

REVOLUTION

Organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

Vol. 4, No. 10-11
October/November 1979



“We’re here to tell the people about Bob Avakian and the Mao Tsetung Defendants. . .”

As we go to press, the battle to Stop the Railroad of Bob Avakian and Free the Mao Tsetung Defendants is on the eve of a critical juncture. Over 150 volunteers (symbolized by the figures on the cover), a political army made up of picked fighters from across the country, have already begun to wage a campaign to turn the country's capital politically upside down, carrying their agitation around this case to the masses of people across the city, and helping to create the conditions to make it a burning question for many millions throughout the U.S. On November 19, as a crucial pre-trial hearing begins, thousands of people will converge on the capital for a courthouse demonstration, and more will march at the same time in a West Coast action in San Francisco.

These 17 defendants face several lifetimes in prison if the government succeeds in convicting them on the more than two dozen phony felony charges they were hit with after the Washington, D.C. demonstration of last January 29 against the Chinese Premier Teng Hsiao-ping's U.S. visit. The pretense that this is a simple “criminal” case has been laid bare by recent court proceedings, in which the government essentially offered evidence of a “conspiracy” case, with Party Chairman Bob Avakian the focus of their attacks. As it stands now, the trial is to begin February 3, 1980. At the November 19 hearings, the defense will demand the dropping of all charges, and is preparing for all sorts of tactical twists and changes by the government.

In response to this grave situation, the Central Committee of the RCP issued a call to Party members and all those willing and determined to make the necessary sacrifices to take their stand with the Party—to volunteer to serve in Washington, D.C. in the weeks before and during the November hearing, and during the trial itself in February.

Far more applications to join the volunteers were received than could be selected, both from within the Party and from among the masses who see the crucial importance of this battle. The volunteers who stepped forward, often at great personal sacrifice in terms of jobs and families, came from the mining camps of West Virginia, the auto plants of Detroit, the ghettos of Chicago, the barrios of California.

These volunteers are now in Washington, fanning out throughout the political capital of our imperialist rulers, taking the issues of this trial, and the crucial political questions it concentrates, to hundreds of thousands of people in the D.C. area. By the time the hearing starts, by the time the trial begins, and even more through the course of the trial, this work is key to making it the major political question in Washington and indeed throughout the country, known and talked of on a daily basis by the masses of people.

To serve along with the weekly *Revolutionary Worker* as the main weapon in that work, the Party has begun to publish a special supplement of the paper in D.C. which will come out daily during the hearings and the trial so that through this agitation the whole filthy attack and the reasons behind it can be exposed and the people aroused against it.

A nationwide speaking tour by Chairman Bob Avakian in the months preceding these hearings has brought many thousands of people to programs in dozens of cities, and hundreds of thousands more have heard him speak on radio and TV. Through all this the Party's revolutionary line has gotten out far more broadly and brought forward increasing support from among the masses.

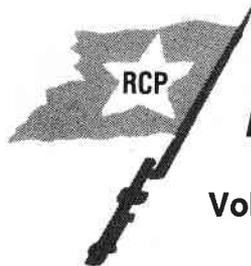
The international solidarity that this campaign has received from revolutionary parties and organizations in many other countries has helped bring the significance of this battle into even sharper focus, and surely the U.S. bourgeoisie has felt this message too.

The RCP aims at nothing less than turning Washington, D.C. into a major political battleground, and in doing so, and through the support built in every major area across the country, to rock this whole country to its foundations. As the Party's Central Committee call for the D.C. volunteers stated,

“We are firmly resolved that, no matter what the ruling class does, no matter what attacks it unleashes, despite all its efforts to rob us of revolutionary leadership and wound the head of our movement, we will not back down, we will never sink to our knees, we will spread and strengthen our movement, we will not let any attack go unanswered, and we will defend our Party and its leadership. If they think they can use this trial to shatter and destroy our Party and all it represents, they will be proven wrong. But, on the other hand, we have the chance, by beating back this attack, by preventing them from convicting the Mao Tsetung Defendants and carrying through the railroad of Bob Avakian, to strike a tremendous blow against them, arousing and inspiring hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people whose hearts will leap with joy at such a victory, and thousands of whom can be brought forward to the front ranks as activists for the cause of revolution.”

