportunist parties can, under certain circumstances, become influential and sway a large portion of the masses).

If a party or organisation is based on a correct ideological and political line, it will, through a process of struggle, succeed in deepening its roots among the masses, whilst strengthening its grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and leading the people forward in revolutionary struggle. If it follows an incorrect line, it will end up isolating itself from the masses of people and undoing any previous accomplishments it

may have made. As Mao put it so succinctly, "The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything".

Point 11 of the Resolution calls for the working class to "forge a united front with all oppressed classes and forces interested in the revolution according to the conditions in each country, in order to defeat the reactionary clique of each country." In our document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* RIM recognises Mao's teachings on the united front as vital to the communists in all countries. However, we are concerned that the Resolution's definition of the goal of the united front, namely to "defeat the reactionary clique of each country", could have the effect of losing sight of the united front as a weapon for the strategic alignment of the revolutionary class forces. Of course it is true that the ruling class is often divided into hostile cliques and it is sometimes possible and necessary to take advantage of these rifts and conflicts in the interests of the revolution, but it is still the case that the united front of the progressive classes is generally aimed at the reactionary ruling classes as a whole and not only this or that "clique". We should not confuse possible necessary tactical manoeuvres with the strategic alignment of class forces for accomplishing revolution.

COMMENTS ON "DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST AND WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM"

We most definitely agree with the emphasis in this Resolution on the need to carry out a vigorous struggle against all types of revisionism. We also agree that the collapse of revisionist regimes in the East Bloc did not automatically resolve the problem of revisionism, the struggle against which will indeed be a permanent and necessary task throughout the era of proletarian revolution.

RIM has always attached great importance to the condemnation and exposure of the revisionist usurpers in China. The developments in China put the entire Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement to a severe test and it is important that the appropriate conclusions are drawn.

We note that the Resolution makes the very important and correct statement that "after the death of Mao Zedong, the dictatorship of the proletariat was destroyed and under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping capitalism was restored." At the same time, this statement is not complete and leaves itself open to some wrong interpretations.

The reversal in China came about as a result of a coup d'état – the violent seizure in 1976 of the state apparatus by the capitalist roaders and the overthrow of the proletarian revolutionaries who were upholding Mao's line (Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao being the most outstanding representatives). It is not correct to speak only of Deng Xiaoping and say nothing of Hua Kuo-feng or to ignore the question of the coup d'état. We cannot forget that it was Hua who organised the counter-revolutionary coup nor that it was carried out under the signboard of "crushing the Gang of Four" (as the supporters of Mao's line were disparagingly referred to) and that more than a few in the international communist movement were taken in by this. This is not only a question of historical accuracy and correct verdicts. It is necessary to correctly understand the actual terms of the last great battle led by Mao and the revolutionary headquarters against the revisionists in China. Basic clarity on this point is a necessary prerequisite for enabling the international communist movement to draw further lessons from both the great achievements and bitter defeat of the proletariat in this struggle.

COMMENTS ON "CONTINUING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES"

We commend you on the successful conclusion of your Fifth Conference and we hope that your efforts in the future will contribute to the unification of the international communist movement, on the basis of a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line.

When discussing the criteria for uniting the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces we should return again to Lenin's celebrated definition of proletarian internationalism cited above. We must unite those communists who are fighting consistently for the overthrow of their own ruling classes and support that line and no other in

each and every country. It is true that "consensus and unanimity in decision-making" should be sought within the international communist movement. But unanimity and consensus can never be considered more important than upholding proletarian revolution and opposing revisionism.

FOR A COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL OF A NEW TYPE

Given that the ICML has expressed its desire to achieve "the ideological and political unity" of the international communist movement, the question of the organisational form of such unity comes sharply to the fore. In our opinion, the ideological and political unity of the proletariat must have an organisational expression that unifies the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces to the greatest degree possible, given the level of political and ideological unity which has been achieved at any given point. Ultimately this must take expression in the form of a new Communist International.

In 1993 RIM adopted a resolution proclaiming Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as its ideology. This decision, after many years of discussion, struggle and accumulated experience by the parties and organisations making up RIM, was more than a mere change in terminology. It reflected our united and deeper understanding of the third, new and higher stage in the proletarian ideology that had been forged by Mao Tsetung. We hope you will agree with us that Mao's development is of no less significance than that of Lenin's earlier development of Marxism to a second stage.

The requirements of the proletarian revolution, the need to forge and strengthen genuine communist vanguards in every country, means that we need to be armed with the fullest and most scientifically correct understanding achieved by the proletariat to date – Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. We understand that the goal of a Communist International of a new type will not be attained overnight, but we also understand the importance of proclaiming this goal and taking concrete measures to advance, step by step, towards achieving it.

Our understanding is that the new Communist International must be based upon Marxism-Leninism-Mao-

ism and should have a common General Line for advancing the world proletarian revolution. No doubt there are many difficulties in organising an International that must function along the lines of democratic centralism, while taking into account that this cannot be in the same sense as a party in a single country, given the fact that revolution will develop in specific states and each party will have the responsibility of leading the revolution forward in its own state.

The views of RIM on this subject have been proclaimed in our *Declaration* and in the 1993 document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism! A recent article in the magazine A World to Win* [1998/23] entitled "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" also reflects our basic understanding of these questions. We hope very much that the parties and organisations of the ICML will study our viewpoint and make an evaluation. In this way the discussion and struggle necessary to achieve a higher level of unity in the international communist movement can advance.

Our own intention in distributing these comments privately to your organisations, as well as recommending the distribution of your Resolutions, along with these comments, to the rank and file of the participants in RIM is to encourage an atmosphere of vigorous discussion and debate, which we are confident will contribute to clarifying the points of convergence, as well as the remaining differences between RIM and the ICML and thus lay the basis for resolute efforts to achieve unity on a correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist basis. Similarly, we hope you will distribute these comments to the rank and file of the parties and organisations of the ICML. We are confident that the genuine communist revolutionaries, whether they be inside the ranks of RIM, the parties and organisations of the ICML or not presently participating in any international grouping, will welcome such an initiative and will give adequate attention to the task of uniting internationally on a correct basis.

Our warm communist greetings,

**The Committee of the
Revolutionary Internationalist
Movement**

Resolutions of the Fifth Conference of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations

In October 1996 the Fifth Conference of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist (ICML) Parties and Organisations was held. One of the results of this Conference was the adoption of a series of Resolutions reprinted below. The evaluations of the Committee of Revolutionary Internationalist Movement precede this article.

Note: The Fifth Conference was held in October 1996 with the participation of 20 Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations. It approved four main resolutions and adopted a special resolution on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the martyrdom of Comrade Charu Majumdar.

Parties in attendance were the following: Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Afghanistan; Revolutionary Communist Party, Argentina; Workers' Party of Bangladesh; Marxist-Leninist Communist Organisation Revolutionary Way, France; Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany; Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Janashakti; Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) New Democracy; Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War; Japan Communist League; Communist Organisation of Luxembourg; Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninists); Marxist-Leninist Group (Red Dawn), Netherlands; Workers' Communist Party, Norway; Communist Party of the Philippines; Communist Unification of Spain; Pan Africanist Congress, South Africa; ChingKang Mountains Institute, Taiwan; Revolutionary Communist Party, Uruguay; a revolutionary organisation from Zaire; and another revolutionary organisation that has opted to remain unnamed.

RESOLUTION 1: THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WORLD AS BASIC CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REVOLUTIONARY WORK

1. The Sharpening General Crisis of Capitalism

The collapse of the bureaucrat-capitalist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a deep crisis of modern revisionism. It did not constitute a defeat of socialism but is a vindication of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

A unified capitalist world market has been fully restored. However, objective reality has exposed the myth of a crisis-free capitalism and of an almighty imperialist system, propagated throughout the world

with the aid of modern anti-communism. The capitalist world system is characterised by general destabilisation.

The crisis of the imperialist world system is the result of the contradiction of the productive forces and the relations of production. It is aggravated by the use of high technology.

The internationalisation of production in the current period has led to the centralisation of capital in a few industrial capitalist countries. The same process is taking place in a few big cities in countries dependent on imperialism. On the one hand, such centralisation advances the material preconditions for socialism. On the other hand, it leads to the destruction of a large part of the productive forces on a global scale. Thus, the development of the world capitalist system has become more uneven than ever before. This rapidly worsening crisis of the capitalist system has enormously aggravated the neo-colonial plunder of the masses in the countries of oppressed nations and peoples and of the proletariat and peoples in the imperialist countries. Under these conditions, the fundamental contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the imperialists and the oppressed nations and peoples, and among the imperialists, are becoming sharper.

1.1. The Situation in the Imperialist Countries

International production is dominated by only 100 multinational companies, which in 1993 commanded 60 per cent of world capital investments. The international monopolies fight to liquidate each other. This is linked to the so-called lean production process in industrial capitalist countries and the intensification of exploitation in the world. Mass unemployment has become a permanent phenomenon. The crisis programmes adopted by the anti-people governments erode the social gains of the working people. In many countries, the monopoly capitalists' state is increasingly losing its ability to blunt class contradictions and has itself become the target of growing mass discontent manifested in latent and open political crises and in an upswing of mass struggles and protests. The biggest mass strikes up to now were those in France of December 1995. In many countries, new youth movements imbued with internationalism and militant women's movements have developed. Nevertheless, the influence of reformism and revisionism on the masses must be overcome. This situation demands from Marxist-Leninists painstaking revolutionary work and support for the self-organising efforts of the masses.

1.2. The Situation in the Neo-colonies and Dependent Countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia

Africa is the continent most devastated economically by old colonialism and by neo-colonial methods of imperialist and social-imperialist exploitation and oppression. African society is imploding once again. It has plunged all the people into generalised distress and undermined the conditions of life for future generations. Thirty-three of the 50 poorest countries of the Third World are here. The global overproduction of raw materials, deteriorating terms of trade with the imperialist countries and heavy foreign indebtedness since the late 1970s have plunged the African countries, which depend on the export of agricultural and mineral products, into a state of depression. Worse, massive displacement of people and massacres are being perpetrated in the African continent. The objective conditions there cry out for revolutionary work.

In Latin America, the imperialists and reactionary governments have imposed on the people the IMF policy of structural adjustment program, which means privatisation, economic liberalisation, heavy indebtedness and reactionary reforms in the state, in the educational and the social security systems.

Unemployment is increasing in the cities and among the landless peasants. The landlords and the finance capitalists are profiting from this situation. The contention for markets among the monopolies is sharpening. All these have led to a new upswing in the people's struggles. Armed struggle is being launched in Chiapas and Guerrero (Mexico), persisting in Peru and developing in Colombia. The strikes being conducted by the proletariat in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are growing in significance. In Brazil and Paraguay, the struggle of the poor peasants for land is developing to a higher level, with occupations that rely on self-defence. There are also uprisings of students, women and pensioners. Political crises are brewing.

In the Middle East, imperialist oppression and exploitation is very intense because this region is strategically important.

The Kurds and Palestinians are in the forefront of the struggle for national liberation and social and democratic rights.

In South Asia, the semi-feudal economies are in grave crisis.

The huge Indian economy, with its heavy and basic industries, has been undermined by increasing compradorisation and tighter integration with the world capitalist system

since the late '80s. Militant mass movements and/or armed struggles in varying degrees are on the rise in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and other countries in South-east Asia suffer from the same economic ills as Mexico. The promise of industrialisation remains false in the face of endless foreign trade deficits and dependence on foreign loans and speculative investments. In the Philippines, protracted people's war is being waged under the leadership of a proletarian revolutionary party, while in Indonesia democratic mass protests have broken out against the Suharto regime.

In the current period, the struggle between armed revolution and armed counter-revolution is focused on the countries of the oppressed nations and peoples.

1.3. The Situation in the Former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe

The collapse of bureaucrat capitalism and integration into the new international capitalist division of labour have led to a decline in industrial production in these countries. The openly anti-communist governments that replaced the revisionist regimes have been rapidly discredited as a result of the general economic and social devastation as well as of their subservience to western imperialism. Hence, many big revisionist or "Left" reformist parties won elections by peddling a mixture of nationalist, social-democratic and neo-liberal slogans. Rival cliques are locked in civil wars, with various forms of Russian imperialist intervention. These developments have resulted in the impoverishment of large sections of the people and has sharpened class contradictions. This has led to the first mass struggles in Russia, Poland and other countries. However, in these countries no proletarian revolutionary party has developed to the extent of being able to make thoroughgoing and fundamental criticism of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration.

1.4. The Intensification of the Contradictions among the Imperialists

The contradictions among various monopoly capitalist groupings and among the imperialist states are sharpening. Since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the United States has been trying to play the role of a world policeman in striving for a new imperialist world order. So far the United States has not succeeded in solving its economic problems caused by enormous budget and trade deficits. The centres of the imperialist world economy are the United States, Japan and the European Union, of which the strongest are Germany and France. In Russia, the remaining state sector of the economy as well as the private monopolies are making efforts at co-operating, even as they compete with western multinational groups. Russia continues to be an imperialist power.

The imperialists today use various organisations such as the United Nations, IMF, World Bank (WB), World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Group of Seven (G-7) to exploit and oppress the world's peoples.

Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany have joined in the building of imperialist intervention forces and strive for permanent seats in the UN Security Council to expand their political power. Inter-imperialist rivalry sharpens the general danger of war. The imperialist policy of pacification has failed in such areas as Palestine, Central America, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Russia.

2. Perspective of the World Proletarian Revolution

The scientific basis for the optimism of the revolutionary forces of socialism and anti-imperialism is to be found in the accelerated contradiction between the capitalist forces and relations of production. However, there is neither an automatic collapse of imperialism nor an unhindered and limitless industrial capitalist growth. There is enough disorder and instability to stimulate the emergence and development of revolutionary forces which have to be vigilant against the enemy's capacity to do damage to the masses and the revolutionary forces. The ground is fertile for Marxist-Leninists to build proletarian parties and international solidarity in order to raise the level of the anti-imperialist and socialist movements to a new and higher level than ever before in the struggle against imperialism, the common enemy of the international proletariat and peoples of the world.

Signatories: MLO, Afghanistan; RCP, Argentina; WP, Bangladesh; MLCO, RW, France; MLP, Germany; CPI (ML), New Democracy CPI (M-L), People's War CPI (M-L), Provisional CC CPI (M-L), RFCO, Luxembourg; CP (UML) (excluding first paragraph and point 3 of part 1) MLG (RD), Netherlands; WCP, Norway; CP, Philippines; CU, Spain; PAC, South Africa; CMI, Taiwan; RCP, Uruguay

RESOLUTION 2: TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST AND WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

1. We are in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. The international proletariat struggles in unity with the oppressed peoples and nations against imperialism and for socialism. The struggle for national liberation and democracy is part of the world proletarian revolution.

2. It is necessary to continue promoting the unity of parties which are guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and with those parties which have a positive attitude towards Mao in order to confront and defeat revisionism with which we can have no ideological unity but without negating the broad political unity of all anti-imperialist forces.

3. We reaffirm and advance the line of proletarian internationalism whose first principal task is solidarity with all the struggles of the working class throughout the world.

We call on the world's proletariat to militant concerted actions against mass unemployment and deteriorating terms of employment and for the defence of workers' rights. Let us fight the policies of the IMF, WB and WTO and measures of labour flexibility and of withdrawing other social gains all being pushed by the monopoly capitalists globally.

4. The historic mission of the working class is to end the exploitation of man by man by overthrowing the capitalist system and building socialism in transition to communism. To this end, it is necessary to destroy the reactionary states through armed revolution. The proletarian party must learn to use all forms of struggle in accumulating strength necessary for the seizure of political power. 5. We give all-out support to the struggles of the oppressed peoples who with arms in hand confront their oppressors in the Philippines, Cambodia, India, Kurdistan, Mexico, Colombia, Peru and others. We also support the peoples' struggles of North Ireland against British imperialism, Chechnya against Russian imperialism, Palestine against Zionism and other peoples' struggle for self-determination.

6. It is necessary to promote and help the resistance of the peoples and nations of the Third World against imperialist economic plunder, and oppose imperialist intervention by it under the UN banner or not, as in the cases of Cuba, North Korea, Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and others.

7. We act in solidarity with peoples suffering human rights violations against the genocide instigated by imperialist powers and local reactionaries, as in Africa, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia.

We demand freedom and democratic rights for thousands upon thousands of revolutionary fighters and leaders such as Abimael Guzman and Jose Maria Sison.

8. Every party integrates Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought with its country's concrete conditions in determining its form of struggle and each tactics in the struggle for the strategic objectives.

Revolutions can be carried out and advanced and the people's democratic dictatorship and the proletarian dictatorship can be established only in specific countries by the proletarian masses led by their revolutionary parties.

9. In the capitalist countries, the character of the revolution is socialist.

In countries of the oppressed peoples and nations, be they semi-colonial or dependent, the character of the revolution is new-democratic (agrarian) and anti-imperialist. The revolutionary proletarian struggles to advance the revolution continuously towards socialism and communism.

In former and current revisionist-ruled societies, efforts must be exerted to encourage the proletarian revolutionaries and revolutionary mass movements for socialism.

10. History shows us that no revolution has triumphed without the leading role of a vanguard party with a revolutionary theory.

It is not by mere self-proclamation that determines whether one is the vanguard or not. That is determined in class struggle.

First, the party has to be the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat. Second, the revolutionary proletariat has to be the vanguard of the broad masses of the people.

11. The working class should forge a united front with all oppressed classes and forces interested in revolution, according to the conditions in each country, in order to defeat the reactionary clique of each country. In the backward countries, the worker-peasant alliance is the foundation of any united front.

12. It is necessary to promote unity and co-operation of the parties guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought with the working people, anti-imperialist forces and revolutionary movements in the struggle against imperialism and reaction in order to advance the cause of national independence, democracy and socialism.

Signatories: MLO, Afghanistan; RCP, Argentina; WP, Bangladesh; MLP, Germany; MLCO, RW, France; CPI (ML); Janashakti CPI (ML); New Democracy CPI (ML); People's War CPI (ML); Provisional CC CPI (ML); RFO, Luxembourg; CP (UML); (excluding nos. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12) MLG (RD), Netherlands; WCP, Norway; CP, Philippines; CU, Spain; PAC, South Africa; CMI, Taiwan; RCP, Uruguay; RO, Zaire.

RESOLUTION 3: DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST AND WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

1. We must fight against revisionism of every variety. It is the most dangerous form through which bourgeois ideology exerts its corrosive influence on the working class. Thus the proletarian ideology must struggle against all varieties of the revisionist ideology. Without overcoming the influence of revisionism within the working-class movement, there can be no new upswing in the struggle for socialism nor victory for the proletarian revolution.

2. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was not the defeat of socialism. Khrushchov's modern revisionism had betrayed socialism at the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956. From then on, capitalism was restored and the Soviet Union evolved into a social-imperialist superpower.

3. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the Communist Party of China resolutely denounced and fought Khrushchovite and later Brezhnevite modern revisionism. It exposed the modern revisionists as the capitalist roaders within the party. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched to prevent the restoration of capitalism in China and defend the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was a historic achievement.

4. The collapse of the Soviet Union was also a decisive practical defeat, which led to the weakening of modern revisionism. However, this did not automatically solve the problem of revisionism. The struggle against revision-

ism will have to be carried out for as long as there is class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The revisionists deny the Leninist theory of the state and thus the necessity of revolutionary violence and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In addition to long-standing ones, various neo-revisionist tendencies have emerged. The neo-revisionists wish to whitewash modern revisionism and conceal the betrayal of socialism. Thus, they also express some criticisms of the Soviet development. However, such criticisms do not touch the essentials because the revisionists deny the restoration of capitalism. Neo-revisionism blurs the distinction between Marxism-Leninism and modern revisionism. The neo-revisionists attack Mao Zedong and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in particular, supposedly as "Left" sectarian. They slander revolutionary parties that adhere to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought as splitists. All parties present condemn the attacks on Mao Zedong as well as the attempt to collide Marxism-Leninism with Mao Zedong Thought.

5. In the past, the Communist Party of China fought against modern revisionism. Today, the modern revisionism of the Communist Party of China has to be combated. The People's Republic of China is no longer a socialist country and the Communist Party of China is no longer a Marxist-Leninist party. After the death of Mao Zedong, the dictatorship of the proletariat was destroyed and under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping capitalism was restored. Deng's reforms are not socialist but are capitalist. It is the task of the Marxist-Leninist parties to expose this revisionist swindle and help Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought gain new esteem among the working class and the working people.

Signatories: MLO, Afghanistan; RCP, Argentina; WP, Bangladesh; (excluding point 5); MLP, Germany; CPI (M-L); Janashakti CPI (ML); National Democracy CPI (ML); People's War CPI (ML); Provisional CC CPI (ML); RFO, Luxembourg; MLG (RD), Netherlands; CP, Philippines; CU, Spain; (excluding point 5); CMI, Taiwan; RCP, Uruguay; RO, Zaire.

RESOLUTION 4: ON CONTINUING THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

1. The Fifth Conference resolves to prepare and hold a Sixth Conference within a period of two to three years in order to continue, step by step, the process of reaching ideological and political unity in the Marxist-Leninist and working-class movement internationally.

2. The Fifth Conference was very successful. Twenty organisations and parties from four continents participated. Aside from the progress made in the ideological, political and practical exchange on questions regarding economic and political developments and the theory and practice of class struggle, which are expressed in the various resolutions, the conference was marked

by a pronounced proletarian, democratic, open and broad debate carried out on a principled basis. This success runs counter to the questioning from outside about the character of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations. Mutual respect and equality of rights, a strictly objective discussion and comradely treatment of each other characterised the efforts of all participants for unity and progress of this forum of revolutionary parties and organisations, which met on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought in the struggle against revisionism.

3. The participants of the Fifth Conference recognise and affirm the work of the Joint Co-ordinating Group (JCG) as indispensable for the preparation and holding of this meeting.

The JCG's method of work was distinguished by a systematic dissemination of information among the participants, by efforts towards a democratic exchange of views and by the multilateral co-operation in carrying out the conference. It unanimously approved the report of the JCG on the preparation of this conference as the JCG strictly adhered to the principles set forth by the Fourth Conference, as amended and readopted by the Fifth Conference.

Co-operation among Marxist-Leninist organisations internationally is based on the following principles:

- Independence and equality, mutual respect, mutual support and co-operation.
- Non-interference in internal affairs as well as in bilateral or regional relations of any party or organisation with other parties and organisations.
- Consensus and unanimity in decision-making.
- Achievement of unity step by step through principled debate and co-operation among parties/organisations, with no party making public attacks on other parties/organisations.

4. To prepare the Sixth Conference, a new Joint Co-ordinating Group shall be formed.

5. The Fifth Conference shall exert all efforts to call on all Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations to participate in the preparation and realisation of the Sixth Conference. It is open for criticism, suggestions and active participation on the basis of the following three main criteria:

- Adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.
- Struggle against modern revisionism and a positive attitude towards Stalin and Mao, and
- Acceptance of the Rules of the Conference.

Signatories: MLO, Afghanistan; RCP, Argentina; WP, Bangladesh; MLP, Germany; MLCO, RW, France; CPI (ML); CPI (ML) Janashakti; CPI (ML) New Democracy; CPI (ML) People's War; CPI (ML) Provisional CC; CO, Luxembourg; CP (UML); (excluding nos. 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12); MLG (RD), Netherlands; WCP, Norway; CP, Philippines; CU, Spain; PAC, South Africa; CMI, Taiwan; RCP, Uruguay; RO, Zaire.

NEW EDITION!

The Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement & Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Signatories of the Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and Participating Organisations in RIM:

- ★ Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)
- ★ Communist Party of Afghanistan
- ★ Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD(ML)]
- ★ Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
- ★ Communist Party of Peru
- ★ Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist [TKP ML]
- ★ Maoist Communist Party [Italy]
- ★ Marxist-Leninist Communist Organisation of Tunisia
- ★ Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla [PBSP] [Bangladesh]
- ★ Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia
- ★ Revolutionary Communist Party, USA
- ★ Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran)

In addition to the above list of participating parties and organisations of RIM there are candidate participants of RIM in a number of countries struggling to form vanguard Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. A new edition of the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* including *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* is now available in English and Spanish.

The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* has been printed in over 20 languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Creole, Danish, English (2 editions, Indian and US), Farsi, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Kurdish, Malayalam, Nepalese, Punjabi, Spanish (4 editions – Colombian, Peruvian, Spanish and US), Tamil, Turkish. *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* is also available in many of the above languages.

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Resolutions of the Fourth Regional Conference of RIM South Asian Parties and Organisations

20 December 1999

■ Resolution on People's War in Peru

Basing ourselves on the principles of proletarian internationalism, this Regional Conference of South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement reaffirms its determination to further unite resolutely with the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) and the People's War led by it.

The People's War in Peru, led by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), is a glorious event of paramount importance for the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and international communist movement as a whole. In the South Asian region the People's War in Peru has intensified the beacon of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, helping to illuminate the road to liberation for the teeming millions of this subcontinent. We strongly uphold and hail this magnificent chapter of proletarian revolutionary struggle as we have from the beginning, more determined than ever to continue to learn precious lessons from the People's War in Peru to help prepare, initiate and advance people's war in our countries and others throughout the globe.

The Communist Party of Peru is struggling to overcome the "bend in the road" caused by the arrest of the Chairman and outstanding leader of the PCP, Comrade Gonzalo, by the US imperialist puppet regime of Fujimori. The genocidal regime has kept Chairman Gonzalo in isolation since 1992. In recent months, the Party and the People's War have faced another blow with the arrest of Comrade Feliciano, who has led the Party and the People's War during the "bend in the road". We strongly and resolutely stand together with the PCP and the revolutionary masses of Peru in the fight to break the isolation and produce Comrade Gonzalo in public and to defend the lives of Chairman Gonzalo and Comrade Feliciano. We also once again ex-

press our support to the struggle of the PCP Central Committee against the capitulationist Right Opportunist Line of seeking a peace accord with the reactionary regime.

We express our solidarity with the PCP, all the fighters and the heroic people of Peru in their efforts to advance the People's War toward final victory. Once again we hail the active presence of the PCP in RIM and are confident that the PCP will continue to play its positive role in the coming period as it has in the past in contributing to the heightened unity and further development of our Movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

The comrades and revolutionary people of Peru can be sure of the great reservoir of solidarity and support that lies in the communist revolutionaries and class-conscious fighters of the South Asian region. We again renew our pledge to march shoulder to shoulder with our Peruvian comrades, united by our common participation in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and our common ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

■ Resolution on the arrest of Comrade Feliciano

The Regional Conference of South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement denounces the arrest and sentence of life imprisonment meted out to Comrade Feliciano (Oscar Ramirez Durand), leader of the Communist Party of Peru and the leader of the People's War of Peru. This cowardly trial conducted in secret by hooded judges reflects the reactionary anti-people character of the Fujimori regime and its US imperialist masters.

Comrade Feliciano assumed the responsibility of leading the Central Committee of the PCP in continuing the People's War through the "bend in the road" resulting from the arrest of

PCP Chairman Com. Gonzalo in 1992. In that crucial moment Com. Feliciano, by showing the highest courage and determination in the face of the enemy, bravely led the People's War of Peru despite massive military campaigns against the People's Liberation Army. Under Com. Feliciano's leadership the PCP has combated the Right Opportunist Line which seeks to abandon the People's War in the face of hard blows.

Despite the arrest and sentence of Comrade Feliciano, the People's War in Peru is continuing in the face of the severe and brutal suppression of the bloody Peruvian regime. The continuing People's War is a beacon of light for the whole fighting revolutionary people of Peru, pointing the way forward to liberation.

At this moment of both difficulty and courageous determination, the South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement call upon all the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, revolutionary, anti-imperialist and progressive forces and people to stand united to protest the life sentence of Com. Feliciano, to defend his life and demand that he be allowed visits and other rights normally accorded prisoners of war. This is all the more important given the criminal and barbaric record of the Fujimori regime, including holding Chairman Gonzalo in isolation for almost seven years.

The Regional Conference also calls upon all revolutionary forces of the South Asian region to support the continuing People's War of Peru under the leadership of the Central Committee of the PCP.

■ Resolution on State Suppression in the South Asian Countries

In South Asia an important part of the world's population is suffering under the yoke of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. In or-

der to enforce this exploitation and oppression, the reactionary ruling classes of the countries of South Asia are conducting savage and barbarous repression against the revolutionary fighters and broad masses of this region.

The stooges of imperialism in Nepal, the feudal, bureaucrat-comprador ruling classes in collaboration with US imperialism, Indian expansionism, and aided by the hated Israel and Peru, have unleashed a reign of terror and genocidal repression to stop the glorious People's War of the masses of people of that country. Arrests, tortures, rapes and killings have become the routine work of reactionaries in that country. Recently the reactionaries have escalated this repression to include the practice of secret killings and "disappearances" of revolutionary fighters and other opponents. But none of these barbaric actions can save the reactionaries from their ultimate doom. The People's War in Nepal will inevitably emerge victorious and liberate the toiling masses of that country.

The all-India ruling classes are conducting severe repression and ruthless exploitation against the masses of that country. They have been stepping up terror in the ruling class's futile pursuit to stop the on-going heroic armed revolutionary struggle of Andhra, Bihar and Dandakaranya led by Maoist forces. In particular, hundreds of communist revolutionaries and struggling masses have been murdered in cold blood using the pretext of fake "encounters".

Indian expansionism - this watchdog of imperialism in South Asia - continues to pursue a reactionary policy of drowning in blood the liberation struggle of different nations and nationalities. The Indian ruling classes have imposed a bloody war to stop the struggle of the Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and other peoples for liberation. Under the pretext of fighting "Pakistan infiltrators", they let loose a reign of killing against the people of Kashmir. Looting, raping and killing are carried out by the reactionary army. India is revealed as a prison-house of nations.

The Sri Lankan reactionary ruling classes are continuing their savage and bloodthirsty military operation against the just struggle of the Tamil people and other revolutionary and democratic forces of the country. Despite

the ruling class reign of terror, the heroic struggle of the Tamil people for self-determination has surged ahead.

In recent months the reactionary state machinery in Bangladesh has been conducting a new wave of repression, replete with arrests, torture, extortion of money and the murder of revolutionaries, opponents and masses in that country under the pretext of the so-called suppression of "terrorism". The ultimate purpose of this repression is to uproot the revolutionary movement and solidify the rule of the reactionary classes. But no amount of repression can stop the people's revolutionary struggle.

The ruling classes of Pakistan and their succession of autocratic regimes have been widely and justly notorious for their reactionary nature and their suppression of the peoples of that country. Recently they have again resorted to open military rule.

In a word, the whole of the South Asia region has become a torture chamber for the masses. The heroic peoples of this important region of the world have been conducting powerful armed and mass struggles, including the Maoist People's War in Nepal. The Regional Conference of South Asian Parties and Organisations united in RIM condemn all the reactionary repression against the masses and call upon the revolutionary people of the region to step up their struggle for liberation and make South Asia a graveyard for the reactionaries and their imperialist masters. The reactionaries in this region are ridden with innumerable conflicts between themselves. In spite of that they are united and collaborate with one another against the masses.

People of the South Asia region, get united, fight shoulder to shoulder with your sisters and brothers to advance the cause of your liberation. You are not alone. The people of the whole world are with you!

■ Resolution on the People's War in Nepal

On 13th February 1996, the People's War in Nepal was initiated under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This glorious People's War has turned a backward Nepal into an advanced outpost of proletarian revolutionary struggle. The leader of the People's War of Nepal, the CPN (Maoist) led by Comrade

Prachanda, is a participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, which further increases our responsibility and determination to learn from and defend it.

Since its initiation the People's War in Nepal has been advancing through leaps and bounds. It has begun the process of establishing the people's power by overthrowing the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism.

The on-going People's War in Nepal is a glorious event not only in South Asia but also for the whole international communist movement. Coming after the defeat of the revolution in China and following on the achievements of the People's War in Peru, the People's War in Nepal is a thunderous call to the people of the East and another blow to the slanders of the reactionaries that "Marxism is dead".

To destroy the People's War and the newly emerging people's power in Nepal, imperialism, Indian expansionism and the Nepalese reactionary ruling classes are widely attacking it in every way. But our sisters and brothers in Nepal are resisting this brutal oppression, exposing the deception of the revisionists and opportunists, making tremendous sacrifices and facing martyrdom on a large scale to advance the cause of liberation.

The Regional Conference of the South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is calling on all Maoist, anti-imperialist, democratic and progressive forces to rally behind the People's War in Nepal and develop a powerful movement in solidarity with the People's War in Nepal.

Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)

Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD (ML)]

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Naxalbari [CPI (ML) Naxalbari]

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla [PBSP] [Bangladesh]

Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist) [RCCI (M)]

Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) [RCCI (MLM)]

Appeal to the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre

20 December 1999

By the Fourth Regional Conference of South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

With a deep sense of anguish, comradesly concern and responsibility, this Regional Conference of the South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement issues this appeal to the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre.

Comrades, both of your parties have a heroic record of revolutionary armed struggle and self-sacrifice. The struggles led by you continue to inspire the revolutionaries, progressives and the broad masses not only in India but throughout the world. Hence, it is only natural that reports of armed clashes between the activists and supporters of both of your parties has shocked them and caused great concern.

True to their reactionary character, the ruling classes in India and elsewhere are rubbing their hands in glee over this. They are doing all they can to use these clashes to paint an ugly picture not only of your parties but of the whole communist project itself. The evil content of the propaganda of these ruthless butchers of humanity will no doubt be rejected by the masses. But, comrades, we must accept that these clashes do indeed raise serious questions in the minds of the revolutionary masses themselves. We must recognise that these clashes are raising serious questions that have deep ideological and political implications for the communist vision of a new world. These clashes are raising questions about our capacity to play the

vanguard role in uniting the broad masses for the revolutionary struggle to establish a new-democratic society where the broad masses enjoy genuine democracy and dictatorship is exercised only over the reactionaries.

These clashes are causing heavy damage to our entire, common, communist revolutionary cause. They must stop at once.

We do not intend to enter into a discussion on the rights and wrongs of the causes leading to these clashes. No doubt, they must be summed up. But what is more important is to recognise that there is nothing right or justifiable in using force to resolve contradictions among the people. This is what Mao Tse-tung has taught us. Contradictions among the people must be resolved only through persuasion, through political struggle. Never by force.

Comrades, you know how this Maoist principle was applied during the stormy days of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in China. You know of the heroic communist standards set by the workers of Peking who relied only on their ideology and determination to stop the armed clashes between different factions of the Red Guards in Tsinghua University. Let us not forget that they persisted in this Maoist policy despite having to pay the heavy price of their own lives.

In the context of such clashes it is often argued, "We were not the first to attack and we are only defending ourselves against attacks." This argument

must also be examined by applying the lessons of the GPCR. We know how the slogan "Attack with reason, defend with force" which came up in the midst of Red Guard clashes during the GPCR was criticised and withdrawn. Yes, it is true that those circumstances were different. But the lessons gained by our class through the GPCR and the principles of our ideology cannot be denied in the name of particularities or inflamed emotions.

The revolutionary prestige earned by your parties places an even greater responsibility on each of you to break away from a vicious cycle of clashes and counter-clashes. We fully appreciate the difficulties and pressures you face and know that implementing a correct policy in the face of the loss of comrades is no easy matter. We appeal to you to stand firm on the revolutionary principles of our ideology. We call on each of you to publicly declare your willingness even to sacrifice valuable lives in order to put an end to the clashes, by stopping them unconditionally and unilaterally, by refusing to retaliate. Such sacrifice will never be futile. It will be a glorious example of proletarian determination and sacrifice in the cause of the people. It will unleash a tremendous force of revolutionary public opinion which no one can ignore. It will give a powerful impetus in converting a bad thing into a good thing and thus proving once again the strength of our ideology.

When different revolutionary parties are active in the same region, wrong tendencies among the cadres and

masses can give rise to strained relations and political differences can be turned into antagonisms. And there will always be opportunists or even bad elements who try to fish in troubled waters. Some exercise of mutual restraint and common sense is called for in such circumstances. This is even more necessary while extending areas of activities. But the only sound and lasting way to tackle such questions, including the question of extension, is that of broadening and deepening ideological, political struggle — among the masses, within the ranks of the party and, when necessary, against opposing political views.

The revolutionary masses, the true creators of history, can never be denied the right to know, examine and grapple with different ideas and arrive at their own conclusions. Besides, the strength of a revolutionary line must also rest on its capacity to retain its support in the face of challenges and even provocation. It can never be "protected" by any means other than ideological and political struggle. Indeed, one of the negative consequences of the clashes is that at a time when the communist movement in India requires more and deeper struggle over the major questions of political and ideological line, these clashes interfere with and obscure such necessary struggle.

Comrades, once again, in a spirit of communist solidarity and with high expectations of the strength of your revolutionary traditions, we appeal to each of you to stop these clashes, unconditionally and unilaterally, and to issue a public proclamation to this effect. This is the pressing need of the time. For our part, the South Asian Parties and Organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement pledge our assistance in helping end these clashes.

Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)
Communist Party of Bangladesh
(Marxist-Leninist) [BSD (ML)]
Communist Party of India
(Marxist-Leninist) Naxalbari
[CPI (ML) Naxalbari]
Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla
[PBSP] [Bangladesh]
Revolutionary Communist Centre of
India (Maoist) [RCCI (M)]
Revolutionary Communist Centre of
India (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)
[RCCI (MLM)]

On the Cowardly Murder of Three Leading Members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War)

5 January 2000

Message to the Central Committee, Communist Party of India
 (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War) from the Committee of the
 Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

Dear Comrades,

It was with great grief that our Committee has learned of the loss of Comrades Nalla Adi Reddy (Shyam), Arramreddy Santosh Reddy (Mahesh) and Seelam Naresh (Murali) at the hands of the reactionary ruling classes of India. As members of the Central Committee of your Party, all three of these comrades had played a leading role in the advances of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War), and their loss saddens all genuine communists and revolutionaries throughout the world, as well as in India.

The murder of these comrades after being captured by the enemy hundreds of kilometres away from where their bodies were deposited comes on top of the killings of hundreds of other leaders, members and supporters of the CPIML (People's War) over the last few years. In this latest case, as in so many others, the authorities have tried to cover over cowardly murders of unarmed prisoners as "encounter killings". In India and abroad, revolutionary and progressive forces are exposing and condemning this dastardly act.

You have aroused millions of the oppressed masses in wide areas of India and shown that "it is right to rebel" and that only through people's war will it be possible to defeat the powerful enemies of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Your Party has based itself upon the proletarian ideology developed by Marx, Lenin and Mao and is fighting to carry out the new-democratic revolution in India as part of the world proletarian revolution, whose goal is communism. For these reasons the reactionary Indian state lashes out in vicious fury against the CPIML (People's War). But no amount of terror or brutality will save the reactionary classes from their doom.

Comrades, despite these bitter losses our Committee and the parties and organisations of RIM are confident that your Party will turn your grief into strength and further advance the cause of the proletariat and the oppressed masses in your country. The sacrifices of Comrade Adi Reddy, Comrade Santosh Reddy and Comrade Naresh will be avenged by the ultimate defeat of the reactionary ruling classes.



Statement on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Siraj Sikder

2 January 2000

By the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

2 January 2000 represents the twenty-fifth anniversary of a dastardly act — the killing of comrade Siraj Sikder at the hands of the anti-people Bangladeshi regime, led at the time by Sheikh Mujib. The reactionary classes of Bangladesh hated and feared Siraj Sikder because he was the founder and leader of the Purba Banglar Sharbohara Party (the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla or PBSP), which in the few turbulent years of the early 1970s had emerged as a party capable of arousing the masses and challenging the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Siraj Sikder symbolised a different future for Bangladesh and its teeming millions — the future of new-democratic revolution and the eventual advance to socialism and communism. Because of this, the oppressors could not tolerate Siraj Sikder alive, even in captivity. For this reason, he was executed without even the pretence of a trial, and the president of the country publicly boasted in parliament of this cowardly act.

Comrade Sikder recognised the historic importance of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and learned from the Naxalbari movement of neighbouring India. He led a fierce struggle against revisionism, which had previously dominated the communist movement in Bangladesh. Siraj Sikder was killed at a young age but he had already made important contributions in linking Marxism-Leninism-Maoism with the particular conditions of Bangladesh. He made serious efforts to analyse the particularities of the country from the Maoist standpoint and with the goal of initiating, sustaining and developing the people's war that will alone lead to the liberation of the people of Bangladesh. He gave great attention to how

some of the features of Bangladesh, such as its vast and dense population and its geographical character as a river delta (in which much of the land is submerged during the rainy season) could be used to overcome some of the country's unfavourable features, such as its essentially flat terrain and relatively small surface area (which facilitates the enemy's ability to quickly mobilise a superior force to try to encircle and suppress the revolutionary forces).

Siraj Sikder symbolises daring: daring to take on the responsibility of forming a vanguard party with nothing less than the total liberation of the people and the eventual achievement of communism as its goal; daring to initiate armed struggle; and daring to develop a political line even if it appeared to differ from some of the policies that other, more experienced, Maoist parties had been following. Siraj Sikder dared to put the PBSP, at the time still in its infancy, at the head of the whole people in the struggle against the Pakistani ruling classes, when other opposition forces, including the leaders of the Awami League, fled to India and Sheikh Mujib himself surrendered to Pakistan. In a word, Siraj Sikder incarnated the Maoist dictum, "dare to struggle, dare to win".

In the twenty-five years since the murder of Siraj Sikder, the revolution in Bangladesh has gone through twists and turns. The revolution faces a powerful and determined enemy, backed to the hilt by imperialism and Indian expansionism. It has proven difficult to sustain and develop people's war in the conditions of Bangladesh. Repeated two-line struggles have broken out within the ranks of the Maoists over whether and how it is possible to apply the basic Maoist strategy of new-democratic revolution and protracted people's war in that country.

In all of the political debate among the revolutionary forces of Bangladesh, Siraj Sikder stands out as an obligatory reference. No doubt the struggle to develop a correct line in Bangladesh requires an examination of the correctness or incorrectness of some of the specific lines and policies of Siraj Sikder. Indeed, such an approach is completely in keeping with Siraj Sikder's own legacy of critical thinking. But history has shown that advance will come by building upon the positive contributions of Siraj Sikder to the theory and practice of revolution in Bangladesh.

On this 25th death anniversary we remember the past, but our focus is on the future. The cause for which Siraj Sikder devoted his energy and shed his blood has yet to be achieved. The masses of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals in Bangladesh still have the giant burden of imperialism and the domestic reactionary classes weighing heavily upon them in old and new forms. The need for revolution, for people's war, has in no way diminished.

On behalf of all of the participating parties and organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement we again express our proletarian internationalist support to today's followers of Siraj Sikder, the PBSP. We are confident that by applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the conditions of Bangladesh, by critically assimilating the advanced experience of the international communist movement, and by basing themselves on the legacy of Siraj Sikder while learning from the positive and negative lessons of the past several decades of struggle, they will overcome all difficulties and write glorious new chapters in the history of the proletarian revolutionary struggle in Bangladesh.

Long Live the Revolutionary Legacy of Siraj Sikder!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

The Maoist Communist Party

Announcement by the Maoist Communist Party

1 May 2000

Salute from the

On this shining, victorious, extraordinary 1 May, the Italian communists announce to the proletarians and peoples of the world, to the parties and organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and to the international communist movement, the foundation, amidst the fire of class struggle and in close connection with the masses, of the *Maoist Communist Party*, so as to hoist again the banner of socialist revolution in Italy, uniting all the advanced proletarians under the banner of Maoism, applying the strategy of people's war to the conditions of this country, and putting this new beginning into practice so as to seize power and march triumphantly to socialism and communism.

1 May 2000 – Long Live the Maoist Communist Party of Italy!

A new great wave of the world proletarian revolution is approaching in the world today, with its most advanced points being the People's Wars led by Maoists in Peru and Nepal, but also in India, the Philippines and Turkey. In many other countries, the masses are rising up, guns in hand, even when the leadership of these struggles is not in the hands of proletarians led by genuine communist parties. Crisis is deepening in the heart of the imperialist system, a crisis for which this system has no solution. Though protected by all their armed might, the imperialist governments cannot

even hold their world summit in peace. More and more the proletarians, the unemployed, women and youth feel the need to put an end to a system based on exploitation, oppression, repression, racism and war by making revolution, in the universal form of people's war, which is the only way to lead the proletariat and masses to seize power and free themselves.

From the Andes to the Himalayas, from Washington to Berlin, from Istanbul to Bombay, from Bogota to Rome:

Long Live 1 May under the Banner of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Long Live the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!

People's War until Communism!

It is within the core of the working class in our country, amongst the exploited proletarians and immigrants, the unemployed and the impoverished, that we communists organise the struggle, raising consciousness and building up the leadership and cadre in order to expand and intensify the class struggle and turn it into mass political struggle to overthrow the bourgeois government, combating reformism, electoralism, pacifism and opportunism. We work to organise the rebellion of women as a mighty force of revolutionary struggle and transformation. We call on rebel youth to fight state repression and everyday oppression. We defend the revolutionary political prisoners, and build the revolutionary united front.

We proudly and enthusiastically hail the founding of the Maoist Communist Party (PCm) in Italy as a party united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, a party whose task is to lead the proletariat and revolutionary masses in that country to overthrow their imperialist ruling class as part of the single world-wide process of proletarian revolution and to wholeheartedly support this effort in every country.

This event represents a great and daring leap after two decades of difficult political and ideological struggle and revolutionary practice, in which comrades who began as local circles linked up both with each other and, from its beginning, with RIM, and fought to uphold the banner of proletarian revolution in that country and to take responsibility for leading it. Through the course of this, the comrades in Italy have sought to apply the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the particularities of that peninsula, to unite all who can be united to make this line a material force, and to begin to sink roots among the masses, especially the proletariat.

As we all know, in every country the formation of the party is only the beginning of a process. Even after the party is formed it must continue to grow and develop through arduous efforts for its influence among the masses to deepen and for its grasp of the correct line to become stronger. This is an on-going process that will exist throughout the whole life of the party. The party must be built in the course of class struggle, including the two-line struggle, both inside the party and against revisionism in all its manifestations.

As our Movement declared in the document *Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!* when it adopted this ide-

tyin Italy is Founded!

Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

ology, "Mao Tsetung's theory of people's war is universally applicable in all countries, although this must be applied to the concrete conditions in each country and, in particular, take into account the revolutionary paths in the two general types of countries – imperialist countries and oppressed countries – that exist in the world today." Our Movement's understanding of the universality of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism's teachings on people's war is one important feature that demarcates us from other trends in the international communist movement. In the imperialist countries, as in the oppressed countries, the work of communists prior to the outbreak of revolutionary war is to prepare for the violent seizure of power. The formation and strengthening of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party is the key aspect of leading the revolutionary struggle forward amidst the inevitable twists and turns, complexities and diverse "pulls" that accompany any revolutionary process.

There is a rich experience in Italy of waging different kinds of struggle, and even armed struggle, against the reactionary state. But these struggles could not succeed in developing into a revolutionary war of the masses. This experience needs to be summed up and appropriate lessons learned. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism must be creatively applied to the concrete situation in each country. In so doing, as our *Declaration* affirms, the October Revolution remains the basic point of reference for Marxist-Leninist-Maoist strategy and tactics in the imperialist countries. The party must steer clear of the rocks of revisionism in all its forms, both right and "left", while raising the political consciousness of the masses and leading them in revolutionary struggle, so as to prepare and launch

the armed struggle for the seizure of power when a revolutionary situation appears that makes the development of a genuine people's war possible.

As Lenin said, the communist ideal is not a trade union secretary but a tribune of the people, striving to provide both ideological and practical leadership to those sections of society who are already clamouring for it and beyond, going lower and deeper among old and new sections of the proletariat and more broadly as well. One task the party faces is to attract and train new forces, in particular young revolutionaries who have been coming forward in Italy in a period in which confusion reigns. Bringing forward a new generation of communists will require vigorously combating other ideologies that are competing to influence this generation. A particular strength of your party is the importance you have given to unleashing the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution, a force which could spell victory or defeat for the seizure of power in Italy and the continuing transformation of society, leading to the triumph of classless society all over the world.

You have upheld and supported the world's revolutionary movements and people's wars, such as in Peru and Nepal, which has been of vital importance to the revolution in Italy and the world revolution. Your participation in RIM is also a favourable factor to enable your party to assimilate the rich experience our Movement is gaining in many countries throughout the world.

Today, the whole world is full of contradictions and volatility. The storm centres of the world proletarian revolution are in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where, for deep-rooted reasons, a revolutionary situation generally exists, although with

ebbs and flows. However, the other major contradictions in the world are also sharpening. This intensification has led to the eruption of reactionary warfare in the Balkans, right on Italy's doorstep. Certainly Italy itself is not immune from the future possibility of violent upheaval and dislocation and the accompanying revolutionary openings – in short, as our *Declaration* says, "revolutionary situations which appear infrequently in these countries but which concentrate the fundamental contradictions of capitalism". Italian imperialism's increasingly direct and enthusiastic involvement in bloody adventures to expand its sphere of influence and grab its share of the imperialist re-division of the world has greatly stepped up the popular outcry against these criminals, sharpened the struggle and built up the pressure driving a host of contradictions. You comrades have pointed out the factors of political and social crisis threatening to break through the surface in Italy.

The foundation of the Maoist Communist Party in Italy is most timely. The objective circumstances under which the PCM has been born and the conditions for carrying out its work are propitious, as is the growing maturity of our Movement on an international level as the embryonic political centre of the world's Maoists.

We are overjoyed that your Party is determined to seize the hour and assume its responsibilities – this is an urgent necessity for the revolution in Italy and the world revolution. Great victories crown great efforts, and we wish you every success in this heroic endeavour.

Long Live the Maoist Communist Party in Italy!

Long Live the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!

20 Years of Continuing People's War

Encirclement and Counter-Encirclement in Peru

During the last year, the People's War in Peru has continued to undergo twists and turns, suffering hard blows, whilst also striking hard at the enemy and successfully defying all attempts to wipe it out.

For Peru's ruling classes and their imperialist backers, the high point of this period was the 14 July 1999 capture of Comrade Feliciano, who had led the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) Central Committee since the 1992 capture of Chairman Gonzalo. After seven years of outflanking one government offensive after another, Comrade Feliciano finally fell into enemy hands in "Operation Encirclement", involving several thousands troops and armoured aircraft in the eastern valleys and hills of Junin. In early July, government troops swarmed through the region, raping, beating and murdering the Quechua-speaking peasants in their path, killing their chickens and cows and stealing their crops, in an effort to prevent the Maoists from being able to draw on the people for strength and sustenance. Numerous peasants were carried off to military bases where they were threatened and tortured in an effort to obtain information, which only produced widely-voiced protest and hatred.

Since his arrest had been falsely announced so many times before, the regime felt obliged to display their captive to the press. He was exhibited behind a thick layer of soundproof, one-way glass, so that he could not repeat the humiliation Chairman Gonzalo inflicted on them when he gave his famous "cage speech" in similar circumstances. For extra measure, music was

played loudly in the military auditorium, as waiters plied the reporters with alcohol. Comrade Feliciano stood calmly under the heat of intense spotlights, raising his right fist in a clear signal to continue the People's War. Like Chairman Gonzalo, he was sentenced to life in prison for treason by a military tribunal that met in secret.

One particularly dramatic manifestation of the outrage that welled up against this crime came from Umraniye prison in Istanbul, Turkey, where 78 political prisoners signed their names to a letter hailing "Comrade Feliciano's revolutionary fist" and declaring the continuing People's War, led by the PCP, an inspiration to "resistance and revolution" in Turkey, as around the world.

Shortly after, it was announced that Comrade Julio had assumed the responsibility of leading the Party.

Peruvian President Fujimori's joy and predictions of following up with a quick and decisive military victory were shattered within a few months, when the government's subsequent "Operation Annihilation" offensive against the revolutionary army in Junin and Ayacucho was resoundingly defeated. In this "hammer and anvil" operation in October and November 1999, the enemy had tried to confine People's Liberation Army (PLA) units within a 100-kilometre radius centred on the Ene river valley so that air power and troops could "hammer" them toward the "anvil" of military bases and fortified strongholds. But the PLA fought and won a series of fierce battles and finally broke through.

The worst single blow suffered by

the reactionary armed forces, since 1992, according to Fujimori's own admission, came when PCP-led guerrillas blew up an M-17 transport helicopter stuffed with high-ranking officers. They killed a colonel who had participated in the operation against Comrade Feliciano, three other officers and a sergeant. The government denied initial reports that four soldiers died as well. Many of the other 26 personnel aboard were wounded, including General Fournier, who was in charge of intelligence during Comrade Feliciano's capture. Fournier was missing — wounded and hiding in the jungle — for several days before being carried back to government lines. Fujimori's right-hand man, the former CIA agent and present head of the Peruvian secret police, Vladimiro Montesinos, was personally directing what he thought was going to be the televised surrender of PCP-led fighters. The helicopter was landing when the expedition literally exploded in their faces, turning it into a personal humiliation.

A November 1999 ambush near the Ene river in Vizcatan, in the province of Huanta in the northern part of the department of Ayacucho, left a captain dead and eight soldiers wounded after a long battle. In another ambush, guerrillas shot at and incapacitated a helicopter that had landed to evacuate a soldier wounded by a bamboo booby trap. These were part of a series of battles in Junin and Ayacucho during November that sealed the defeat of "Operation Annihilation". The government relied heavily on armed helicopter gunships, but its troops were unable to successfully confront

the guerrillas on the ground.

Although few details are available, another series of revolutionary actions were reported before and during the April elections in the river valleys and mountains of this region, from low-lying Satipo in south-eastern Junin to Huanta and La Mar in bordering north-eastern Ayacucho.

PCP-led forces also mounted a series of actions during this period throughout the extensive Huallaga river valley, including the departments of San Martín, Huanuco and Ucayali. In early April 2000, a police patrol was put to run and their vehicles destroyed in a battle on a main road near Tingo Maria, an area where PCP-led armed forces have long been strong. Another police patrol on the motorway to nearby Aucayacu was ambushed and destroyed at the end of the month. Also in April, clashes took place further north in the Huallaga valley in Tocache and Uchiza, and on the right bank of the Huallaga river in Ucayali.

During the last year news reports have filtered out about important military actions in other areas of the country, including Ancash in the north.

Another milestone in the People's War occurred in February 2000, when PCP-led prisoners at the notorious Yanamayo facility in Puno seized the prison for several days in what they called "a great political, military and moral victory for the Party and the Revolution". A riot squad sent in against the prisoners murdered one of them before they themselves were cornered and trapped. With this action, the prisoners successfully resisted what they denounced as an incursion meant to force them into punishment cells, transfer them to even worse prisons and otherwise break and kill them. They pressed demands that they be recognised as prisoners of war and treated like human beings. They also added their strength to the continuing struggle to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo, held in extreme isolation in an underground dungeon at the Callao naval base. Comrade Feliciano is being kept in the same complex of subterranean tombs. The prisoners demanded that it be closed. These demands were echoed by support demonstrations and other activities on several continents.

