

On the Joint Communiqué

—Marxist-Leninists from Haiti

We are writing this letter to make known our points of agreement and disagreement with the Joint Communiqué. The goal of this text is thus to help launch a thorough discussion, around the Communiqué, on the essential theses which divide true Marxist-Leninists from modern revisionists.

Although we have some points of disagreement with the Communiqué, overall we agree with its orientation. Why?

Because first of all, we think that in the face of the crisis situation existing today on a world scale, in particular in the face of the threat of a third world war, Marxist-Leninists throughout the world must unite and unite the masses of people around them in order to either prevent imperialist war, or if it should break out, to transform it into revolutionary war.

Secondly, the orientation of this Communiqué: it enables Marxist-Leninists themselves to unite around scientific theses of Marxism-Leninism, providing a dividing line between genuine Marxist-Leninists and the revisionists who claim they are also Marxist-Leninists though their real goal is to attack and falsify genuine Marxism-Leninism. This is in order to impose their own dictatorship over the peoples of the world.

We are going to list here our points of agreement and of disagreement with the text, as well as the points which we think need clarification. We will also refer to an open letter of the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist (TKPM-L), published in the September 4, 1981 issue of the *Revolutionary Worker*. We think that certain parts of the text are too general, such that even enemies of Marxism-Leninism can make use of them.

(p. 1) "This war is looming on the horizon and will break out unless the revolutionary struggle of the masses, the seizure of power by the working class and oppressed people, is able to prevent it. Still if this does break out, it will represent an extreme concentration of the crisis of the imperialist system and will heighten the objective basis for revolutionary struggle that must be seized by the Marxist-Leninists." (Joint Communiqué)

Overall, we think that war can be prevented by "the revolutionary struggle of the masses." We even think that this prevention is basic. Indeed, the confrontation between the two imperialist blocs could very well lead to the use of nuclear arms, which would endanger the very survival of mankind. This position should not lead to defeatism. On the contrary, it should drive us to advance the struggle against imperialist war. We think that this position is diametrically opposed to that of the Chinese revisionists, according to whom "World war, though inevitable, can be postponed." ("Chairman Mao's Theory of

the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism," FLP 1977, p. 69.)

At the very moment when the world is going through this extremely serious crisis, the masses are not prepared for revolutionary struggle. This is due to 1.) the division and lack of preparation among the Marxist-Leninists themselves, who must lead the revolutionary struggle of the masses against imperialist war, 2.) the antagonistic contradictions between the Marxist-Leninists and the modern revisionists within the revolutionary movement.

It is important that Marxist-Leninists continue to discuss their points of disagreement among themselves, in order to come to a real unity based on Marxist-Leninist principles. This is necessary to carry out their mission of leading the masses in the struggle against modern revisionism within the revolutionary movement, and in the struggle against imperialism and social-imperialism, for peace and socialism.

(p.2) "All the other imperialist powers are also driven by their nature toward war—they are also big exploiters, thoroughly reactionary, aggressive and enemies of the proletariat and the peoples of the world." (Joint Communiqué)

Contrary to the TKPM-L, we think that this paragraph constitutes a demarcation from the Three Worlds Theory, which calls on the peoples dominated by the imperialists of the "second world" to unite with them to fight the imperialists of the "first world." As a matter of fact, this paragraph specifies that the imperialists of the "second world" are "just as exploitative, reactionary and aggressive" enemies "of the proletariat and the peoples of the world." They must develop their autonomous struggles against these imperialisms, which, flowing from their very nature as imperialists, want war just as much as the two superpowers.

(p.4) "The armed struggle must be carried out as a war of the masses and through it the masses must be prepared ideologically, politically and organisationally to exercise political power.

"Whatever the necessary forms and stages of the revolutionary process the principal reliance must be based on building up the armed forces of the masses led by the party, while it is also necessary to carry out political work among the armed forces of the enemy to help disintegrate these armed forces and win over as many of their soldiers as possible in the course of the revolutionary struggle." (Joint Communiqué)

According to the TKPM-L, "In our opinion this statement is not entirely clear. A vital part of preparing the masses for the seizure of power are armed and unarmed forms of political struggles. The relationship between these two forms of struggle varies according to the social-economic structure of the respective country and depends on

which stage the revolution has reached.”