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lenin's Struggle Against International Opportunism: 1914-1917 2

With the outbreak of World War 1, tremendous crisis broke out in the international socialist movement. The quick organizational collapse of the once-proud Second International was the inevitable product of its internal political collapse. For over five years revolutionary Marxists fought to free themselves from moribund social democracy and reconstitute an international proletarian movement. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party led this absolutely crucial struggle, rallying at first a mere handful of forces in a battle which culminated in the founding of the Third International in 1919. This was accomplished above all by adhering firmly to Marxist principles, which enabled the Bolsheviks and others to base themselves on what was rising and developing in the objective situation—and thus to lead the proletariat and oppressed in changing the face of the world.

The Prospects for Revolution and the Urgent Tasks in the Decade Ahead 6

—Documents from the third plenary session of the Second Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

"Is there a real possibility that a revolutionary situation might actually ripen within this country in the next decade (through the working out of this spiral)? In my opinion, yes."

The matters taken up at the recent meeting of the leadership of the RCP are vital to the revolutionary movement and its success in the coming period. Thus we are here reprinting large parts of two documents from this Central Committee meeting.

Two Statements Upholding Mao Tsetung

These are the first in a series of documents from Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations around the world upholding and defending the contributions of Mao Tsetung which will be reproduced in the pages of *Revolution*.

Ceylon Communist Party 15

Communist Party of Turkey (Marxist-Leninist) 22

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Lenin's Struggle Against International Opportunism: 1914-1917

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was the greatest test yet to face revolutionary Marxists of that time. Within three years, virtually all of the advanced capitalist countries, along with many of their colonies, were embroiled in the war. The imperialists in each country whipped up a tremendous wave of national chauvinism, of uniting with one's own imperialist government under the slogan of "defend the fatherland." In the face of this situation

the Second International crumbled and collapsed.

The overwhelming majority of the leaders of these parties capitulated to their bourgeoisies and deserted the cause of revolution. The overt social-chauvinists directly supported the predatory moves of their governments and called on the workers of their own country to shoot down the workers of other countries as a patriotic duty; while the covert social-chauvinists, like Kaut-

sky (the foremost "socialist" of the time), claimed to be "neutral"—and constructed a myriad of "Marxist" arguments to justify this massive betrayal of the international proletariat and the cause of socialism.

At a time when confusion, panic and demoralization had spread throughout the ranks of socialists around the world, the Russian Bolshevik Party, led by V.I. Lenin, firmly upheld the banner of revolutionary Marxism. In close alliance with left-wing forces in other countries, the Bolsheviks called for a revolutionary struggle against the imperialist governments in all the belligerent countries. They branded the leaders of the Second International as traitors to socialism and called for the formation of a new proletarian International, the Third International. Alone among revolutionaries at war's outbreak, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party raised the slogan "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" and called for genuine socialists in all the imperialist countries to work for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks set out on this difficult course at a time when the situation in what had been previously called the international socialist movement appeared to be very bleak, at a time when, other than the Bolshevik Party, there were only small and scattered forces who rallied to the defense of revolutionary Marxism at first. The Bolsheviks were denounced as "splitters" and were ridiculed as a "sect" that had lost all touch with reality.

Writing in the spring of 1915, Lenin noted trenchantly:

"The war has led to a grave crisis in the whole of international socialism. Like any other crisis, the present crisis of socialism has revealed ever more clearly the inner contradictions lying deep within it; it has torn off many a false and conventional mask, and has shown up in the sharpest light what is outmoded and rotten in socialism, and what its further growth and advance toward victory will depend on."¹

The counter-revolutionary betrayal of the proletariat had not dropped from the sky, Lenin explained to those who thought it might have been a temporary mistake that could soon be rectified. In fact, an abcess of reformism and opportunism had been growing and festering within the main parties of the Second International during the relatively stable and peaceful years preceding the imperialist war, and with the crisis brought on by the war, it had inevitably burst open into full-fledged social-chauvinism and outright desertion to the bourgeoisie.

As Lenin and the Bolshevik Party clearly saw, the ability of socialism to

"advance toward victory" depended first and foremost on rallying all revolutionary Marxists to wage an uncompromising political and ideological struggle on the international level against social-chauvinism and opportunism. The hold of the Second International's treacherous leaders on honest socialists and the masses of the people had to be broken in order to launch revolutionary agitation and struggle in the course of the war. Without this historic struggle spearheaded by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, the earth-shaking victory of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia would not have been possible. Furthermore, it was only in the course of waging a common political and ideological struggle against opportunism that it was possible to unite genuine revolutionary forces internationally around the key political questions dividing Marxism and internationalism from revisionism and social chauvinism, and on a basis of principled political unity, to advance as rapidly as possible towards the formation of the Third International. The fruits of the struggle were realized with the successful founding in 1919 of the Communist International, an international center to lead the struggle against imperialism.