On 7 February, the first day of the uprising, the prisoners released a

statement that brought their "revolutionary greetings to the national proletariat and the Peruvian people... and the international proletariat and the peoples of the world". They emphasised that their action was meant to expose and oppose not only the Fujimori government and the prison administration, but also the "revisionist and capitulationist line that calls for a peace accord" and seeks to trade the blood spilt by the Peruvian people, including hundreds of prisoners, for what they denounced as "amnesty and enlistment" – a release of prisoners in return for their political acquiescence to the continued domination of Peru by the imperialists, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords. This is particularly important because this Right Opportunist Line, as the PCP calls it, has been concentrated in the prisons. The stand against it, in words and deeds, taken by these prisoners who are in the hands of the enemy and yet continue to turn these hell-holes into "shining trenches of combat", is particularly significant and inspiring.

The Yanamayo action set off a chain of prison rebellions in Peru in the following weeks, mainly by common prisoners (revolutionary prisoners there are always kept in separate buildings or sections). The country's whole enormous and horrific prison system was in ferment. One of the most notable of these was among common prisoners in the Chorrillos prison for women in Lima. In May 2000, women prisoners in the northern city of Huaraz rose up. Reportedly, this heroic protest against intolerable conditions involved prisoners in the special pavilion for "subversives", as well as the rest of the women.

Of course, the Fujimori regime's ultimate weapon is, and always has been, US support. In August 1999, US "drug czar" General McCaffrey visited Peru to hold official and off-the-record talks with Fujimori and Montesinos. This was highly ironic since Montesinos' last job was as a lawyer for Peru's drug cartel bosses and the Fujimori regime has been repeatedly exposed for its involvement in the narcotics trade. McCaffrey's office issued an explicit denial of reports in the opposition press that he had highly praised both men. Recently, an investigative reporter revealed that, while serving as a US Army general during the Gulf War, McCaffrey ordered his troops to pour

massive amounts of artillery and gunfire upon retreating Iraqi soldiers ... after the US had declared a cease fire and fighting had halted. This apparently made him well qualified to head up the US "war on drugs", which is no less bloodthirsty. During "Operation Annihilation" in October, the US Ambassador inaugurated a new police base in Palmapampa, in the jungle region of Ayacucho near the Apurimac river, which has been particularly bitterly contested by both sides since the early days of the People's War. The police base was paid for by the US out of its "anti-drug" budget.

The first round of the presidential elections in April 2000 took place amid intense scandals (a million names on the registration petition for Fujimori's party turned out to belong to dead people). Strikes and violent demonstrations against Fujimori broke out throughout the country. During the vote counting, districts under military control were reporting close to unanimous returns for the president, who had fired the country's supreme court for ruling him ineligible for a third term. Just as Fujimori was about to announce a dubious victory, a US government spokesman publicly warned him to allow a second round of voting. Clearly, the US does not want their lackey regime and the imperialist-dominated system in Peru to stand naked. But the Clinton administration has proposed an unprecedented amount of military aid for the governments of Peru and Colombia, exactly because the US has no intention of failing to protect its interests and American guns have long been decisive in that.

This 17 May marked the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the People's War in Peru – 20 years that our red flag has been flying there, in the hands of country's downtrodden, held aloft by the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of the PCP, itself forged in the revolutionary line developed under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo. With proletarian revolutionary optimism, sacrifice and hard struggle, the PCP has confronted what Chairman Gonzalo, in his "cage speech", referred to as only a "bend in the road" – a judgement that more than ever haunts the reactionaries who stand in the way of the masses as they continue their unstoppable march on that road. ■

Defend the Lives of the Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War at the Naval Base of el Callao and Yanamayo!

We received the following statement from the prisoners of war and political prisoners who rebelled at the Yanamayo prison in Puno, Peru. It is dated 7 February 2000. — *Information Bureau of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*

"We are here as the sons and daughters of the people and we are fighting in these trenches, this is also combat, and we do this because we are communists! Because here we defend the people's interest, the principles of the Party, and the People's War! That is what we have been doing, what we are doing, what we will continue to do!" Chairman Gonzalo (Speech by Chairman Gonzalo)

The Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War of the Communist Party of Peru extend our revolutionary greetings to the National Proletariat and the Peruvian people, and we further extend our greetings to the International Proletariat and the Peoples of the world.

We denounce before national and international public opinion the plans of genocide of past and present (4 October, 1985 at Lurigancho Prison; 19 June, 1986 in the prisons of Fronton, Lurigancho, and Callao; 6, 7, 8 and 9 May, 1992 at Canto Grande Prison; 7 February, 2000 at Yanamayo Prison; etc), a take-no-prisoners war that is being carried out by the Peruvian state

and its fascist, genocidal, country-selling government and the puppet Fujimori who heads it up; genocidal plans executed by the genocidal Armed Forces (AAFF) and police forces (PPFF), all under the advisement and approval of imperialism, principally Yankee, pushing forward its war of low intensity, with the International Red Cross as one of its accomplices.

On 6 February, at 11:30 at night in Pavilion four of Yanamayo Prison, the genocidal PPFF with the DINOES special forces entered to carry out their vile genocide, murdering a prisoner of war and leaving dozens injured by gunshots, ending this massacre and incursion at 5:00 am on the morning of 7 February. They had dreams of rendering a devastating blow, a decisive one that would lead to crushing the struggles of the prisoners of war, but the fierce resistance of the prisoners of war has unmasked the fascist concentration camps of the Naval Base, Yanamayo, and Challapalca and their plans for further isolation, annihilation and genocide [of prisoners who resist] in defense of the rights of the people, of the revolution, and of our own lives and principally to Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo, who has been held in complete isolation since 1992, in which the fascist dictatorship, mainly Yankee, has been raising counter-revolutionary hoaxes against Chairman

Gonzalo.

This vile genocide, ordered under mandate of the government, perpetrated by the PPFF, led by Colonel Oscar Altamirano Flores — we say under government mandate because since September 1999 this prison has been under the direct control of a commission of the Ministry of the Interior sent from Lima — they have acted with blind hatred against the best sons of the people and have collided head-on with the indomitable resistance of the comrades, combatants, and masses, who have raised ideology, valor, and heroism to the highest, reaffirming revolutionary violence, leaving a legacy and great example to the Peruvian people and the peoples of the world.

We unmasked this vile and counter-revolutionary black vomit that is put forward by this genocidal Fujimori, when he says that: "the inmate Carlos Ponce was killed by his fellow inmates, because he obeyed the orders of the prosecutor...", with this farce they try to cover up the genocidal policies of the fascist dictatorship. The prisoner of war Carlos Ponce, who today is a hero of the people, an example of giving one's life for the Party and the revolution, was murdered by the genocidal PPFF with a gunshot to the face from a distance of one metre. Despite this, the fascist



Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo (above) and Comrade Feliciano (left).

dictatorship says that: "in the prisons, the human rights of the prisoners are respected...", "...pacification...", but the facts demonstrate that with their vile genocide they continue to spill the blood of our people, that the AAFP and the Fujimori government have been the most genocidal and country-selling to date. This tattered and filthy flag of human rights has and will never have anything new to offer. The human rights that they raise are the rights of imperialism, of the bourgeoisie, of reactionaries worldwide. It has been made clear by the Armed Forces and police forces, and the Fujimori government has demonstrated that it does not respect even the most basic of the so-called human rights. Therefore, we will not let them throw sand in our eyes, we will not allow them to numb our consciousness with the rotten and tattered flags of human rights, pacification, etc. We also unmasked this so-called "people's defender" (ombudsman) who does not recognise or carry out what the bourgeois constitution asks him to do; what's more, he was warned (in July 1999) that the fascist dictatorship was preparing a genocide against the prisoners of war, a warning to which this defender of the people gave no response. We can, therefore, say that this "defender" is a facilitator for these sinister plans,

he is a knife in the back of the people and an agent of the fascist dictatorship.

In its unrestrained and shameful fascism, the fascist dictatorship prohibits, here in this concentration camp, the entry of the newspapers *La República* and *Liberación* "because they are subversive", in this way restricting and denying us the right to education and culture.

We also unmasked all sorts of opportunists and revisionists, principally the black heads of the revisionist and capitulationist Right Opportunist Line that calls for a peace accord, who like a broken record call for amnesty and enlistment, but beyond this, are trafficking with the prestige and recognised leadership of Chairman Gonzalo and the Communist Party of Peru, claiming that he is calling for a peace accord. Besides, these gentlemen have never done anything to bring about what they say they defend: "the public presentation of Chairman Gonzalo," nor to defend the rights of the prisoners of war, but today with the repercussion of the struggles of the prisoners of war of the Communist Party of Peru they try to shamefully traffic in, and stand on top of, the blood that has been spilt to make some gains on their road to amnesty and enlistment. We say to them that the all-powerful Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, Gonzalo

Thought People's War will sweep away and convert imperialism, reactionaries and all manner of revisionists into a few black ashes.

Finally, the prisoners of war, at the cost of their own lives, have won a great political, military, and moral victory for the Party and the Revolution, with broad impact on the country and the world; persisting in fighting, mobilising and producing we will transform these sordid dungeons of reaction into Shining Trenches of Combat. We reaffirm our pledge to continue winning victories, success and battles even beyond death, always guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, led by the PCP and offering our lives for the Party and the revolution.

Defend the Life of Chairman Gonzalo!

Long Live the Communist Party of Peru!

The People's War Will Inevitably Win!

Down with the Fascist Concentration Camps!

Fight and Resist to be Recognised as Prisoners of War!

Glory to the Fallen Heroes, Long Live the Revolution!

Defend the Political Prisoners of Yanamayo

By the International Emergency Committee to Defend the Life of Dr Abimael Guzman (PCP Chairman Gonzalo)

On Sunday, 6 February 2000, a group of political prisoners and prisoners of war at Peru's notorious Yanamayo prison in Puno refused to return to their cells and seized and held the prison guards. After several hours, the authorities sent in armed squads to put down the protest. The prisoners, who are charged with belonging to the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), fought back fiercely, forcing a retreat after a furious battle in which one of the prisoners was reportedly killed.

Although the Peruvian government denies it, news reports give detailed accounts of negotiations that the government was then forced to conduct with the prisoners. The prisoners demanded an end to the isolation of Abimael Guzman (Chairman Gonzalo), that he be presented publicly and that the special prison at Callao where he and other leading PCP prisoners are being held be closed. They also demanded recognition as political prisoners and prisoners of war; an improvement in the harsh conditions of imprisonment they face and more humane prison conditions for all prisoners; and the presence of the Red Cross and human rights officials to ensure their safety.

The conditions in Yanamayo, like all Peru's prisons, are notoriously cruel. But in addition it is located 4000 metres high in the mountains, in bitter cold and far from Peru's population centres, making visits extremely difficult. The cells are 2 x 3 metres, the windows are tiny and often lack glass, so that the wind sweeps through, and the water is so cold that prisoners' fingers turn purple when they wash. The food is rotten, insect-ridden and generally inedible, and the prisoners have little access to medical care and medications. [For more information, see the International Emergency Committee (IEC) Emergency Bulletin 60, the article on Peru's prisons in AWTW 1996/22

and the interview with an ex-prisoner of war in AWTW no. 1999/25.]

For months tension had been gathering in Yanamayo. In November, the political prisoners had issued a set of demands, but in January the once-monthly family visits were denied and other punitive measures taken. The final spark to the rebellion was reported to be an incident when 60 to 70 guards, armed with teargas and shotguns, stormed a prison block, killed one prisoner and wounded 20 others, and then tried to blame the prisoner's death on the prisoners themselves.

After rising up and seizing the prison block, the prisoners repulsed several attempts to retake it, and held firm in their demands. Eventually, on Monday 7 Feb, the authorities agreed to take no reprisals against them and to transmit their demands to the highest level of government. The following day, although the prison was entirely surrounded by army reinforcements from "special operations units", journalists reported that the prisoners raised red flags and, in an organised fashion, chanted their slogans to get their message out to the world and demanded that the government comply with the negotiated agreement.

The prisoners' struggle selflessly raised the need to break the isolation of Chairman Gonzalo, a just and necessary demand raised by people all over the world. He has been held in complete isolation for almost seven years now, in violation of international law and the government's own legal undertakings. The isolation must be ended. Their demands for an end to the inhuman treatment suffered by Peru's prisoners also deserve the support of people everywhere. The IEC has long sought to expose the vicious practices of the Fujimori regime, which are aimed in particular at breaking the prisoners' steadfast support for the People's War.

Indeed, their heroic struggle under the extreme conditions they face gives heart to all those struggling against oppression everywhere and urgently cries out for support. So does the People's War itself, which the PCP has continued to lead forward through the twists and turns of recent years, despite repeated claims that it has been defeated by Fujimori and his US imperialist backers.

We call on people around the world to back the prisoners' struggle and to protest against the Fujimori regime and its continued isolation of Chairman Gonzalo in whatever ways possible. We also call on people to be alert to further manoeuvres by the regime. As of 13 February, press and human rights observers have still not been allowed into the prison, and the regional hospital had been put on alert in case of casualties "of a great magnitude". Indeed, the political prisoners have warned against the possibility that the Fujimori regime might repeat a massacre like the one that took place in 1992 in Canto Grande prison, or the massacre in El Fronton prison in 1986, when three hundred political prisoners were killed after a heroic struggle. The Fujimori regime has been widely condemned for its violations of human rights, and it has openly declared that it refuses to recognise rulings of the Organisation of American States Inter-American Human Rights Court. ■

The political prisoners have risen up, at enormous risk, to raise their voices against the US-backed tyranny imposed on their country. They need your support.

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Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Chinese Revolution!

This is an edited version of a speech prepared by AWTW which was given at various meetings held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949

We are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Chinese revolution. The workers, peasants and common people of China held political power from 1949 until 1976. Here we are going to focus on what the people did with that power, both what they did with it right away, almost overnight, and what they did with it over the course of almost 30 years. We are celebrating their accomplishments in building a new and different society.

Revolutionary war led by the Communist Party made that change possible in China. The guns of the Russian Revolution inspired the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. This party was something China had never seen before – a political party whose backbone was the "coolies" on the docks, the miners who had spent their lives in the dirt and other workers, that drew in legions of poor peasants and others from the countryside, as it led two decades of revolutionary wars.

The revolutionary outlook and goals of this party took a very concrete form in the Red Army it created. Its soldiers never stole so much as a needle and thread from the people, and even turned in everything looted from the enemy. They embodied new values of selflessness, co-operation and serving the people. They not only fought, but organised the people and worked in the fields, whenever possible, so as not to be a burden to the masses.

When poor people and others joined the Red Army, they were transformed. They stopped being down-trodden and desperate for a way out

of an unbearable life, and began to understand that the way out for China and the world depended on them and their class brothers and sisters. They held political meetings, where soldiers and officers criticized each other's backward ideas and individualistic habits without restraint. These soldiers were capable of a heroism no mercenary army could match. Wherever they went they called on the poor to rise up and join them.

Eventually, the Red Army became a raging torrent that tore apart the reactionary army of Chiang Kai-shek, who had all the tanks and planes and soldiers US money could buy.

On 1st October 1949 Mao proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese people, he said, have stood up. The US, Britain, France, Japan and all the other imperialist powers would not accept it. They told everyone the Chinese communists could not succeed. A US official wrote a report saying that China simply had too many people and no government could ever hope to feed them all. Even many of China's people themselves thought, *meiyu banfa* ("there is no way"). But Mao and the Chinese revolutionaries did not agree.

"In a few decades, why can't 600 million 'paupers', by their own efforts, create a socialist country, rich and strong?" Mao asked. "The wealth of society is created by the workers, the peasants, the working intellectuals. If they take their destiny into their own hands, use Marxism-Leninism as their guide, and energetically tackle problems instead of evading them, there is no difficulty in the world which they cannot overcome."

That was not a boast. It is an accurate description of what they set out to do and did.

China had been a prisoner of feudal landlords; foreign imperialists, who

directly ruled some parts of China as if it were their own country; and a handful of big monopoly capitalists, who were closely associated with the landlords and served as the imperialists' junior partners. Once the army of the former ruling classes had been defeated and their government overthrown, the next step was to break their economic power. Their property had to be confiscated immediately if the new government was to meet the basic needs of the people. Many millions had fought for the new government and were counting on it; many wavering people would support it if it could bring them relief from their problems.

THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The vast majority of China's people were peasants who worked the land, and yet they had little or no land to call their own. They were like people standing on slippery rocks in water up to their necks: as long as everything went fine they could survive, but at the slightest ripple, they would drown. In bad years they ate leaves and bark, begged food from the temples and froze. Some years they died in their millions.

When the revolutionary army defeated Chiang Kai-shek's armies and the local landlord forces, this feudal system was quickly overthrown. Actually, the overthrow began in the liberated areas before country-wide victory, and then swept across China like a river bursting a dam. Work teams led by the Party went into the villages to hold long and deep discussions with the peasants about the conditions and their problems. The Party told the peasants they should rise up, organize themselves and seize the land. The peasants held big protest demonstrations against the landlords and their

goons, and 'spoke bitterness'. All debts to landlords and money-lenders were cancelled. The landlords had to give back what they had stolen. Those who had committed the most serious blood crimes against the people were punished; otherwise, the people they had trampled on would not have dared to speak out.

The peasants themselves divided up the land, tools and animals in mass meetings where everyone in the village had their say. What made it so complicated was the question of how to treat the various classes among the peasants in such a way that the poorest peasants would get what they needed and yet unite as many people as possible to support the new political power. The deeds were given to every single person, men, women and children, not just to the husband. This was an extremely revolutionary measure. Never before had Chinese women been treated as equals or owned anything.

As we will see, the Chinese revolution could not stop with the policy of "land to the tiller". But it had to start there. First of all, if the peasants did not take over the land they farmed, they could never feel free. Second, there was no other way that China could feed itself and build the foundations for the development of industry and an independent economy not controlled by imperialism.

Contrary to the United States' predictions, by 1952, when land reform was basically completed, China became self-supporting in rice. This meant that every single person had enough to eat. It also meant that the imperialists could no longer threaten to starve China.

THE CITIES

Before the revolution, China's cities were no less a horror than the countryside.

Take Shanghai, China's biggest city. It was a roaring, teeming, pulsating metropolis, one of the world's largest cities. Yet Shanghai was several different cities all jammed together, like so many cities in the Third World today. It had a traffic-filled, modern city centre, with large Western-style hotels and corporate headquarters. There were luxury department stores and speciality shops where the rich could buy goods from all over the world. It had night-clubs, where officials, officers and millionaires could entertain, gam-

bling joints, and houses of prostitution for every pocketbook. The French, British and Americans each had their own private districts, where the city's real overlords could live in mansions with gardens, undisturbed by the Chinese. The Chinese worked their lives away on ships and wharves; in warehouses, factories, restaurants, kitchens and shops; driving rickshaws, pedicabs and other vehicles; and in general serving the rich. They lived crowded together in one-room hovels on the narrow, dark and dirty side streets and alleys, or on the street itself.