Overall we agree on this point with the TKPM-L. But we go further: indeed, it’s our opinion certain other points need clarification. We think that, at certain stages of the revolutionary struggle, the Marxist-Leninist party could very well not have armed forces under its command (generally, at the beginning of the revolutionary process). At these times, the party must necessarily wage a non-armed political struggle. However, and here we unite with the Communiqué, this political struggle must be waged in such a way as to build the revolutionary armed forces, in order to move on to the higher stage of the armed struggle.

Secondly, we think that, if political work within the armed forces of the enemy is key at the stage of armed struggle, then political work cannot be neglected within all the other forces of the enemy at this stage. This is even more obvious at other stages where the non-armed political struggle prevails. Thus the question of *stages*, and even the stage of armed struggle, must be clarified, understanding fully that intensive political work must be carried out *among all the forces of the enemy*.

(p.5) “The existence and the leading role of the party of the proletariat is another cardinal principle. This is expressed in an organisation of the vanguard of the proletariat which must be based on a Marxist-Leninist ideological, political and organisational line on the principal problems of the revolution.” (Joint Communiqué)

We agree with this point. However, we think that it is necessary to specify which are the “principal problems of the revolution” at each stage: before the seizure of power by the proletariat, and after this seizure of power.

(p.5) “The party must give great attention to the illegal forms of struggle and organisation, in order to preserve its independence and to educate the masses in the struggle against their enemies. From a strategic point of view, illegal forms of work are fundamental. At the same time the party must make use of legal opportunities in order to broaden its influence without falling into or promoting bourgeois-democratic illusions and while preparing for the inevitable repression by the reactionaries.” (Joint Communiqué)

We are in profound agreement with this point of view. But we must note that certain Marxist-Leninist organisations or parties, while overall holding a revolutionary line, often fall into the trap of bourgeois democracy, which makes repression by the reactionary forces easier when they unleash it. We think that such parties or organisations must correct bourgeois-democratic tendencies, because they are very harmful to the revolutionary struggle.

(p.7) “Experience has shown that without the leadership of the proletariat and a genuine Marxist-Leninist line it is impossible to free these types of countries from imperialist enslavement, still less to advance on the socialist road.” (Joint Communiqué)

We think that this is correct. In order to carry through the new-democratic revolution successfully, it is necessary to form a united front of all classes opposed to imperialist domination and its local lackeys. But within this united front, the Marxist-Leninist party must maintain its independence and its leading role, because the revolution will be compromised if bourgeois tendencies take over leadership of the struggle. Thus the leadership of the proletariat and its party is indispensable.

(p.7) “There is an undeniable tendency for imperialism to introduce significant elements of capitalist relations in the countries it dominates. In certain dependent countries capitalist development has gone so far that it is not correct to characterise them as semi-feudal, it is better to call them predominantly capitalist even while important elements or remnants of feudal or semi-feudal production relations and their reflection in the superstructure may still exist.

“In such countries a concrete analysis must be made of these conditions and appropriate conclusions concerning the path, tasks, charac-

ter and alignment of class forces must be drawn. In all events, foreign imperialism remains a target of the revolution.” (Joint Communiqué)

We’d like to point out two things here:

—The formulation “semi-feudal relations of production” poses a problem. Feudal relations of production exist in the majority of social structures dominated by imperialism. Therefore these have long been considered semi-feudal, semi-colonial social structures. Today, with the introduction of capitalist relations of production into these social structures, they are correctly called predominantly capitalist countries, but where elements or remnants of *feudal production relations* and not “semi-feudal” ones can be found. A production relation is a relation involving a ruling class and a dominated class—here, the class of landowners and the peasant class which it exploits. The class of landowners cannot be called a “semi-feudal” class: it is entirely *feudal*. Therefore there are “elements or remnants” of *feudal* relations of production, in a structure dominated by capitalist relations of production.