In the face of savage repression and extremely difficult conditions, Lenin directed the work of the Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee Abroad, which was based in Switzerland from 1914 to early 1917, and tirelessly fought to advance this line on the imperialist war and the urgent revolutionary tasks that were set before the proletariat and genuine Marxists worldwide. They utilized every possible opportunity to do so, including struggling actively within the Zimmerwald anti-war movement that developed in 1915.

In the course of these years Lenin and the Bolsheviks paid closest attention to rallying left-wing forces from various countries and forging the greatest amount of unity among them ideologically, politically and organizationally. The victories that were achieved in that struggle, though they might have seemed to be small and insignificant at the time, in fact paved the way for the greatest advances that had been made by the proletariat and the oppressed people of the world to that date.

This historic struggle waged by the Bolshevik Party during World War I, in alliance with other revolutionary forces, contains important lessons for genuine communists today. Particularly in the wake of the revisionist coup in China and the restoration of capitalism there, the international communist movement is once again facing a grave crisis and major tests and trials. Today, as in

Lenin's time, the imperialist system worldwide is heading into deeper crisis, world war, and a period of growing turmoil and revolutionary struggle. And the outcome of the current struggle between genuine Marxism and the rotting forces of revisionism around the world will be no less important than in 1914-1917 in determining whether the international proletariat will be able to seize the great revolutionary opportunities that will arise.

I. The Struggle in Russian Social Democracy and the International Socialist Movement Prior to World War I

The shape of the historic struggle that took place within the international socialist movement from 1914-1917 was conditioned to no small degree by the struggle which had broken out between revolutionary Marxism and opportunism prior to World War I. While Lenin and the Bolsheviks (who were at that time the majority of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party) paid primary attention to the development of the class struggle in Russia and to building the party, the ideological struggles they waged during the 1903-1914 period against the Economists, Mensheviks and Liquidators brought them into the thick of the battles that were raging within the European socialist parties of the Second International.

Leading Bolsheviks attended several important international socialist congresses before the war that debated the questions of militarism and war, colonialism, and revolutionary tactics. Lenin himself was a member of the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) of the Second International from 1905 to 1914, where he became well acquainted with its chief leaders.

In Europe, the early 1900's were a largely peaceful period which provided fertile soil for the development of parliamentary cretinism, reformism and open "revisionism" of the kind championed by Bernstein in Germany and Jaures in France. In the battle to consolidate the RSDLP around the revolutionary *Iskra* line in 1903, Lenin viewed the Economists as the Russian representatives of this international opportunist trend.

As the 1905 Revolution approached and the Bolsheviks split sharply with the Menshevik wing of the RSDLP over questions of Party organization and carrying on all-around social-democratic (communist) political work in the working class and developing its leadership

in the struggle against the Tsarist regime, the Bolsheviks found that most of the leaders of the Second International leaned heavily, and openly at times, in the direction of the Mensheviks' bourgeois liberal political line—an important part of which were their appeals for unprincipled "unity" in the RSDLP.

Soon after the 1904 international socialist congress, which passed a resolution that there should be only one socialist party in every country, the leaders of the Second International made the first of several attempts to unite the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. The Mensheviks readily accepted a proposal to submit their differences to a court of arbitration, while the Bolsheviks correctly maintained that there would be no purpose in holding unity negotiations unless the Mensheviks repudiated their opportunist lines on key questions. As a result, the Bolshevik wing of the RSDLP led by Lenin entered the 1905 Revolution with a compact organization of professional revolutionaries united around a revolutionary Marxist line.

In the following years, the Bolsheviks played an increasingly active role in the congresses of the Second International and in the work of the ISB, where they were generally viewed as sectarian Russian emigres who didn't understand the intricacies and delicate questions involved in organizing mass socialist parties in the "more cultured" countries of Europe. In the course of this, Lenin drew attention to the fact that there were "opportunist and revolutionary wings of the international Social-Democratic movement on a number of cardinal issues"²—as he did in his summation of the 1907 Congress held in Stuttgart, Germany.