Many of these workers became Communists. All during China's long period of revolutionary war, quite a few proletarians went to the countryside to strengthen the Red Army. Others stayed and built underground party organisations and labour organisations, whose membership included many hundreds of thousands. The Party also secretly organised and led store clerks, students, artists, intellectuals and all those who could be united against the common enemy.

When the Red Army marched into Shanghai early one morning, months before Peking and southern China were liberated, some things began to change right away. The revolutionary army began to replace or direct the old police, whose high officers had fled. The police were forbidden to mistreat the people. They could no longer stop rickshaw and pedicab drivers, beat them up and steal their money and the seat cushions from their vehicles.

The liberation forces immediately began repairing the sewers. Shanghai stank mightily because its ancient sewer system was full of holes, especially in the poor districts, as the old authorities hadn't bothered to fix them for a century. Slums had been built over broken sewer pipes and many people lived surrounded by raw sewage. The streets were cleared of piled-up garbage. The huge puddles of muck and stagnant water that bred disease were drained. In the city and the countryside, China's millions could live free of filth and have clean drinking water, something that to this day billions of people in this world do not have.

As they seized China's biggest cities, one after another, the Red Army marched into the biggest banks, factories and other businesses and took them over. They organized emergency

supplies from the countryside, which had been cut off from the cities during the war.

The plentiful and extremely cheap labour provided by the feudal system had not only kept wages at starvation level, but had held back China's industrialisation as well. Why bother putting in modern machinery when an endless supply of people from the countryside could be worked to death instead? Many workers were not treated much differently from the peasants. Young women who worked in the textile mills were locked in at night like slaves. Boys and men who worked in the mines were beaten and abused; the masters treated the donkeys far better.

REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

The Party put an end to all this overnight. Child labour was abolished. The working day went from 12-16 hours a day to eight. Wages went up two or three times in the first several years. Because they knew their labour was going to free China and help make it a bastion of world revolution, workers now had an interest in production and for the first time were encouraged to reorganise it to make it increasingly efficient. All the workers who had never been more than a pair of hands were free to take part in the transformation of the country's social, cultural and political life. They were encouraged to join the Communist Party. They formed unions and other associations of all the workers that began to take part in the administration of the workplaces. Factories built new housing, nurseries, cafeterias and other facilities previously unknown in China.

China's million prostitutes were now organised into groups led by the Party. Previously they had often been sold or kidnapped; many had been kept prisoners for many years. These new groups helped the women understand the reasons for their oppression and also fought any tendency by other people to look down on them. The former prostitutes could train for jobs or return to the countryside.

Within a short time, the streets and country roads of this country, which had been among the most violent and dangerous in the world, had become relatively safe. Reactionaries like to argue that the way to end crime is more government repression. China proved the opposite, that when the conditions

that gave rise to crime were changed, the crime rate dropped dramatically. Further, when the people, especially the poor people, were free and began to rule society themselves, they could bring their own collective strength to bear against crime. Today the reactionary rulers of countries where hundreds of thousands and even millions of people are behind bars, like to claim that socialism is one big lock-up. The truth is that socialist China kept only a few thousand people in prison, and freed the people to go anywhere at any hour without fear.

WOMEN

The status of women underwent huge changes very quickly. Chinese women had been ruled by men their whole lives, by their fathers as children, their husbands when young, and their sons or other male relatives when widows. People used to say, "No one is happy when a girl baby is born." This wasn't because the poor were hard-hearted. Some people felt they couldn't afford to raise a baby girl who was destined to serve someone else's family.

If workers and peasants suffered under the yoke of feudalism, capitalism and imperialism, women, too, suffered under all this plus one more burden: they were also oppressed because they were women. This gave women tremendous revolutionary potential. Furthermore, China could not become completely free of the feudal system without knocking down one of its main pillars, patriarchy – the rule of the male head of the family over the women and children. The masses of women were a powerful force in overturning all the old social relations and the backward ideas and moral values that rested on them, which were common among the people.

Some said, "Land reform is good, the new currency is good, but when they won't let a man beat his wife anymore, that's going too far." The answer was not a matter of relying on government repression to end wife beating. For instance, during the land reform, many men did not want their wives going to the peasant association meetings. When women spoke up there, men laughed in contempt. These backward attitudes were struggled against by the Communists and advanced women, who had been organ-

ised into a women's association. If a man beat his wife, the village women's association might pay him a visit. All would join the wife in criticizing him and arguing with him about why such behaviour served the old society and went against the peasants' interests. In extreme cases, the women would give the man a taste of his own medicine.

By comparison, at the time this took place, women in many European countries were still not allowed to vote. In 1950, divorce was difficult for women to obtain in almost every other country of the world, birth control was unavailable and abortion illegal. Women in the richest countries today are just starting to catch up with some of the legal rights women in revolutionary China won two generations ago. But, again, as we will see in the case of land reform, China's revolution was to go far beyond simple legal equality and begin to eliminate the reasons for inequality and oppression.

All these were just the first steps on a long road.

STRUGGLE IN THE PARTY

From the start, there was struggle within the Chinese Communist Party about the path forward. One of the biggest issues was how to achieve modernisation. Should it be by putting profits in command and simply modernising the same kind of economy as China had before, thereby keeping China dependent on the world market controlled by imperialism? That would be following the capitalist road, and it would lead back to a life that China's workers, peasants and women hated. With industry now the property of the whole people, it had to be developed in a different way, not by simply pouring resources into those industries that generated the most profit. The goal of the economy now was to produce what the people needed and to encourage even development throughout the country. This meant giving priority to agriculture, so as to feed the people, supply industry with raw materials and provide a market for industrial goods. China had to develop a balance between heavy and light industry, build a self-sufficient national economy and support revolution throughout the world.

Mao said that China's new-democratic revolution had opened the door to capitalism but had opened the door

to socialism even wider. For instance, land reform had created a country of small farmers, but the revolution couldn't stop there. First, if it did, some of those who had slightly more land, tools and animals or even just more labour power would prosper, whilst some of those who had less would end up forced to sell their land. The workings of capitalism would have polarised the countryside into rich and poor. Second, even though the overthrow of feudalism by the peasants had started to pull the Chinese countryside out of stagnation and poverty, the further advance of agriculture depended on turning these small plot holders into collective labourers. Thirdly, this backwardness blocked the overall development of the socialist economy.

The need for these big changes met with resistance from within the Party itself. But Mao believed that the peasants' potential enthusiasm for collectivisation could overcome all obstacles.

Before country-wide liberation, and even before land reform was completed, peasants formed mutual aid teams to help each other in planting and harvesting. Within a few years of liberation they had formed lower-level co-operatives. They farmed all the land together and distributed the produce according to how much land, tools and animals each family had put in, as well as their labour. But still they needed canals, dams and flood control, as well as terracing, irrigation ditches and so on. Individual ownership was holding back the peasants' ability to produce.

By the mid-1950s, peasants formed higher-level co-operatives. They burnt the deeds to their land because they now owned the land, tools and animals in common. This was a zigzag process, with different areas moving at a different pace. It was not uncommon for peasants to join a co-operative, drop out, join up again and drop out again, according to their moods and confidence in the new ways. But at some stages of this process there were waiting lists of peasants who wanted to join up. As peasants pooled their land and labour, giving up their old isolated plots and working together to change the physical face of the land, tractors and other machinery could be used in areas which had never before seen an iron plough. The development of agriculture allowed industry to soar.

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

China was ready for a Great Leap Forward.

The basic level of government in rural China is the county or township. The co-operatives of a whole county joined together to create something new, an economic and political unit through which tens of thousands of people built a common life. These People's Communes were a giant step in moving toward the elimination of the gap between the peasants and government, since now they would increasingly administer everything themselves. While work teams based on several families were still the basic unit, the confines of the clan and the village were breached as these teams became a part of a far broader organisation. Irrigation, flood control, roads and so on could be planned on a large scale, with the knowledge and participation of the peasants playing the driving role in determining what should be done and how.

Mao's policy put the emphasis on the rural areas to gradually narrow the gap between the city and countryside and between workers and peasants. The move to People's Communes made it possible to make a large dent in this gap by building hospitals, schools and new industries in rural areas, rather than just expanding the existing facilities in the cities, even though that might seem "cheaper" in narrow economic terms.

The development of industry in the countryside would not have been possible without the People's Communes. Women and men were encouraged to take the initiative to organise, start up new factories and find new ways of meeting the needs of the people. The Party led this process and the government lent support in accordance with the country's overall economic plans, but everything hinged on the people's own efforts and initiative.

The Great Leap Forward solved many problems and achieved great things. But it ran into difficulties. There were three years of extremely severe drought. The Soviet Union sought to sabotage China's economy in retaliation for China's criticism of the capitalist road the USSR had taken under Khrushchev. There was also opposition to the Leap from within the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese

capitalist roaders used these difficulties as an argument for why China, too, should change course.

Revolution, they said, had become a distraction from the labouring people's real job, to work. The people were not supposed to concern themselves with questions of state or how their workplaces were organised and run, and whether or not their labour was serving to gradually liberate all the abilities of all the people and what direction society as whole was taking.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

By studying experiences in both the Soviet Union and China, Mao and other Chinese revolutionaries came to understand that socialism does not end the struggle between antagonistic classes. Instead, once the old ruling classes are eliminated, the battle shifts to within the Communist Party itself. The conflict over opposing policies and strategies — over different roads — represents a struggle between opposing classes. The workers and peasants and their Party leaders seek to continue on the socialist road. This means, step by step, eliminating the social gaps and inequalities left over from the old society and the old ideas that went along with these relations, supporting revolutions all over the world and making the country a base area for advancing to communism world-wide. The communist revolutionaries find themselves locked in deadly battle against those high party leaders who represent a newly emerging exploiting class and stubbornly seek to protect and expand all the old relations and accommodate themselves to the imperialist world order. These revisionists have the weight of tradition on their side, along with the dominant position of imperialism in the world.

This struggle came to a head with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In 1966, Mao and the revolutionaries in the Chinese Party called upon the Party members and masses to "Bombard the headquarters" — to criticise these capitalist policies and overthrow those who tried to impose them, to study and apply Marxism, and to take the initiative in creating socialist new things that could further transform society.

The immediate aim of the Cultural Revolution was to overthrow those Party leaders who were trying to take

China down the capitalist road. But, as Mao explained, it had a deeper goal as well: to transform the world outlook of the people, so that people could better understand the difference between Marxism and revisionism. This meant that people's thinking had to be transformed, along with transforming the economic and social relations between people that these ideas represented.

The opening battles in the Cultural Revolution were fought by the Red Guards, fearless students and youth who answered Mao's call to oppose some of the most powerful people in China. But Mao also called upon the working class to take the lead in everything. He fought to strengthen the Party's ability to lead as the representative of the long-term interests of the workers in turning society and the world upside-down.

In January 1967, after months of meetings and fierce debate to clarify the issues, rebels from Shanghai's factories, neighbourhoods and schools, led by revolutionary party members, threw out the old city administration, which had been a stronghold of the capitalist roaders. They replaced the old administration with a new, city-wide three-in-one combination of: representatives from the rebel organisations, revolutionary party leaders and Red Army representatives. The masses had seized power in an all-round way and from below. By late 1968, this kind of revolutionary committee was formed in every area of China.

Millions of educated youth went to take the Cultural Revolution to the countryside. Many stayed there permanently. City people who did not usually work with their hands also went for periods of time to work on the farms, to get to know the peasants and better understand their needs and to help transform their own outlook.

Factories were run by three-in-one committees of workers, technicians and administrators; in hospitals the committees were made up of doctors, workers and patients' representatives; and so on. As Mao predicted, when the role the workers played in production was revolutionised, when they began to act as thinkers and administrators and not just as pairs of hands, and when everyone's thinking was further revolutionised, then production too was liberated. At a Shanghai oil refinery, whose gases used to foul the air,

workers carefully studied the problem, including the most technical details, and figured out how to recycle the gases for use in manufacturing chemicals to make clothing, plastics and medicine. It had seemed cheaper for the plants to simply spew their poison freely into the atmosphere. That made a plant look more profitable and required less effort from the workers, and maybe even made extra funds available to them. But this, the workers proved, was not what was best for society or even the economy as a whole.

China's cultural activities – films, plays, opera, books, etc. – were a bastion of the capitalist roaders and a remnant from the old society, and their dominance of the ideas and outlook in the sphere of culture was a big obstacle to further revolutionising society. Mao said that the Ministry of Culture should be renamed the Ministry of Emperors, Kings, Generals and Ministers, Talents, Mummies, Gifted Scholars and Beauties, if it refused to change.

Chiang Ching came forward as a major Party leader in her own right. She played an important role in leading a mass upsurge to overthrow the capitalist roaders wherever they had power. She also made a particular contribution to the revolution in culture. Opera was extremely popular in China and yet still needed to be transformed. In a meeting with 5,000 representatives of opera companies from across the country, she provocatively asked whether they wanted to serve the interests of the common people or the handful of capitalist roaders who represented the persistence of the evils of the old society. "The grain we eat is grown by the peasants, the clothes we wear and the houses we live in were all made by the workers, and the People's Liberation Army stands guard at the fronts of national defence for us, and yet we do not portray them on the stage. May I ask which class stand you take?" The foremost task in opera, she said, was to create revolutionary heroes and especially to produce some advanced operas that could serve as models for opera and culture in general.

With the Cultural Revolution teaching was completely overhauled. Universities were set up in the countryside, so that teachers and students could learn from each other and from the masses and produce graduates who were both close to the masses and

scientifically trained – in other words, both red and expert.

CONCLUSION

What made all this possible? The leadership of a Communist Party guided by the ideology that today we call Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. That Party led a revolutionary war that smashed the political power of the old ruling classes and put it in the hands of the people. It made that ideology the property of the dispossessed and led them to continue the revolution, step by step, toward the liberation of all humanity.

China remained a poor country, but its socialism was a superior system.

It was able to meet the people's needs. From the early days after liberation, everyone was guaranteed food, clothing, fuel, a dignified funeral and education, whether working or not. No one had to worry about what would happen to their children. In short, they stopped being prisoners of starvation and could develop fully as human beings.

This development took place in a way that can never happen in a capitalist country. China was able to provide for its people, without exploiting the people of other countries, which is the secret of the higher living standards in the imperialist countries. Instead of increasingly dividing the country into a rich minority and a poor majority, the Chinese revolution was increasingly reducing the gaps and inequalities in society, between city and countryside, workers and peasants, intellectual labour and manual labour, and men and women. While it was not yet possible for everyone to simply get everything they needed, without any differences, many of the basic necessities of life were free or very cheap for all.

The Cultural Revolution could not put an end to all social inequalities and contradictions. As Mao said, communism could not be won until classes were finally abolished, not only in China but throughout the world. As long as classes exist, what is decisive is the line the party takes, or in other words, the direction society is moving in.

The capitalist roaders staged a military coup, arrested Mao's closest comrades, Chiang Ching and Chang Chung-chao foremost among them,

and unleashed a wave of terror against the revolutionaries. China's masses were robbed of their political power.

The new ruling class undid everything. They broke up the People's Communes. Today a few peasants have become rich and a hundred million or more roam the country, homeless and half-starved, searching for work. The workers have been kicked out of running things and ordered to shut up and be grateful for their jobs – if they are "lucky" enough to be employed in making something the imperialists find profitable. China's so-called "modernisation" has meant shutting down much of China's heavy industry and throwing people onto the streets to fend for themselves. Where new industries have sprung up, making clothing and televisions, for instance, they have meant the employment of cheap Chinese labour under the boot of foreign capital and often for the foreign market. The dirty work for rich countries is done in countries like China, where industrial poison and toxic wastes are everywhere. China's new rulers are running the country for the benefit of the imperialists on whom China's economy increasingly depends.

China now has some of the world's most extreme corruption at every level. There have been major peasant uprisings against the heavy burden of taxes and other new forms of exploitation. Girl babies are being killed at an alarming rate. Prostitution and drug addiction are once again rampant. AIDS is threatening to rival or even surpass the epidemics that stalked China until they were stopped cold in 1949.

The capitalist roaders who have taken over the Communist Party may be in control, as long as it suits their foreign masters, but there is nothing at all communist about the Chinese Communist Party anymore. Once again, China's people will have to take power, guns in hand, with the backing of the revolutionaries and the people of the world. Yet they – and we – don't have to start out all over again, from zero, because we have the experience of socialism, the line and lessons of that living, breathing example, developed through the struggle of hundreds of millions. It was a revolution that went further than any other ever before. That experience is the common heritage of the people of the world, a shining example of the superiority of the socialist system. ■

The Strategy for People's War in India

Repudiation of the Views on Military Line of the Central Reorganisation Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)

This article originally appeared in *Spring Thunder* no. 1 in 1998, then the theoretical journal of the Maoist Unity Centre CPI(ML). Since that time the MUC has ceased to exist, having joined forces with Communist Party of India (ML) Naxalbari [CPI (ML) Naxalbari] in April of 1999 to form a united organisation which upholds the basic positions in this article. Because of its length AWTW was forced to cut approximately 25% of the article. The whole article is available from us upon request. —AWTW

From its formation in 1979 till its dissolution in 1991 the views of the CRC, CPI(ML) on armed struggle and military line underwent three important shifts. The first one took shape in the period 1979-1982. It was sanctioned by the All-India Conference of 1982 and further developed during the following months. The second one emerged during the discussions leading to the 1985 All-India Plenum and the Second All-India Conference held in 1987. It was formalised in 1988. The third shift took place with the adoption of the document "On Proletarian Democracy", put forward in the form of a draft for discussion. It could not be finalised since the CRC, CPI(ML) was liquidated in October 1991. Throughout this period the CRC, CPI(ML) claimed to uphold the path of people's war and its basic concepts. This is why we have characterised the changes in its views on armed struggle and military line as "shifts". But, as we shall see below, they really represented a consistent, step by step deviation from the military science of the proletariat.

MOVING AWAY FROM CHARU MAZUMDAR

The CRC, CPI(ML) [CRC] upheld the "proletarian revolutionary line of Comrade Charu Mazumdar" as one of its basic positions. It stated, "Armed strug-

gle is the main form of struggle and all other forms of struggle should be complementary to it." But, from the very beginning, the main constituents of the new organisation diverged in their grasp and practice of this basic position. The Andhra Pradesh unit was of the view that the main weakness of the earlier movement lay in the military aspect. Whereas the Kerala unit considered that it should be sought in errors in developing mass organisations, mass struggles and economic programme. Just preceding the formation of the CRC, the Kerala State Committee (KSC) had adopted certain positions on these questions. Pointing to particular conditions in Kerala, it argued that the armed struggle could be initiated only after "uncovering and sharpening contradictions by intervening in ongoing mass and trade union struggles and developing them into political struggles". These differences were settled by the 1982 Conference. The issue was decided in favour of the Kerala State Committee's positions. An earlier draft "Tactical Line" document, drawn up along the lines of the basic position adopted in 1979, was withdrawn by decision of the Conference. Since the positions of the KSC became decisive in the further evolution of the CRC's views on armed struggle and military line, we will probe them in more detail.