We think that foreign imperialism is not only “one” target of the revolution, but indeed, one of its main targets. Thus this formulation must be re-examined.

According to the TKPM-L, there are certain countries “of the second type” which are semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries.” In their view:

“Even if comprador capitalism has developed in these countries to a greater or lesser extent, their production relations are still predominantly feudal and semi-feudal. The two main tasks of the new-democratic revolution in these countries are the attainment of national independence and the abolition of feudalism by means of the agrarian revolution, and the principal strategic slogan for these countries must generally be ‘democratic dictatorship of the people.’ In this context, the path of revolution in these countries will generally be protracted people’s war.”

We think that here, the comrades of the TKPM-L underestimate the leading role of the proletariat and its party in the revolutionary process. Indeed, the proletariat develops from day to day in these countries, under the influence of imperialism, which introduces capitalist relations of production into it. In these countries, feudalism is in decline, and capitalism is on the rise. The feudal class itself is forced, in order not to die out, to transform itself into an agrarian bourgeoisie, bringing about the expansion of the agricultural proletariat. This shows the necessity of the proletariat and its party to exercise leadership over the revolutionary process, in order to carry through the new-democratic revolution and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the support, of course, of the oppressed section of the peasantry, which makes up the majority of the population.

With regard to the struggle against economism: The struggle against economism is very important, because economism holds back the development of the political consciousness of the masses. A party in which economism reigns, trails behind the masses instead of playing its leading role. But neither can one fall into the opposite extreme, that is, not paying enough attention to the struggle of the masses, which would mean abandoning in fact the leadership of these struggles. These struggles, as minimal as they are, represent a step forward for the political consciousness of the masses, if they are well led.

Let’s go back to the text of the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist. This text says: “It is possible to establish certain distinctions among the imperialist countries themselves, and these should not be regarded merely as different stages of the revolution. The ‘Joint Communiqué’ does not deal with the situation in imperialist countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and other countries under the influence of Russian social-imperialism. In our view the strategy and tactics of the road of the October Revolution are also valid for these countries. But above and beyond that, the political, financial and military influence of the Russian social-imperialists has a particular significance. In revisionist-capitalist coun-

tries of this type the proletarian revolution, in attacking the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, must at the same time set its sights on Russian social-imperialism because the two are bound together by a thousand threads. And this aspect will influence the tactics to be followed on a number of questions of the class struggle, such as alliances, military strategy, etc., etc. In our opinion it is necessary—especially in view of the growing revolutionary situation in Poland—for the world's Marxist-Leninists to take up this issue and subject it to close scrutiny."

Like the comrades of the TKPM-L, we think that the Joint Communiqué doesn't deal with the case of countries under the influence of Russian social-imperialism. Yet, differing with these comrades, we don't think that the countries of Eastern Europe are imperialist. Indeed, it must not be forgotten that:

—these countries are occupied militarily by Soviet troops.

—the economy of these countries is tightly bound to the Soviet economy through the "international socialist division of labour."

These countries, in our opinion, are not imperialist countries but *bureaucratic capitalist countries dominated by Soviet social-imperialism.*

Let's make note of the fact that the countries of Eastern Europe differ from other capitalist countries only in the different means with which they exploit the workers. Accordingly, the revolution in these countries must be made under the leadership of a vanguard workers' party. One of the characteristics of the revolutionary situation in Poland is that the struggle of the workers has not been guided by a Marxist-Leninist party leading the workers. And only this party can develop a correct strategy and tactics to carry through the revolution successfully.

On the subject of the mass line, we must say that we think that, although the mass line is found in Lenin's works, Mao Tsetung systematised the formulation of it, by giving it a precise definition for the first time. Thus we think that a reference to Mao was necessary there.