The Stuttgart Congress was especially significant in view of the formation of rival imperialist blocs among the European "great powers," accompanied by a rising tide of militarism and sharpening battle for control of the colonies. The majority of the German delegation at Stuttgart, led by Bernstein and David, in league with Dutch and other chauvinists, proposed a "socialist colonial policy." Though this resolution was rejected, Lenin commented that the debate clearly revealed that full fledged "socialist opportunism" was rearing its head—opportunism which he linked to the development of imperialism in providing "the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism." This was a theme Lenin was to return to and develop much more fully when events came to a head in the decade to come.

The questions of militarism and war absorbed an even greater amount of at-

tention at the Stuttgart Congress. The debate in the Anti-Militarism Commission and then in the Congress as a whole centered around the active tasks of the proletariat in relation to militarism and war. The rightwing and center of the German and other delegations were opposed to binding themselves to definite methods of struggle against the imperialist wars of plunder and conquest that had already begun. The proposal made by the veteran German socialist leader August Bebel was purposefully vague on this:

"If a war threatens to break out it is the duty of the workers in the countries involved and of their parliamentary representatives to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war by means they consider most effective. In case war breaks out notwithstanding these efforts, it is their duty to intervene in favor of its early termination."³

In response, Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg (who was a leading representative of the growing left opposition inside the German Social Democratic Party) fought to change this resolution by stating specifically that in the event of war, it is the duty of the working class and its socialist leaders "to do all in their power to utilize the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the peoples and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule."⁴

Lenin related that the original drafts of his and Luxemburg's resolutions contained much more open statements about revolutionary action and agitation, which were opposed by Bebel and others on the grounds that they could result in the dissolution of their party organizations by the governments.

For the Bolsheviks and other revolutionary Marxists, the essential thing was not merely to prevent unjust, predatory wars but to utilize the crisis created by these wars in order to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. This was reflected in the resolution "On Militarism and International Conflict" adopted unanimously, and obviously hypocritically on the part of many at the 1907 Congress. In his summation of Stuttgart, Lenin pointed out that it would be possible "to read Bebel's orthodox propositions through opportunist spectacles," pointing to the example of the German chauvinists Vollmar and Noske openly arguing just a year later that, in the event of an "attack" on Germany, "Social-Democrats will not lag behind the bourgeois parties and will shoulder their rifles."⁵

The adoption of this resolution on war at the 1907 Stuttgart Congress was the first significant victory for the small left-wing nucleus forming within the Second International. As it turned out, it

was a significant one, for this resolution that the socialist leaders reaffirmed at Congresses in 1910 and 1912 served as a stark indictment of their foul deeds and treachery upon the outbreak of the First World War.

At both Stuttgart and the 1910 Copenhagen Congress, Lenin worked closely with the leftwing that was beginning to form inside the German party, as well as with Polish social democrats such as Karl Radek who had split away from the reformist and bourgeois nationalist Polish Socialist Party in 1903, and Dutch left-wingers who had been expelled from the officially recognized party in 1909, as well as others. In 1924, G. Zinoviev wrote that Lenin at this time clearly saw the importance of developing ties among the international leftwing elements:

"In his reports and informal talks Comrade Lenin told us how, during the Stuttgart Congress, he and Rosa Luxemburg made the first attempt to assemble an illegal (not in the police sense, but with respect to the leaders of the Second International) conference of Marxists who were inclined to share his and Rosa Luxemburg's point of view. There proved to be only a few of that kind within the Second International, but nevertheless the first basis for the group was laid at that time."^{6*}

Between 1909 and 1912, mass strikes, demonstrations and other signs of sharpening class struggle erupted in Europe and Russia. Bourgeois democratic revolutions were underway in Mexico, China and Persia (as Iran was known at the time). A sharp debate took place around revolutionary tactics in the

* Zinoviev played a valuable role as a close collaborator of Lenin's from 1908 to 1917 in the Leninist battles against various forms of error and opportunism within Russian social democracy and the European social democratic movement. Faced with the more severe tests posed by the revolutionary struggle for power and for the consolidation and extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, Zinoviev committed some serious errors, then later degenerated, was expelled from the Party, and finally tried and executed in 1936.

In October 1917, when the Bolshevik Central Committee voted that the Party should organize and launch an insurrection as soon as possible, Zinoviev and Kamenev argued and voted against the resolution, and then after it had been passed revealed the plan for an insurrection and their disagreement with it in a letter to the Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*. After the successful uprising, the same pair (along with some others) demanded a coalition government drawn from all the socialist parties—this at the same time that the other "socialist" parties, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries were participating in the "Commit-

tees of Public Safety" that had been set up to fight the revolution.