The positions of the KSC diverged from the 1970 line of the CPI(ML) in two important aspects. The more obvious one was its proposal to develop mass struggles into political struggles in order to prepare the ground for initiating armed struggle. This contradicted Charu Mazumdar's well-known opposition to making economic or partial struggles a precondition for the initiation of armed struggle. It also contradicted Lenin's refutation of economism and the Leninist stand that economic struggles cannot be developed into the political struggle for power. By now, the KSC had already come to the view that the

CPI(ML) failed to develop mass organisations and struggles complementary to people's war. It held that this remained as a major issue of rectification. This was the justification for diverging from Charu Mazumdar. But the contradiction with Leninism could not be explained away so readily. The KSC sought to do this by adopting a new style of militant mass struggle built around the slogan, "To rebel against injustice is right". The thrust of its practice was on intervening in local issues and conducting "People's Trials" with mass participation mobilised on the basis of this slogan. Contradictions among the masses, as well as contradictions between the masses and local oppressors, were handled in these trials. They were conducted by People's Committees temporarily formed to take up specific issues. These trials were projected as "rudimentary forms of parallel political power".

Work along these lines spread out very quickly. In some areas this led to a sharpening of the contradictions with local oppressors and annihilations. The whole experience appeared to validate the KSC's claim of developing mass struggle, complementary to armed struggle, without sliding into economism. Furthermore, it also appeared to substantiate its claim of applying the lessons of the struggle in defence of Mao Tse-tung Thought and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) against the capitalist usurpers in China, to resolve the crucial problems facing the Indian new-democratic revolution.

We noted that KSC positions diverged in two ways. The second, not so obvious one, was contained in the assumption that the armed struggle could be initiated only *after* uncovering and sharpening the contradictions. This implied that, apart from the subjective conditions, the objective conditions for initiating armed struggle were also either absent or weak. Yet

this conclusion was never spelt out. Rather, the CRC continued to maintain that, despite being uneven, a continuous revolutionary situation existed throughout India.

While discussing the prospects for initiating and sustaining the armed struggle for the seizure of power, Mao Tse-tung had pointed to the existence of a continuous revolutionary situation in China. This was formed by objective contradictions, namely, the contradiction between imperialism and the people and that between feudalism and the broad masses. Mao had also pointed out that the revolutionary situation was never static. Depending on conditions and the advance of armed agrarian revolution, it could be stagnating or developing and there could be ebbs and high tides. By initiating the war in regions of sharp contradictions, building up armed forces and seizing power area-wise, the communist party should expand red power in wave upon wave. Thus, it should accelerate the development of the revolutionary situation.¹ Charu Mazumdar had insisted on these Maoist positions as one of the cornerstones of the new party's ideological and political line.²

Accepting the existence of a continuous revolutionary situation in the oppressed countries means, in essence, accepting the objective possibility and necessity of initiating armed struggle to seize political power, without waiting for the maturing of a countrywide revolutionary crisis. Evidently, this does not negate the necessity of preparations, the building up of sufficient subjective forces to initiate and sustain armed struggle. But it makes this preparation, and only this preparation, the key ideological, political and organisational task which must be addressed by a Maoist party. Though the KSC's positions on the necessity of uncovering and sharpening contradictions appeared to be in the nature of such preparations, its essence was quite different. If conditions in Kerala had created a situation where the objective contradictions were nowhere sharp, then apart from the preparation of the subjective forces, the objective conditions for taking up the armed struggle for seizure of power itself had to mature. In that case, armed struggle could not be on an immediate agenda, regardless of the level of the subjective forces.

This was the key to the camou-

flaged economism of the KSC. Although not everywhere and in equal intensity, the objective conditions for the initiation and development of people's war always exist in an oppressed country. The central task of a Maoist party is to seize this opportunity and make the initiation and development of war the centre of gravity in all its areas and spheres of activity. If this task is kept aside or grasped in a formal way then the party's line will be economist, no matter what its subjective intentions are. Because, *when socio-economic and political conditions have already put the armed struggle for seizure of power, the highest task of revolution, on the agenda, any line which falls short of directly taking it up will be economist.*

Once again, this does not mean that the party should initiate armed struggle without preparation. It also does not mean that it should be initiated in all of its areas of activity. Even in the vast countryside, where contradictions are comparatively sharper, there will be regions where the objective conditions are less developed. The party should make a materialist evaluation, through investigations, identify that region (or regions) most suitable for the initiation and development of people's war and concentrate there. Besides, its work in other regions, both in the countryside and cities, must be handled in a manner serving the task of initiation. *"Before the outbreak of war all organisation and struggle arise in preparation for the war....After the war breaks out, all organisation and struggle are coordinated with the war, either directly or indirectly."*³

The successful initiation and development of People's Wars in Peru and Nepal at the end of the twentieth century is powerful testimony to the Maoist position: *The central and immediate task of a communist party in an oppressed country is to seize power from the class enemy through people's war. All of its activities should be oriented towards the resolution of this task. All the activities of the party should be judged primarily in relation to this central task. It should either carry out the seizure of power or should be preparing for it.*

During this period, the KSC [and later the CRC] was upholding the strategic line of an Indian new-democratic revolution. There was no question of drawing up a separate tactical line for

Kerala. Yet, instead of reviewing and rectifying the KSC positions, they were made the dominant guidelines of the CRC. Moreover, the KSC's contention on the particular conditions existing in Kerala was never investigated and challenged in a systematic manner.

True, certain transformations were taking place in Kerala's class relations. They played a role in the ebb of the revolutionary situation since the mid-1970s. But the agrarian question was by no means resolved. Besides, even in those conditions, there were still regions of sharp contradictions with explicit forms of semi-feudal exploitation. In other words, unevenness remained (and remains) as an important feature. In particular, this period of ebb was also a period of intensification in the exploitation and oppression of the Adivasi masses, by any standards the lowest section of society. Land-grabbing from Adivasis became an immensely profitable business for powerful landlords and money-lenders. The two parliamentary fronts led by the Congress and the CPI(M) had reached stagnation. Significant sections of the Dalit basic masses were being alienated from the parliamentary left. The rise of new forms of share-cropping and tenure, the rapid growth of private financiers (known among the masses as "blade" companies) and the evolution of new bureaucrat capitalist relations in agriculture and industry, through the agencies of the state and co-operatives, were also part of the new situation. In other words, the transformations in class relations had not at all made the Maoist basic principles irrelevant in Kerala.

Instead of making a concrete analysis of the concrete conditions, the KSC made a summary evaluation, which, in essence, wrote off the possibility of initiating people's war in Kerala. Its acceptance of a continuous revolutionary situation was formal and idealist, since it neither analysed nor grasped the specificities of the revolutionary situation. This deviation was endorsed and further worsened by subsequent positions of the CRC.

These two intertwining strands of economism and idealism were continued in the CRC's positions on parallel political power and its concept of political power. As mentioned earlier, People's Trials were seen as a rudimentary or embryonic form of parallel political power. In reality, they were no more than the imposition of the momentary

ity organised will of the masses in some specific partial issues. Just as much as a forcible seizure of land does not, in itself, contain the seizure of political power, a People's Trial leading to the annihilation of a hated tyrant also does not represent anything more than the violent resolution of a partial issue. Furthermore, these trials were not protected by any means of revolutionary armed force. Hence, they could be conducted only up till the point that the enemy's political power unleashed its suppression. Once the enemy decided that enough was enough and started suppressing those organising and participating in such trials, they came to a stop. The lesson was not a new one. No amount of "organised will" can stand up to the enemy's armed suppression unless it takes up arms. Political power can only grow through the barrel of a gun. The enemy's political power must be destroyed through armed struggle to set up and defend the new power. Without such political power "everything is illusion". In the case of the CRC, this illusion was created and maintained by its concept of parallel political power. It was later deepened with its "new concept of political power".

We will first analyse the concept of parallel political power. Parallel to what? If it is supposed to be parallel to the enemy's power, then the question of whether it can exist over a long period of time must be answered. More fundamentally, the question must be answered of *whether at all* revolutionary political power can exist in parallel to the enemy's power. The Maoist concept of red power, base area, liberated area, etc., can be said to be parallel political power only in the sense that they exist in a small part (or parts) of a country where countrywide political power is still held by the enemy. *Within the base area red power is the sole power.* Moreover, as proved by the experience of the October Revolution, even in capitalist countries "dual" power can exist only for a brief period. It can exist only under exceptional circumstances, where neither of the contending powers is in a position to forcefully impose its domination. This duality has to be resolved in favour of one or other power. In a certain sense, the red power pockets, established through people's war, also face a similar urgency. Unless the pockets of red power are created and sustained as

base areas of the people's war, unless they are expanded to accelerate the revolutionary situation, unless the war is developed as a "total war", aiming at the countrywide seizure of power, they will not be able to exist for long. This is apart from the constant possibility of their being abandoned temporarily, in order to manoeuvre, or their being seized back by the enemy.

Within the strategy of people's war, particularly in the initial period leading to the areawise seizure of power, parallel power other than as pockets of red power has no place and can have no place. Any concept of establishing power, *without* the areawise armed smashing of the enemy's power and the building up of armed forces to defend the new power, is sheer idealism. It is the substitution of the "illusion of power" for real political power. This is why Mao insisted that, *"The fundamental conditions for establishing a base area are that there should be armed forces, that these armed forces should be employed to inflict defeats on the enemy and that they should arouse the people to action."*³ Lenin himself had pointed out that the seizure of power even in a small area would immediately confront the revolutionaries with *all* the tasks of government.⁴ The point is that one cannot have power in parts. Areawise seizure of power is partial only in relation to the countrywide power of the enemy. Within that area or base, it must be the sole power. *Otherwise it is not yet political power.* We will have to come to back to this question later on.

'LEFT' SPONTANEITY COMPLEMENTS ECONOMISM

The positions of the KSC, which later on became the line of the CRC, did not go unchallenged. Within the Kerala unit itself some comrades had opposed these positions and many had doubts. But the strongest opposition came from the Andhra Pradesh (AP) unit. It continued the struggle till splitting away in 1985.

As pointed out earlier, the AP unit had identified the military aspect as the principal issue of the setback. On its own, and later as part of the CRC, it launched a number of armed assaults. But they could not be sustained. Many leading cadres were caught and killed by the police.

Actually, apart from correctly identifying the military aspect as the key issue to be taken up, the AP State Committee never tried to make a systematic summation of the military line and experiences of the CPI(ML). Merely insisting on the correctness of Charu Mazumdar's positions and trying to keep the flag of armed struggle flying, it repeated a number of errors which were evident in the armed struggle led by the CPI(ML) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There was no rupture from the powerful elements of spontaneity in military matters. This failure sustained 'left' errors in developing mass work to prepare for and serve the people's war. Ultimately, its correct stand, on seeing the military aspect as the principal issue leading to the setback, did not advance beyond a formal assertion. The failure of the AP unit in taking up the military question from the standpoint of line and synthesising both the positive and negative lessons of the armed struggle led by the CPI(ML), gave ample room for the CRC leadership to establish the Kerala experience as the cornerstone of its summation of CPI(ML) experience.

The feeble opposition in Kerala also suffered from a similar weakness. From 1967 until 1976, the revolutionary movement in Kerala had carried out armed struggles, including successful assaults on police outposts. But the struggle could not be sustained. In fact, unlike other states in India, the movement was totally crushed a number of times by the enemy. Given this experience, some hard thinking was called for. Dogmatist denial of mass struggles and organisation and secrecy had helped the CPI-CPM revisionists in isolating the party. Yet it still enjoyed prestige among the basic masses. After the repeal of the state of emergency in 1977 most of the cadres, including leading ones, could resume revolutionary activities. Based on these positive strengths, a proper summation of the political-military failures, aimed at charting the application of the path of people's war in the concrete conditions of Kerala, was needed. But the opposition to the new positions failed to rise up to this task. They too failed to rupture from the elements of spontaneity, subjectivity and one-sidedness in the CPI(ML)'s line and practice. Subsequently they were swept up into the spontaneity of economism.

SUMMING OUT REVOLUTION

All the elements of the CRC's positions on armed struggle as it existed until 1985 had thus emerged by 1982. What remained to be done was the task of placing them in a comprehensive line and making this the basis of evaluating the experiences of the CPI(ML). This was done in the First All-India Conference.

The CRC's summation, "Towards a New Phase of Spring Thunder", picked on some real errors in Charu Mazumdar's positions and the CPI(ML) line and practice in order to reverse correct verdicts. Charu Mazumdar's "counterposing of mass struggles and mass organisation to guerrilla struggle", ignoring the necessity of an agrarian programme and one-sided stress on secret work, etc., were identified as the major reasons for the setback. Regarding military line, it argued, "...the party was not implementing a well thought-out and well defined line on the military front. At times the military line was developing spontaneously and at other times comrade Charu Mazumdar was attempting to give a shape to it."¹⁰ But this justified criticism of spontaneity covered up the worship of spontaneity from the opposite, economist end. The CRC's ideas about a "conscious development" of military line meant that, "...the communist revolutionaries who were leading the Naxalbari⁹ struggle could not chalk out a thorough, concrete programme for establishing parallel power centres and continuing it for a long time because they did not think seriously about the possibility of the existence of dual power centres in the countryside for a long time. Without a political line of setting up people's power centres in parallel to the enemy's existing power centres and gradually overcoming the latter through a long drawn-out struggle, the concept of establishing political power at the local level can never be realised, leading ultimately to the countryside seizure of power."¹¹ This error was attributed to "...the lack of the very concept of protracted war".¹² Charu Mazumdar's counterpoising of the struggle for political power and the struggle for "economic gains" was also identified as one of the reasons leading to the setback. In fact, this was characterised as the very basis of "...the dogmatic understanding of the question of political

power and one-sided rejection of other forms of struggle and organisation".¹²

Let us start from this argument. Any class seizes power in order to overturn existing relations of production and establish new ones corresponding to its class interests. This is also a decisive way of suppressing and eliminating the overturned class. Areawise seizure of power also entails these tasks, though not in its fullest dimension. In an oppressed country the crux of these tasks is the overturning of semi-feudal agrarian relations and the implementation of "land to the tiller". This is what an agrarian programme should deal with. Though the CPI(ML) did not have a worked-out agrarian programme, it did have a clear-cut agrarian policy. This policy was realised in the Naxalbari armed rebellion. The Teral report gave an exhaustive account of this experience.¹³ It also summed up the reasons for the setback at Naxalbari in the following way: "...lack of strong party organisation; failure to rely wholeheartedly on the masses and to build a powerful mass base; ignorance of military affairs; thinking on old lines and a formal attitude towards the establishment of political power and the work of land reform."¹⁴

Obviously, all these are linked to one another and the crux is the seizure of power. Without overturning the political, economic and social relations enforced by the political power of the enemy classes, the peasants could never impose the programme of "land to the tiller". Their seizure of land was not a struggle for economic "demands" or "gains" in a partial sense. It was decisive in overturning the whole semi-feudal structure in Naxalbari. This was the gist of Charu Mazumdar's summation, "...militant struggles must be carried on not for land, crops, etc., but for the seizure of political power".¹⁵ Seizing on the lapse¹⁶ in this formulation, which gave room for excluding the economic dimension in the areawise seizure of power, the CRC reduced the struggle in this sphere to one of "economic demands". It then went on to argue that this struggle should precede the struggle for political power.

One year after Naxalbari, Charu Mazumdar explained his line for developing protracted People's War by relying on the masses: "To forge close and intimate links with the people, the peasants comprising the poor and landless peasants must organise the class

struggle of the broad peasant masses by spreading and propagating revolutionary politics in accordance with the Thought of Chairman Mao. When such class struggles are organised, these party units, comprising the poor and landless peasants, will be transformed into guerrilla units. These guerrilla units must then broaden and strengthen the party's mass base by spreading and propagating revolutionary politics through armed struggle. Only in this way and through a protracted struggle can a regular armed force be created and the struggle developed into a people's war."¹⁷ On this, the CRC said, "By merely propagating revolutionary politics, class struggle cannot be developed. All the day to day problems of the people are to be handled using all possible open and secret mass activities and thus developed into higher forms of class struggle. Along with implementing such a programme, we have to propagate revolutionary politics. Otherwise in the absence of such a programme for the fulfilment of the economic demands of the people, the revolutionary politics will appear as abstract slogans unconnected to real life."¹⁸ Thus, *organising class struggle on the basis of revolutionary politics, i.e. the seizure of political power, is replaced with organising class struggle on the basis of economic demands. The revolutionary agrarian programme, which alone can fulfil the economic demands of the masses in a fundamental sense, is replaced with a programme of struggle for partial demands. Economic struggle is separated from revolutionary politics.*

At this point it is worthwhile recapitulating the struggle between Charu Mazumdar's line and the line of Nagi Reddy. The crux of the struggle was the issue of armed struggle for the seizure of power. Charu Mazumdar correctly stressed that the party should centre all its work from the very beginning on the armed struggle for the areawise seizure of power, whereas Nagi Reddy tried to theorise the spontaneous course of development of the Telengana armed struggle into a line. He argued that the peasants must first be mobilised to struggle for land. Following this, an armed resistance struggle to defend this economic gain must be developed. This resistance struggle should be developed into the struggle for political power. For convenience sake we will

term this as the "phase theory of people's war". (Some sections had argued that the armed resistance should be organised simultaneous to land seizure and blamed the postponing of resistance as economism. Clearly this is only a variation of the same line.) The essence of this line is the view that the masses can be mobilised for the struggle to seize power only in phases – struggle for land, armed resistance to defend gains and then the struggle for power.¹⁰ In opposition to this Charu Mazumdar stressed the development of class struggle to the highest level by arming the masses with the politics of the areawise seizure of power. Even though the CRC formally declared itself in support of Charu Mazumdar's line, its thrust was towards a rehashed version of the Nagi Reddy line.