We agree with the view that "proletarian internationalism is something inseparable from Marxism-Leninism and a constant need of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard in all countries." (p.9, Joint Communiqué) Still, we think that the statement is too general and that concrete reference points are needed. Indeed, the revisionist camp does not hesitate to justify military interventions in certain Eastern European countries by presenting this as a demonstration of proletarian internationalism. For example, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. On the economic front, the so-called "international socialist division of labour," which binds the economy of the dependent countries of Eastern Europe to that of the Soviet Union, is presented as an achievement in "proletarian internationalism."

We agree completely with the Joint Communiqué where it states: "We are still living in the era of Leninism, of imperialism and the proletarian revolution; at the same time we affirm that Mao Tsetung Thought is a new stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism. Without upholding and building on Mao's contributions it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general." (p. 10)

We think that the present epoch is still that of Leninism, of imperialism and proletarian revolution. However, new phenomena have appeared in the world, such as modern revisionism, social-imperialism, protracted people's war, etc. These new phenomena required developing the Marxist-Leninist science further. This is what Mao Tsetung did, and it's why we say that Mao Tsetung Thought is a new stage of Marxism-Leninism, adapted to new phenomena, the Marxism-Leninism of our epoch. Mao did not replace the theses of Marx and Lenin with another theory, he developed them to correspond to new

developments in the modern world. This is what in his time Lenin did for Marxism (the theses of Marx and Engels). This task also faces Marxist-Leninists of all countries in the present epoch: to defend and develop the theses of the great Marxist-Leninist thinkers in light of new phenomena which arise as the class struggle develops in every country and on a world scale. By proceeding this way we can also overcome the harmful influence of imperialism and modern revisionism which, through counter-revolutionary theories like "peaceful revolution," the "three worlds theory" or the workerist theses of Trotskyists and of the Albanian Party of Labour, attack the foundations of Mao Tsetung Thought, aim to sabotage the revolution and perpetuate the rule of the bourgeoisie, whether it be the classical (the U.S. imperialist) or "new" (the Soviet social-imperialist) bourgeoisie.

The negative influence of social democracy must also be exposed and fought. This is no small matter, because social democracy, through its political inconsistency, stemming from its bourgeois class position, habitually turns down the bed for fascism (e.g., Chile).

Like the comrades of the Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist, we think that certain phenomena such as the "self-dissolution of the Comintern, the conciliatory tendencies during and after World War 2, the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and in a list of other socialist countries, and the degeneration of the majority of parties of the Third International must be analysed."

(p. 13) "In the face of the demoralisation caused by these facts among broad sectors of the masses, and given that the bourgeois sectors are taking advantage of these facts, claiming that they prove the 'failure' of Marxism, it falls on us communists to show that it is not scientific socialism which has failed, and that, on the contrary, scientific socialism makes it possible for us to grasp what objective and subjective factors gave rise to these events." (Joint Communiqué)

Here, it seems to us that the TKPM-L and the Joint Communiqué are showing the same concern and recommending the same thing for pursuing investigation, analysis and struggle for the unity of Marxist-Leninists.

In conclusion, we Marxist-Leninist militants of the international communist movement must state the following:

—This text is an important contribution to the process of unifying the international communist movement.

—Writing this article has demonstrated to us that in the course of studying the Joint Communiqué a number of points came up which we did not agree with while at first glance it had struck us that we agreed with the whole text. We think that this is healthy. And we also think that the same is true for other Marxist-Leninists who are discussing or will be discussing the Joint Communiqué and even for the organisations and parties which already signed it. We think that these organisations and parties and all Marxist-Leninists must encourage this discussion and participate in it actively, in order to strengthen this Joint Communiqué which represents an important step toward the unity of Marxist-Leninists on a principled basis. This Communiqué draws a clear dividing line between Marxism-Leninism and modern revisionism, despite some limitations which we have brought out in this text.

Long Live the Unity of Marxist-Leninists Throughout the World!
Develop the Debate Around the Fundamental Problems of Marxism!
Fight Against the Different Forms of Modern Revisionism!
Take History Into Our Hands!

October, 1981