German Social-Democratic Party, by far the biggest and most influential in the Second International.

Rosa Luxemburg, joined by Radek, argued for the use of a general strike developing into an armed uprising (citing the use of the general strike in the Russian Revolution of 1905). Kautsky advocated a "strategy of attrition" in direct opposition to the "strategy to overthrow," for which he claimed the German proletariat was not yet prepared. The Russian Mensheviks seized the occasion of this controversy to link together Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg as ultra-leftist phrasemongers and to identify Kautsky's "orthodox" position with their own.

In 1911, when Luxemburg publicly criticized the German party leadership for refusing to take a stand against German intervention in Morocco (then a French colony), Kautsky, Bebel and the right-wing German socialists charged her with "uncomradely" conduct at the September, 1911 meeting of the International Socialist Bureau. Lenin came to Luxemburg's defense, and as Zinoviev described it,

"the thunder and lightning descended upon him as well. Vladimir Ilich (Lenin) appealed to Plekhanov... but Comrade Plekhanov replied that the ear should not grow beyond the forehead... that when we had millions of members as the German Social Democracy had, then we should also be considered... After listening to Plekhanov, Vladimir Ilich slammed the door and left the meeting. Thereupon, Comrade Lenin began to approach more and more the elements which supported Rosa Luxemburg."⁷

tees of Public Safety" that had been set up to fight the revolution.

After the civil war Zinoviev was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and within the Party he helped, along with Stalin and Kamenev, to lead the initial battle against Trotsky's line, thus once again playing a useful role in the revolutionary struggle. After Trotsky's defeat in this first round, though, Zinoviev went on to oppose the line of the Party from the "left" on the peasant question and the New Economic Policy. When his line on these questions was defeated, Zinoviev formed a bloc with Trotsky. Together the two of them attacked the theory of the construction of socialism in one country, called for "primitive socialist accumulation" through the exploitation of the peasantry supposedly for the benefit of the industrial working class, and set up a secret organization with its own underground printing press, etc. The Fifteenth Party Congress, held in December 1927, found that adherence to the Trotsky opposition program was incompatible with membership in the Bolshevik Party, and Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled along with their active followers.

A year later, after the Balkan Wars had broken out and were threatening to spread further, an Extraordinary International Socialist Congress was called in Basle, Switzerland in November, 1912, for the purpose of issuing a manifesto on the situation in the Balkans and the threatening world war. This document was extremely eclectic, with many high-sounding calls for universal disarmament, international courts of arbitration, and so on that were carried over from earlier congresses. But it also contained the key resolution on war and revolution that Lenin and Luxemburg had fought for at Stuttgart in 1907; it declared that a period of imperialist wars had begun in Europe; and it contained a statement that Lenin would refer to repeatedly in the coming years to brand the leaders of the Second International as traitors to the international working class:

"the proletarians consider it a crime to fire at each other for the benefit of the capitalist profits, the ambitions of dynasties and the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties."⁸

This same year, the split in the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party was finalized. The Bolshevik Party expelled the Liquidators and Mensheviks, who were working to destroy the illegal underground apparatus of the RSDLP and were promoting the reformist political line of tailing the liberal bourgeoisie in the struggle against the Tsar. Joined by Trotsky's "non-factional" Social Democrats and others, these opportunists called this a "coup d'etat" and accused the Bolsheviks of being "splitters."

As a result of this struggle to defend the vanguard party of the working class and draw clear lines of demarcation with opportunist trends, the Bolshevik Party was in a position to extend its revolutionary influence among the masses of the workers—skillfully combining legal and illegal work—during the 1912-14 years, which were a time of renewed class struggle in Russia. One of the most important fruits of the struggle was the launching of the daily Bolshevik paper *Pravda* in 1912, which trained tens of thousands of workers in revolutionary Marxism and internationalism during these key pre-war years. Writing in 1915 after war had broken out and the Bolsheviks were facing severe repression, Lenin wrote about this class conscious section of the Russian proletariat trained by *Pravda* that had not been swamped in the wave of chauvinism at the beginning of the war:

"Even if war, prison, Siberia, and hard labour should destroy five or even ten times as many—this section of the

workers cannot be annihilated. It is alive. It is imbued with the revolutionary spirit, is anti-chauvinist. It alone stands in the midst of the masses, with deep roots in the latter, as the champion of the internationalism of the toilers, the exploited, and the oppressed. It alone has held its ground in the general debacle."⁹

At this point, the Mensheviks and their opportunist fellow travelers turned once again to the leaders of the Second International to throw its weight behind their continuing efforts to pose as the great "unifiers" of Russian Social-Democracy. A unity conference involving all the Russian and minority nationality social-democratic groups was called for in July, 1914, in Brussels by the International Socialist Bureau (ISB). Just prior to this conference, Vandervelde, chairman of the ISB, made a fact-finding trip to Russia, where he spent most of his time plotting out a joint strategy with the Mensheviks on how to restore "unity" on their terms.

The Bolsheviks knew exactly what was up. Nevertheless, they decided it was necessary to attend the Brussels conference and to take the offensive in clarifying the reasons for the split, both within Russia and in the ranks of international Social Democracy. The newspapers of the German party as well as others had been publishing quite a few articles by Martov, Trotsky and Plekhanov while excluding replies by the Bolsheviks.

At Brussels, the Bolshevik representative, Inessa Armand, read and staunchly defended a report that had been drawn up by Lenin for the Bolshevik Central Committee. This report laid out the main lines of the political differences in Russia and drew up a detailed report of the influence of the "Pravdists" among the workers (which even Vandervelde had to admit was true). Though Armand was prevented from finishing the reading of this report by the indignant Russian opportunists and ISB members, she stated the Bolsheviks' terms for unity—clearly condemning the liquidationist and Menshevik lines of renouncing both their illegal party apparatus and all-around revolutionary work among the proletariat.

The Brussels Conference proceeded to approve a "unity resolution," drafted by Kautsky for the ISB, which stated that "at the present time there are no tactical disagreements among them [the Russian groups] which are sufficiently important to justify the split." The Bolsheviks and Latvian Social-Democrats refused to vote. The Bolsheviks were warned by the ISB that they would be held "responsible before

the entire International for the disruption of the effort to achieve unity." Encouraged by these threats, the Russian opportunists formed what was known as the "Brussels bloc" that in its short-lived existence drew up a letter addressed to workers in Russia attacking the Bolsheviks' "factionalism" and urging them to support the ISB's unity efforts.

It was expected that the upcoming International Socialist Congress scheduled to be held in August, 1914, in Vienna would make a "definite pronouncement" on the situation. However, war broke out in late July. The Second International collapsed, bringing to an end their ability to attack and try to liquidate the Bolshevik Party in the name of "international socialist unity." In the light of the criminal betrayal of the international proletariat committed by the leaders of the Second International, the conclusion of the Brussels resolution stands as a ringing indictment of the bankruptcy of "uniting" by burying differences:

"No greater crime can be committed against the proletariat of Russia than to interfere with and to hinder the rallying of its various groups into one single organism."¹⁰