This political deviation guided the CRC's evaluation of military experience. As quoted earlier, the CRC saw the main military reason for the setback at Naxalbari in the lack of the very concept of protracted war. This was explained as the absence of a concrete programme for establishing parallel power centres and continuing them for a long time. We have already pointed out the error in the concept of parallel power. Here we can further note how this concept serves, and is served by, economism, both politically and militarily. Dual power centres existing over a long period of time, as conceived by the CRC, could only exist as such by restricting themselves to the handling of partial issues. Perhaps in a militant way, but nevertheless partial issues. In actual fact, this would not be a political power centre but rather a new type of mass organisation, even if they were backed by revolutionary armed force. The CRC's choice of words itself are revealing. Instead of the seizure of power, it spoke about "setting up" people's power centres. Instead of the wavelike expansion of red power through armed struggle, it wanted to "gradually overcome" the enemy's power "through a long drawn-out struggle". Finally, the areawise seizure of power was replaced with "establishing power at the local level".

This last point was heralded by the CRC as its unique contribution, and must be probed further. We will start with this quotation from its summation document, "Under the present circumstances, the concept of establishing political power at the local level has

got a wider significance. Generally this concept is considered to be applicable only to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. But comrade Charu Mazumdar had pointed out that it was Lenin himself who put forward the concept of establishing political power at the local level....Comrade Charu Mazumdar continued: In the era of socialism, all the elements of areawise seizure of power are present in our framework. It is quite clear that comrade Charu Mazumdar was not confining the concept of the areawise seizure of power to a mere tactical concept for revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries....Of course we can't say that comrade Charu Mazumdar was having, at that time, a clear-cut understanding of all the elements of this concept about which we can discuss today. Moreover the distinction between the present concept of establishing political power at the local level and the areawise seizure of power was not understood properly at that time. Now we have all the experiences of the GPCR and also that of the fierce struggle taking place in China since the capitalist-roads have come to power. Today we know that even in a socialist society, the key factor in the struggle against capitalist restoration is to establish and consolidate the real political power of the working class at the local level, at the level of each factory, co-operative farm, commune or any other such institution....So at present the concept of establishing political power at the local level...has become the real essence of the struggle for socialism and communism. Indeed this concept itself has undergone a qualitative change."²⁰

Later on, while discussing Revolutionary Committees, the document said, "...in the beginning when comrade Charu Mazumdar was talking about areawise seizure of power he was not referring to this new concept of Revolutionary Committees evolved out of the GPCR. The tactic of areawise seizure of power is only a part of the military strategy of people's war. But the concept of establishing political power at the local level is aiming at the decentralisation of political power by developing people's power centres at the local level through unleashing the initiative of the people. Of course, this concept can be easily connected with the tactic of areawise seizure of power."²¹

First of all, refuting the revisionist

thesis on seizing power at the centre, in one stroke, with areawise seizure of political power, is *not at all* a mere matter of tactics. In the theory of people's war, the establishment of base areas (which is what is meant by areawise seizure of power) is an essential aspect of strategy. Reducing this to tactics implies the possibility of using "other tactics" to seize power. It undermines the very essence of the path of people's war.

Moreover, it is wrong to equate the areawise seizure of power to the "establishment of power at the local level" for two reasons. The "establishment of political power at the local level" can also be done after seizing power at the centre through an insurrection. So this equation will open the door to abandoning the path of people's war. And this is exactly what the CRC did later on. More basically, red power created through the areawise seizure of power is from the very beginning itself the centralised power of the revolutionary classes led by the proletariat. It can be termed "local" only in the sense of the restricted area controlled by it. Obviously, depending on the spread of the area under red power, the power structure must have local organs, apart from the central organs. But these local organs are still parts of the single, centralised power. State power, however limited the area controlled by it, can only be centralised power. The simple reason is that it represents the interest of a class (or classes). This interest cannot be divided up or "decentralised". It emerges from the objective conditions and historical role of the class. It is common to all of its members. The CRC's position on "local level power", linked to the idea of "decentralising" power, emerged from a misreading of the lessons of the GPCR. It confused centralisation and decentralisation in the administration of power with the impossible task of decentralising state power. This initiated a deviation from Marxist teachings on state power. In the Indian context, this weakened the vital struggle against the reactionary ideology of Gandhism, which has always prattled about decentralised power (Panchayati Raj) in order to cover up the reactionary character of the Indian state and present political power as something neutral or standing above classes.²²

IDEALIST READING OF THE GPCR LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY LINE

In the immediate period following the capitalist coup in China, the KSC leadership published a series of articles entitled "Socialist Path and Capitalist Path", written by K. Venu. (They were published in the 1979 issues of *Mass Line*.) This work exposed the revisionist fallacies of the Deng-Hua clique and refuted their distortion of Mao's teachings and the lessons of the GPCR. In line with this, it exposed the material basis of capitalist restoration – the bourgeois right and the capitalist elements engendered by it. But this mainly correct analysis²⁵ was soon replaced by one which identified the roots of capitalist restoration in the bureaucratisation of the party and state machinery.

This view was elaborated in the article "The Concept of People's Power – a Re-examination". It said, "...in a juridically socialised system (when the entire means of production are turned into state property), the entire means of production are governed by a few individuals at the top of the hierarchy. So the slogan of socialisation in the absence of a concrete programme for the decentralisation of political power will prove to be counter-productive...no serious attempt at decentralisation of this centralised power took place in the Soviet Union. Consequently, the bureaucratisation of the state machinery and the emergence of the new bourgeoisie were facilitated, leading to capitalist restoration at a later stage." "In a socialist society the process of capitalist restoration starts at the local level. It is taking place at the level of each factory, co-operative or commune. At each level, wherever the worker-peasant masses are not vigilant enough to wield the political power in their own hands and to fight against the emerging new bureaucratic class, the people lose their power into the hands of this emerging new bourgeoisie."²⁶

Let us keep aside the grossly distorted presentation of state power and the economy in the socialist Soviet Union in order to concentrate on the basic argument raised here. This is the thesis that bureaucratisation and the emergence of a new bourgeoisie were facilitated by centralised political power. According to Mao (and later as elaborated by Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan), the roots of the new bour-

geoisie lie in bourgeois right, in the continuing, though restricted, role of commodity production, exchange and the law of value.²⁵ In other words, in the continuing elements of capitalism in the socialist economy. This is why the revolutionary transformation of production relations and the superstructure has to be carried out continuously, taking class struggle as the key link. The positions advanced by the CRC replaced this materialist analysis of the contradictory nature of socialism with an idealist and erroneous view of the "new bourgeoisie springing up from the bureaucracy". Is perhaps this view supported by Mao's later comment that the "bourgeoisie is within the party"? No. The bourgeoisie within the party are the agents of bourgeois relations. The struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, the two-line struggle within the party, is nothing other than the reflection of class struggle arising out of the material contradictions of socialist society. The capitalist-roaders within the party violate the democratic centralist principles and mass line of the party and try to subvert them by promoting bureaucratism. Bureaucratism is thus the *result*, not the *cause*, of the capitalist road.²⁶

The idealist error of the CRC is further worsened by its argument, "capitalist restoration starts at the local level". By this it did not mean that new elements of capitalism are engendered at the basic level of the economy. When it mentioned factories, co-operatives and communes, this meant the local organs of power. Besides, it was discussing the *restoration* of capitalism, not the engendering of the capitalist road. The restoration of capitalism does not *start* at the local level. It starts at the very top, when capitalist roaders usurp power or parts of it.

Idealist readings of the GPCR lessons and the stress on decentralisation of power as the key means of preventing capitalist restoration, lead in turn to an idealist and metaphysical deviation in the very concept of political power. The CRC argued that the old concept that stated, "...political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" and that "...the army is the chief component of the political power of a state...is only partially true and quite inadequate."²⁷

Distorting Mao's teachings, it claimed that he had "...developed his earlier inadequate definition of politi-

cal power" by creating "parallel power centres of the people at the local level through unleashing the initiative of the people and developing their political consciousness....[W]ith this development the concept of people's power came to acquire a wider and altogether different meaning. Seizing power through the gun is an important factor in building up people's political power. But real political power will never be created by this act alone. Mobilisation of the political will of the people is a must here....Real people's political power can be established only if both these aspects – the armed might of the people and the political will of the people – are *developed and brought together* as complementary aspects of the same phenomenon."²⁸

The main thing to be noted here for the purpose of our topic of review is the formulation, "seizing power through the gun is an important factor in building up people's political power". What this shows is how an idealist concept of political power inevitably leads to undermining the *central role* of armed struggle in the seizure of political power. This arises from the separation of political power into political will and armed might. This separation is idealist and metaphysical. There can be no "political will" separate from the means to impose it. If no such means exist or are not created, this "will" can be really nothing more than a political aspiration. The real purpose of this separation was²⁹ to argue that the processes of politically mobilising the masses and that of armed struggle are two distinct, separate processes – "*to be developed and brought together*". The next step was this argument, "Whenever the people take an organised decision they are exercising their own political power"; and "[T]he old idea that we can talk about political power only when a liberated area with a standing army is established is negating this dialectical process of the development of political power."³⁰

Thus, there can be a preliminary stage or phase, where "embryonic forms of political power" already emerge through the "organised decisions" of the masses. This will be followed up by a phase where these organised decisions are now enforced by armed might. The "new" concept of political power was supposed to ward off economism. What really took place was that economist theory and prac-

tice led to the denial of the central role of armed struggle. The line of replacing the struggle for political power by the "illusion of power" was further advanced. The strategic task of the areawise seizure of power was thoroughly undermined. These positions were explicitly laid out in a follow-up article, "To Work Out a Military Line".

DIGGING AWAY MAOISM

It was argued that, unlike China, there were no warring groups among the rulers in India and the centralised and powerful state is capable of reaching every nook and corner of the country. It stated, "From our own experiences, we can conclude that unless the state machinery is challenged on a very wide scale, *simultaneously*, from many parts all across India, it is almost impossible to even think of building up liberated areas in one or two or a few pockets here and there." "The *pivotal* question is...how to force the enemy to disperse his forces and compel him to leave many areas out of this direct control."³¹

Apparently, this seems to address some real military questions. But the very posing of the issue indicated a line of thinking contrary to the theory of people's war. Even militarily, the pivotal question in the areawise seizure of power is *NOT* the dispersal of enemy forces. It is the construction of a red army as the main form of organisation and the piecemeal destruction of the enemy's armed force.³² The schematic picture presented by the CRC was like this: first force the enemy to disperse his armed force by a simultaneous attack all across the country, then concentrate forces to destroy him in a few suitable areas. *This scheme denies the very dynamics of war – preserve oneself by destroying the enemy.* When, in keeping with the principles of people's war, the armed struggle is initiated even before the capacity for a simultaneous attack from many or all parts of the country is attained,³³ it can sustain itself only by pursuing a line of offensive within the strategic defensive. Guerrilla struggle must be developed over larger and larger areas. The masses must be drawn into the war and revolutionary armed forces must be built up. The areas of operation must be transformed into guerrilla zones as a step towards the areawise seizure of power. This is the only way to sustain

and advance, *because* the dynamic of war is equally valid for the enemy. It cannot (and will not) restrain or limit its armed suppression on the plea that the revolutionary party has not yet launched an offensive to seize power.³⁴

Within a specific strategic campaign to seize base areas in suitable regions, tactical diversionary attacks or movements, aimed at luring away the enemy or dispersing its concentration in the main point of attack, will have to be carried out. But this is properly part of the overall military plan and its sub-plans. It cannot be the strategic plan for the whole war or for its initiation.

The article negated the view that, "...in an area – however small or isolated it might be – the struggle can be developed to the maximum extent of smashing the enemy power totally and establishing *real* people's political power." It said, "But now, under the present conditions in India, we know that it is practically impossible to build up such areas of people's power in a few places *at one go*."³⁵ Once again this argument appeared to be a rectification of some real errors in the military thinking of the CPI(ML). And once again, it was picking on real errors to negate its positive aspects – aspects which made Naxalbari possible. This was done by confusing the total destruction of the enemy's political power with the establishment of stable base areas. *It is not only possible but also absolutely necessary to totally destroy enemy power locally.* In fact, this is decisive in the development of people's war. But this destruction will lead to the establishment of a base area only if the revolutionary armed forces are able to expand the zone of guerrilla actions and militarily prevent the enemy's attempts to restore his power. The party must consistently prepare the grounds by developing and spreading guerrilla struggle. It must evaluate the overall conditions and judge the correct time for launching its military campaign to seize base areas. The error of the CPI(ML) leadership lay in its failure to prepare such military plans, due to the strong elements of spontaneity and subjectivism in its military thinking. But it was *absolutely correct* in insisting on the total destruction of enemy power locally and directing the guerrilla struggle towards the areawise seizure of power.

In the CRC's scheme, during the first phase the party must "...consciously delimit the extent of struggle to the level

of spreading class struggles including all sorts of mass struggles to wider and wider areas, and developing them to confrontation with the enemy at a lower level". In this phase it must "...take a decision not to launch offensives aimed at wiping out the enemy forces in any particular area before we reach the stage in which our struggle has spread to a number of points so that the enemy can be kept engaged in all these areas".³⁶ To repeat, this is a negation of the dynamics of war. It denies the fact that, apart from the seizure of base areas, *the armed struggle itself can be spread only by repeatedly wiping out the enemy.*

The developed form of the CRC's "phase theory" was an outgrowth of its deviations on the question of political power and its economist line of activity. So, it naturally concluded that in the first phase, "...the main stress must be to build and expand the mass base." This military line was an inseparable part of the whole package – parallel political power, "new" concept of power, mobilisation of political will, etc. It still claimed that military squads must be built in order to implement the decisions of parallel political power centres and carry out "lower level" confrontation with the enemy, including annihilations. But this "armed struggle" was totally different in content from the people's war launched by the Naxalbari rebellion, which directly addressed the task of the areawise seizure of power. It was a reformist concept, a line of "armed resistance to gain and defend partial demands". This line went on to advocate "insurrectionary tactics" in areas where working class masses were the major force. (Such areas included the whole of Kerala!) Of course, it also had some words to refute an outright rejection of people's war, which was advanced by a section who later left the party. They had derived the roots of social fascism in armed struggle carried out by squads without the direct participation of the masses. But this refutation only helped to worsen matters. It said, "Mass struggle cannot develop into military struggle spontaneously because the two are, as forms of struggle, qualitatively different from each other. Special training and organisational forms are needed to develop armed struggle."³⁷ The politics of the seizure of political power from which armed struggle and its forms of organisation emerge is replaced by "special training and organisational forms". The point that mass struggles cannot develop into military struggles, because

the latter represents a leap into the "highest form of politics", is covered up with a plea for "consciously" developing mass struggles into armed struggle.

We will end this section by probing the CRC's concept of base area. The CRC conceived base areas as something permanent, emerging at "one go".³⁸ Apart from the question of the "one go" setting up of base areas, even if they are established through a prolonged struggle, base areas are never considered to be absolute or permanent in the theory of people's war. During the course of war they can exchange hands a number of times. They may have to be abandoned in the face of attack or for purposes of manoeuvring. Besides, Mao wrote about various types of base areas – stable, relatively stable, temporary and seasonal.³⁹ Whatever the type or favourable location for building them, the crux of the matter is that the *areawise seizure of power and building up of base areas is the essence of people's war*. Politically, the people's war advances and accelerates the revolutionary situation by expanding red power in waves. Militarily, without base areas the red army and guerrilla forces will not be able to sustain the war over a protracted period in the face of enemy encirclement and suppression. The essence of the position that starts by posing the question, "is it possible to build base areas which cannot be crushed by the enemy?", is this: negation of the areawise seizure of power and the path of people's war; considering external conditions such as a crisis in the ruling class and the overall political situation as the decisive factors in setting up base areas; and negation of Mao's line on accelerating the revolutionary situation by developing people's war and expanding red power in waves. *If such metaphysical ideas on base areas are not rooted out thoroughly, they can lead to the derailment of the preparations for war and the loss of initiative even if the people's war has been launched.*

STEPPING FORWARD TO LEAP BACK

During this period the military significance of the multinational character of the Indian state and the absence of a dominant nationality were identified. This was seen as an inherent weakness of the Indian state. The CRC lead-

ership acknowledged that it had earlier overestimated the enemy's strength. It admitted that this had led to a complacent attitude towards developing armed struggle. This had also indirectly encouraged many rightist tendencies. The revolt of a section of Sikh soldiers in the wake of Operation Blue Star and the Indian state's political-military compulsions, which made it handle the Gorkhaland agitation in a cautious manner, were taken as pointers to the military potential of the national question. It was acknowledged that in situations where nationalist forces were already engaged in armed struggle, the party could intervene only by initiating armed struggle on its own. These positions were developed over the period 1984-1987. They were formally sanctioned by the Second All-India Conference held in 1987. The Conference also accepted the plan of action proposed by the leadership – initiate armed struggle in Punjab and prepare for initiation in Kerala and Maharashtra within one year.

While this appeared to be forward motion on the military question, it was actually constituted on the foundations of a backward leap to revisionism and liquidationism. The theory of neo-colonialism itself was an attack on the path of people's war. It reduced the armed agrarian revolution to a task for areas where semi-feudal relations still prevailed. This theory also argued that the trend towards the elimination of feudalism by imperialism was dominant even in such regions. Thus, it became a "passing task" in comparison to the national liberation struggle. Along with this, the concept of new-democratic revolution in India, as an ensemble of the new-democratic revolutions of the different oppressed nationalities, fractured the path of people's war into separate people's wars with separate people's armies. These two positions became the foundations of the CRC's line after the 1985 Plenum and were enshrined in its "Strategic Line" adopted in the 1987 Conference.

The pitfalls of its nationalist vision were further seen in its ruling out of civil war. It stated, "Since the contradiction with the central state and imperialism is principal, and since intervention by the centre will bring out national oppression more openly, the people's war will *mainly* be a national war, regardless of the direct aggression of imperialism.

Though internal class struggle will be there...this cannot be taken as civil war since the army and armed forces we face from the very beginning will be controlled by the Central state."⁴⁰ Whether we "take it" as civil war or not is basically a matter of whether we stand for overturning all the dominant relations of exploitation and oppression. As Lenin said, "In politics, too, it is possible to restrict oneself to minor matters and it is possible to go deeper, to the very foundations. Marxism recognises a class struggle as fully developed...only if it does not merely embrace politics but takes in the most significant thing in politics – the organisation of state power"⁴¹ (meaning the revolutionary seizure of power). If the war is to be waged principally for the right of self-determination, then "class struggle" will necessarily be restricted by the political compulsions of this strategic aim. We will not be able to go all out to overthrow the dominant exploiters and mobilise the masses *on that basis*.⁴² Moreover, the new military line ignored the fact that the dominant local ("national") exploiters were very much a part of the ruling classes and the central state. This is not to deny the national contradictions existing in India. We definitely do have the possibility to turn national sentiments in favour of the new-democratic revolution in a situation of widespread suppression by the central armed forces. (Most usually the forces used for this comprise troops from other nationalities.) But this has never taken place in a linear manner. It will not take place in this manner. This possibility will emerge as a favourable political factor *only* through the further intensification of class polarisation achieved by means of civil war. As experience shows, the dominant local exploiters will use *their* roots in the nation as a powerful weapon to isolate and attack the revolutionary party as disrupters of "national development". The "national banner" will itself be fought over. And the issue will be clinched ultimately by the development of the revolutionary civil war, because this alone will pose the issue of national liberation on a revolutionary basis as part of the task of new-democratic revolution.

Finally, despite its criticism of the "phase theory of people's war", this line did not critically sum up the whole package. It also accepted the theses of parallel political power as the form of power in the initial stages of the war.

We have devoted much time to a critical examination of this military line precisely because of its "leftism". This illusion of being 'left' was the main obstacle preventing a sharp polarisation and line struggle within the CRC central leadership. Its influence lingered on for quite some time, even after the liquidation of the CRC, CPI(ML) and the rejection of many of its blatantly anti-Marxist positions. But, although much time has been devoted here to this line, the CRC hardly devoted any effort to practice it. The brief period of its formal dominance was also the period during which the motion towards explicit bourgeois nationalist positions and practice became intense. By the end of 1989 the majority of the central leadership had started "re-examining"⁴³ this military line. The adoption of the document "On Proletarian Democracy" delivered the final blow.

TOWARDS REMOVING INCONSISTENCIES

Following the adoption of this document, the CRC leadership prepared yet another draft document "On Military Line". Most of the earlier positions not totally consistent with the bourgeois political line were ironed out. Based on the bourgeois stand of rejecting the dictatorship of the proletariat, it openly attacked the theory and practice of people's war. It said, "So far, discussion on military line has been mainly centred around the theory and practice of people's war, developed by Mao based on his famous dictum that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. This very concept was emanating from the concept and practice of party dictatorship implemented in the name of proletarian dictatorship since the October Revolution of 1917. The political power is considered as a centralised entity in the form of the proletarian state, the main pillar of which is the army...."⁴⁴ Of course, it did not reject armed struggle! But this was to be a struggle to "...smash the existing state structure...."⁴⁵ And, for this limited purpose it accepted that this "...can be fulfilled only under the centralised leadership of the party and the army under it. So the task of developing the military line remained as important as earlier."⁴⁶

Along with this "important as ever" sweet talk, the grounds for exploring the possibilities of peaceful transformation were also prepared. It was argued that,

neo-colonialism replacing direct imperialist military control with economic-political domination, "...coupled with the widening democratisation process all over the world, has significantly strengthened the role of global public opinion....Even the most powerful superpower is not in a position to arbitrarily assert its will, using its military might over a small country disregarding global public opinion."⁴⁷ (This was written during the Gulf war period!) To clear up all doubts about what is meant by smashing the state structure, it said, "Political mobilisation of the broad masses can lead to conditions of insurrection even in Third World countries. Even such an insurrection can smash the existing state, as was seen in the case of the Iranian revolution of 1979...."⁴⁸ On the United Front it said, "It is through this organ (UF) that the political will of the people is being consolidated. This consolidation is aimed not simply for seizing power, rather for advancing it as the real power of the proletariat...."⁴⁹ This separation of seizing power, i.e. smashing the existing state, from "advancing real power", was already contained in the previously discussed "new concept of political power". Now it fulfils its legitimate role, freed from all "dogmatism". The task is to smash the state structure, not the state. Therefore, "simply" smashing the state will not do. It must be "smashed" to the extent of replacing control by the centre with that of the nation-state. The military activities and organisations necessary for this become nothing more than tools of pressure tactics. The party must be able to switch them on and off depending on the needs of "political mobilisation". "The party must have two wings...an (open) wing...and a separate military wing.... This organisation will be completely under the party leadership, but it will be able to operate *claiming to be an independent organisation*."⁵⁰ After having said all this, it did not forget to add, "Basically (this military strategy)...is the strategy of people's war applied in our developing situations(sic)"⁵¹

"Our situations" were certainly "developing". By the end of the year the CRC, CPI(ML) was liquidated. All the "burdens" of Marxism were unloaded. Soon enough, any idea of using armed activities, even as a bargaining chip, became a hindrance. The theory of "non-class aspects of democracy" came to the rescue. And the

hitherto "unrecognised" potential of parliamentary elections for "broad political mobilisation" was finally discovered. Ultimately, the author of this line, K.Venu, ended up as a Congress-supported [The ruling class political party in India since Independence in 1949 until recently. AWTW] candidate in the 1996 State Assembly elections - politically mobilised to serve the Indian ruling classes.

SOME LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

One important lesson of this review is the indivisibility of proletarian ideology. That is, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism cannot be applied in bits and pieces. The class content of this ideology, its universal principles, must guide each and every aspect of the party's line, policies, organisation and practice. The moment this is violated and alien ideologies are imported, the party enters the danger zone of changing its colour. This is what happened with the CRC, CPI(ML). In the name of tackling "new questions" and breaking away from "dogmatism", it opened itself up to petit-bourgeois and bourgeois ideological currents.⁵² Once these ideologies became implanted in the line of the party, they spread like a virus and, one after the other, all aspects of line, policy, organisation and practice got corrupted. First, it was a matter of "applying Marxism in specific conditions". Then it became one of "solving the new questions of political power". This "concern" led to "fresh thinking on military line". Finally, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was itself rejected as "fundamentalism".

Another important lesson is this. If a deviation is left not rectified, it will generate conditions for its growth into a wrong line. It will do this by moulding the thinking of the leaders and cadres in its own image. We have discussed the differences and struggles within the CRC, CPI(ML) in the preceding sections. We also saw how this opposition not only failed, but also ended up as fuel for the wrong line itself. This happened because there were a lot of common views shared by the contending ideas, at first in the form of 'left' and right spontaneity, later in the form of 'left' and right nationalism. Despite all its eclecticism, a wrong line has its logic and dynamics. It will incessantly push the party away from Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The obvi-

ous divergence from Marxist-Leninist-Maoist positions will no longer seem to be so. Large sections within the party may not feel comfortable with such a divergence. But their ideological alertness is already being dulled by liberal thinking – "well, they do have a point which must also be considered". More ground is yielded to the wrong line. Ultimately, the struggle against the wrong line flounders within the ideological, political boundaries set up by that line itself, causing demoralisation.

Finally, the most important lesson is this. No matter how high the heap of garbage, it can always be dug away – provided Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is firmly grasped and wielded with determination to make a total rupture.

Footnotes

1 Mao Tsetung, "The Struggle in the Chingyang Mountains", "Why Is It that Red Power Can Exist in China" and "A Single Spark Can Light a Prairie Fire", *Selected Works (SW)*, Volume I (Peking, FLPH, 1977).

2 Charu Mazumdar, "Who Can We Unite With?", *Collected Works*, Malayalam edition, 1979.

3 Mao Tsetung, "Problems of War and Strategy", *SW*, Volume II, p. 221.

4 For a discussion on this topic see the article "It Is Right to Rebel" in *A World To Win* 1995/21, particularly Section E entitled "Once the Red Flag is Raised, There is No Bringing It Down". This article was an important contribution from the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) on the ongoing ideological struggle against the capitulationist, right opportunist line within the Communist Party of Peru (PCP).

5 Mao Tsetung, "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla Warfare", *SW*, Volume II, p. 98.

6 Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 78-79.

7 [The draconian measures instituted in 1977 under the Indira Gandhi government. 30,000 revolutionaries were imprisoned. – AWTW.]

8 "Towards a New Phase of Spring Thunder", 1982, p.117.

9 [Naxalbari: 1967 marked the outbreak of armed struggle of the peasant masses led by communist revolutionaries in the village of Naxalbari, located in India's state of West Bengal, near the city of Darjeeling, not far from the borders of Nepal and Bangladesh. – AWTW.]

10 *Spring Thunder*, p. 50.

11 *Spring Thunder*, p. 50.

12 *Spring Thunder*, p. 49.

13 "The revolutionary peasants, through their activities, made their decrees the law in the villages:

1) A blow was dealt at the political,

economic, and social structure in the villages based on the monopoly land ownership which dragged the peasants more and more into the depths of pauperisation.... They marked out all land in the Terai with their plough shares and made it their own... the old feudal structure that had existed for centuries was thus smashed through this action of peasants." (Reproduced in *Spring Thunder*, p. 46)

14 *Spring Thunder*, pp. 49-50. Emphasis added.

15 Charu Mazumdar, "One Year of Naxalbari", *Liberation Anthology*, Vol. 1, Suniti Kumar Ghosh (ed.), 1992, p.96.

16 In a note in his *Liberation Anthology*, (Vol. 1, p. 96) Suniti Kumar Ghosh has pointed out that this was a mistake in translation. The original Bengali version said, "...not only for their partial demands...." This is a significant correction. But it should be noted that the formulation published in the English version of this article in "Liberation" was repeated in other articles also. Some of them have been reproduced in the "Anthology" without correction. So it is not clear whether the translation error was for that particular article or was repeated. Since this formulation is repeated in a number of articles and largely corresponded to Charu Mazumdar's views (of that period) on economic struggle, we think it has to be examined and criticised.

17 "Undertake the Work of Building a Revolutionary Party" *Spring Thunder*, 1968, p. 61. Emphasis added.

18 *Spring Thunder*, p.61.

19 Some examples of this are given here: "...we have ample experience to show that if properly and correctly conducted, all anti-landlord struggles will reach the level of land seizure in a short time. And that is the time to start a partisan warfare." (D.V. Rao, "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought Is Our World Outlook", Proletarian Line Publications, Hyderabad, 1993, p.56.) "The main direction of the party's work should be consciously oriented towards building a revolutionary peasant movement. Selection of strategic areas, concentration of cadres, formulation of fighting and agitational slogans with extensive discussions of the people of the area, mobilising the peasants for struggle on these issues, building the peasant organisations, arming the people with locally available weapons in the anti-feudal struggle from the very beginning, organising of the village voluntary force people's resistance to landlord-goonda-police violence and repression and thus create, develop and defend areas of sustained resistance and thus advance to establish base areas in the countryside." (Chandra Pulla Reddy, *Selected Works*, Volume II, Pratighatana, Hyderabad, 1996, p.37)

Such views are closely related to seeing the seizure of land as THE stepping stone to armed agrarian revolution or its highest

stage. D.V. Rao wrote, "The seizure of land and partisan warfare is interlinked. Seizure of the land of landlords can never be a partial demand...." (p.70, cited above. Emphasis added.) According to C. P. Reddy, "All these (partial) struggles, whichever be the issue, they should be oriented towards the distribution of the landlord's land which is the highest stage of armed agrarian revolution." (p.34, cited above, emphasis added). Actual experience shows numerous examples of land seizures from landlords which have not developed beyond militant partial struggles. Besides, such views contradict Mao Tsetung. "In semi-colonial China the establishment and expansion of the red army, the guerrilla forces and the red areas is the highest form of peasant struggle under the leadership of the proletariat...." (Mao Tsetung, "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire", *SW*, Volume I, FLPH, Peking, 1977, p.118.)

The real issue is not whether mass struggles, including land struggles, should be organised or not. In order to raise the fighting will of the masses and propagate the line of people's war, the party should carry out mass activity and organise struggles during the period of preparation itself. But it is important that the party grasps this point – however correct and necessary such mass activity might be at a certain stage, war is a rupture from the preceding struggles. It is a leap into a totally new and different process. The concept that war can be initiated only as an organic outgrowth of organising peasants in mass organisations and militant struggles is a right opportunist deviation.

20 *Spring Thunder*, pp. 36-37.

21 *Spring Thunder*, pp. 79-80.

22 The germs of the CRC's last act of liquidation and its theory on the "non-class aspect of democracy" can be seen in this argument. The question of the centralisation of power under socialism was raised by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. The gist of its arguments was published in the April 1983 issue of *Liberation*. (pp. 50-51) The main argument was that the CRC's position on the establishment of political power at the local level, as the key issue in preventing the restoration of capitalism, negates the decisive role of the line leading the party and the state. It pointed out that there is no evidence to show that Mao talked about the decentralisation of power. Unleashing the initiative of the masses at the local level has nothing to do with the decentralisation of power.

23 This article was also not totally free from idealist tendencies. Criticising the "theory of productive forces" by basing itself on Marx's "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy", it argued, "...if the overall development of human history is examined we can see that productive forces and economic base have played the decisive role in it. But the role of the production relations and superstructure is not ignored." (Samskara Padhana Kendram,

"*Socialist Pathayam Muthalitha Pathayam*", Ernakulam, 1989, p. 46. Emphasis added. This article was serialised in the 1979 issues of *Mass Line*. In Marx's explanation the "economic base is the sum total of production relations." But the way it is explained in this article, production relations are considered as something *other* than the economic base. A tendency to move away from historical materialism is contained in this formulation.

24 *Liberation*, April 1982, pp. 13-14.

25 Mao Tsetung: "Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Biao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system." "In a word, China is a socialist country. Before liberation she was much the same as a capitalist country. Even now she practices an eight-grade wage system, distribution according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed." Chang Chun-chiao: "We often say that the issue of ownership 'has in the main been settled'; this means that it has not been settled entirely, and also that bourgeois right has not been totally abolished in this realm."

"...in the short term, there will be no basic change in the situation in which ownership by the whole people and collective ownership co-exist. So long as we still have these two kinds of ownership, commodity production, exchange through money and distribution according to work are inevitable. And since 'under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted', the growth of capitalist factors in the town and country and the emergence of new bourgeois elements are likewise inevitable." Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising All Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie", quoted from *Bombard the Capitalist Road*, Progressive Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 27-31.

26 This point is discussed in detail in Bob Avakian, "Democracy: More than Ever We Can and Must Do Better Than That!" *A World To Win* 1995/21. See the section "The Exercise of Power in Socialist Society", pp. 42-44.

27 *Liberation*, April 1982, p. 15.

28 *Liberation*, April 1982, pp. 15-16.

29 "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries." Mao Tsetung, "Problems of War and Strategy", *SW*, Volume II, p.219.

30 *Liberation*, April 1982, p. 21.

31 *Liberation*, July 1982, p. 28. Emphasis added.

32 "The fundamental conditions for

establishing a base area are that there should be...armed forces, that these armed forces should be employed to inflict defeats on the enemy and that they should arouse the people to action. Thus the establishment of a base area is first and foremost a matter of building an armed force." Mao, *SW*, Volume II, p.98.

33 Another way in which the CRC's argument could be interpreted is the more obvious negation of people's war. That is, the war should not be launched until the capacity for a simultaneous attack across the country is attained.

34 Of course, this could be possible for the enemy, to some extent, if the armed struggle leaves out the question of seizing power and is carried out as armed activities for gaining and defending partial demands. Even then it will not be able to continue this "policy of restraint" over a long period.

35 *Liberation*, July 1982, p. 29. Emphasis added.

36 *Liberation*, July 1982, pp. 29-30.

37 *Liberation*, July 1982, p. 32. Emphasis added.

38 See the previous section of this article entitled: "Summing Out Revolution". Here the formulation on "real" political power is itself a reflection of an absolutist concept of base areas. As if they are *real* only when they are permanent.

39 "Retreat is necessary, because not to retreat a step before the onset of a strong enemy inevitably means to jeopardise the preservation of one's forces." Mao Tsetung, section on "Strategic Retreat" in "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", *SW*, Volume I, p. 215. The Communist Party of Peru has aptly termed this saw-saw struggle over base areas as "restoration/counter-restoration". On the types of base areas see, Mao Tsetung, Section 1, "The Type of Base Area" in "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War", *SW*, Volume II.

40 The original version of *On Developing a Military Line*, pp. 3-4. Emphasis in original.

41 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p. 121-122.

42 The minefield hidden in this line of thinking blew up the practice of the CRC, CPI(ML)'s Andhra Pradesh unit. Given the conditions existing in its area of work, it had to take up the anti-feudal struggle. Soon enough the question of confronting the armed power of the landlords and state came up. One section of the State leadership argued for abandoning this area, since practise was leading to the 1970 line and taking the party away from "national liberation". The majority rejected this and stuck to developing armed resistance. But any consistent development of such resistance became impossible for two major reasons. The tasks of taking up the national question and fighting feudal oppression were pulling in opposite directions. The anti-feudal struggle was blunted by the neo-colonialism theory, which declared that semi-

feudalism was already on its way out. The basic masses were motivated by their class interests and were hardly enthused by "national interest". So, in practice the "national liberation" slogan became a mere catchword. But it could still be used by the CRC leadership as a handy stick. When a setback took place, it accused the state leadership of "dogmatism". Because of the ideological-political positions of the proponents of the new military line within the central leadership, they could not stand firm against this attack. They had to go along with the criticism against "dogmatism", causing more confusion and demoralisation.

43 Some armed propaganda actions were carried out in Punjab. But this State Committee also joined the "re-examination" camp and later played a prominent role in the liquidation of the CRC, CPI (ML).

44 *On Military line*, 1991, p. 1.

45 *On Military line*, p. 1. Emphasis added.

46 *On Military line*, p. 1. Emphasis added.

This glaring inconsistency is criticised by Bob Avakian - "The arguments made in this CRC document ('On Proletarian Democracy') on the role of the party...lead toward a line of 'peaceful transition'. The very logic of these arguments leads towards the conclusion that violent overthrow is itself 'coercive' and 'elitist' towards the masses...and therefore is fundamentally wrong." "You cannot 'logically' argue that the vanguard must not impose its will on the people when it is in power but it may do so in coming to power in the first place." ("Democracy - More Than Ever We Can and Must Do Better Than That", *AWTW* 1992/17, pp. 34-35. Emphasis in original.)

47 *On Military Line*, p. 2.

48 *On Military Line*, p. 3. Emphasis added. The hard fact that the Iranian revolution was aborted from accomplishing the "smashing of the state" is clearly exposed in "Defeated Armies Learn Well", *AWTW* 1985/4. This article was contributed by the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran).

49 *On Military Line*, p. 4.

50 *On Military Line*, p. 4.

51 *On Military Line*, p. 7.

52 "...the tendency to negate the universality of this ideology (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) was present in the leadership [of CRC, CPI(ML)] from the very beginning itself. Instead of applying proletarian ideology in the analysis of particular questions, the tendency was to search for answers elsewhere, under the plea that the leaders of the proletariat have not dealt with such issues. Due to this approach, liberalism in ideological matters inevitably developed, even while the party formally opposed such liberalism." (Section 2.1, *Critique of the CRC, CPI(ML) Line*, Maoist Unity Centre, CPI(ML), 1997.)

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