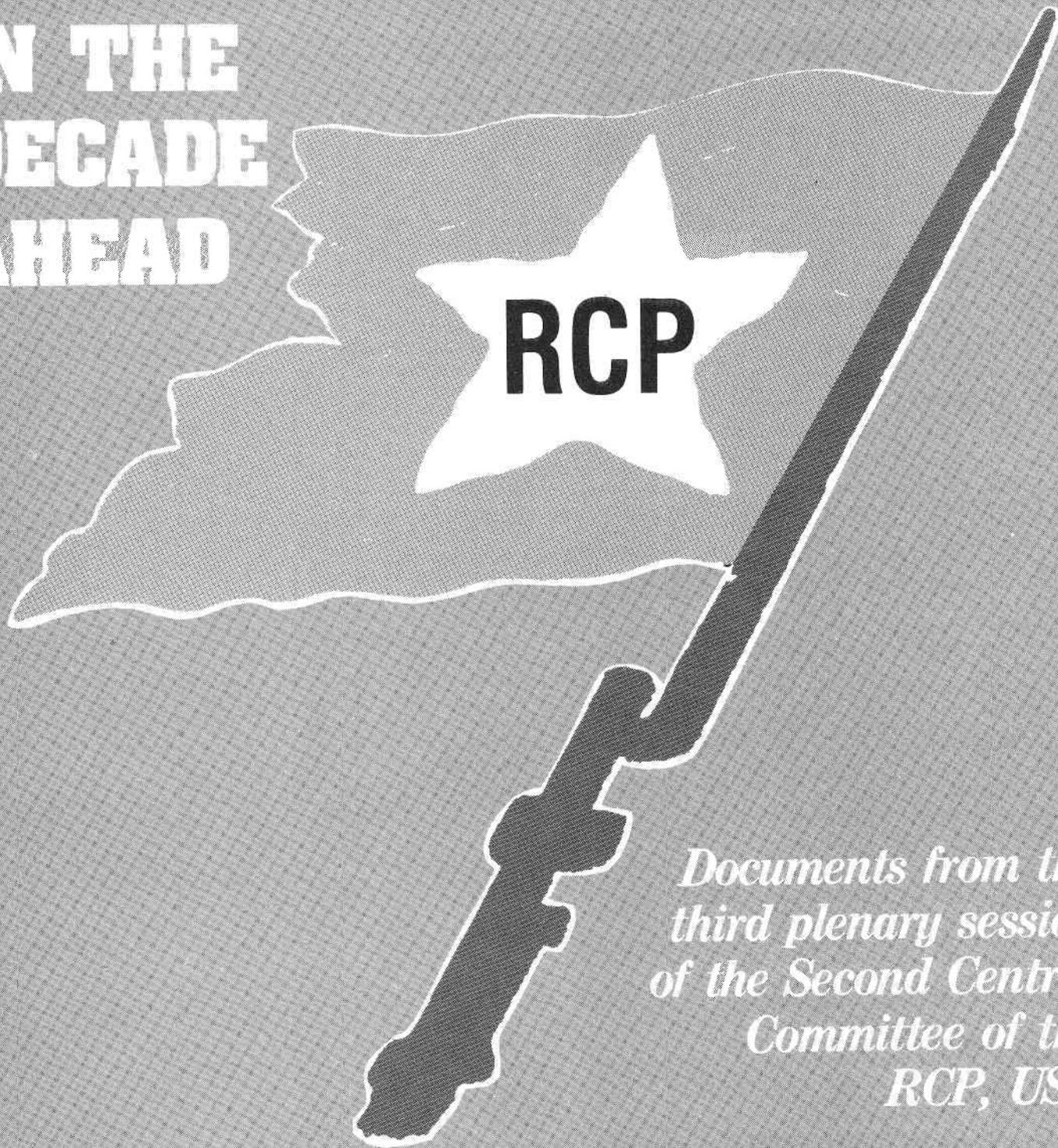
Thus, the ability of the Bolshevik Party to take the revolutionary line that it did at the outbreak of World War I in the face of the massive collapse of the international socialist movement was itself a product of more than 20 years of struggle against petty-bourgeois, opportunist trends, battles which resulted in the formation and tempering of the Bolshevik Party both within Russia and the international socialist movement. Lenin referred to this experience repeatedly in his writings of 1915 and 1916 as a lesson to left-wing forces in other countries who were struggling against the social-chauvinist majorities in their own parties.

In explaining why the Bolshevik Party was prepared to play the international role that it did, Lenin also pointed to the fact that, of all the European countries, only Russia had experienced a revolution, the 1905 Revolution, which had separated out the revolutionary from the reformist trends in Russian Social Democracy. The coming world war was to do much the same thing in the international socialist movement as a whole.

Thus, on the even of World War I, the Bolshevik Party, though still relatively unknown and looked at by most socialists in other countries as the most "sectarian" of the many warring Russian emigre groups, was prepared both politically and organizationally to uphold a revolutionary line, enabling it to seize power in Russia and to rally the

(Continued on page 19)

**THE PROSPECTS FOR
REVOLUTION AND THE
URGENT TASKS
IN THE
DECADE
AHEAD**



*Documents from the
third plenary session
of the Second Central
Committee of the
RCP, USA*

Recently the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA held a very important meeting. The third plenary session of the Second Central Committee took up key questions relating not only to the immediate period and the crucial tasks facing us now, but also to this whole period leading up to the very real possibility of revolutionary crisis in the years ahead.

What was taken up at this meeting is vital to the revolutionary movement and its prospects for success in the coming period. For that reason, in this issue we are printing excerpts from the opening talk given to the Central Committee by its Chairman, Bob Avakian, and from the report, "Outline and Summary," submitted by the Chairman, which was discussed and strongly approved by the whole Central Committee. These have been run in a serialized form in the weekly Revolutionary Worker as well.

Opening Remarks

It is very important for us to recognize just how crucial this meeting is, and what context it is taking place in, both in terms of the development of the objective situation and also of the subjective factor, that is, our Party, and overall in terms of the sharpening class struggle in society. And I think one of the things that has to be recognized—and to a certain degree, although unevenly and not without struggle, is being recognized within our Party—is that what goes on between the ruling class and our Party is not some abstraction without any relation to the class struggle. Rather it is in fact not only a part of but in an important way a concentrated expression of what is going on in society as a whole.

In fact, some of the masses have come forward on the basis of seeing that when attacks come down on an organization like ours, that is precisely an attack on the working class and masses of people that we represent. They understand that precisely what the ruling class goes after first and foremost is that force which is the potential—and is developing as the actual—leadership; that when you want to go after the masses of people, over whom you have to tighten your grip and crack your whip harder, you go after the people, the organized force, that can lead them, most fundamentally, in doing something about it. And increasing numbers among the masses come forward and immediately grasp that this is what's involved and at stake; they don't see the attacks on our Party as something divorced from and unrelated

to what's developing in society as a whole, but as a concentrated form of the class struggle in society, a particularly intense and acute form. And this should give us a sense of the importance of the battle around the Mao Tsetung Defendants.

Lenin wrote in one of his works (I think it was "The Collapse of the Second International") about how some people, even whole parties, become accustomed to relatively peaceful times and of the relative stagnation that can set in for periods when you're in an imperialist country; they become accustomed to more or less peaceful conditions and evolutionary change. And Lenin pointed out that as things sharpen up, and the conditions clearly begin to undergo dramatic change, some people do not go forward, and among them in particular there are two kinds of responses—they either panic or they just simply refuse to believe it, to believe that sudden and drastic changes are already taking place and will take place on an even grander scale in the period ahead.

And I think that we see some of this phenomenon right around us now: some people look reality right in the face and they try to deny it. Some people are saying, "Well, I don't really see why we say that world war is coming (and so on)"—when the signs of it are more and more *blatant* every day. And this is primarily an ideological question; it takes the form of a political line, but it's an ideological question—what are you going to do in the face of these developments? And some people actually take the attitude, whether they're fully conscious of it or not, and whether they openly formulate it this way or not, that maybe if they refuse to acknowledge that heavy things, including world war, are shaping up, then they might not happen (this, of course, is subjective idealism, and solipsism, in the extreme!)

Crisis, Lenin said, crushes and breaks some people, and other people it tempers and steels and strengthens. And overwhelmingly, he said, looking at the overall situation, those in the second category are the greater number. And all this is what's happening already, and will increasingly go on.

As an important part of this you see new people, coming forward especially from among the basic masses, more and more whose feeling is that the situation is intolerable. For some of them it's *been* intolerable for 30 or 40 years and their question especially is, what are we going to *do* about this? And with them it's more a question of explaining the

necessary political work that has to go on, to temper their hatred and not have it just give vent to impatience, and then demoralization. Line is decisive. But the kind of revolutionary line we're putting out does have a dialectical relationship with social forces—if you put out this kind of line it brings forward social forces who see the need for, and more than that feel the urgency for, revolution—some of whom have felt the burning desire for drastic change for most of their lives, and others who are beginning for the first time to feel this way and to understand that it is necessary, and just maybe possible.

And in one of the cities in the tour, I was told that during the speech a middle-aged Black guy came out of the meeting about half-way through and he was crying. People asked him what was going on, and what he said was, "Listen that man up there is saying everything I've wanted to be able to say my whole life, I just can't believe it." It was overwhelming to him—he went back into the meeting—but it was so heavy for him, to actually see an organization that takes such an uncompromising stand, puts all this together, explains it and explains what can be done about it.

To me this is not an isolated individual. He represents millions of people. Not enough yet to launch an insurrection, but millions of people. And this pinpoints this question: are we speaking to the real contradictions and the way things are moving and developing? Are we speaking for the people who have been on the bottom all along and have felt this way all their lives, as well as other people who see their conditions changing and recognize some new things for the first time? Or are we just crying in the darkness; is it the case that we are just gritting our teeth and doing all this because it's the *right* thing to do, even though it has no real relationship to the actual situation and its development?—another form of utopian socialism, idealism, moralism. And if we base ourselves on this utopianism—we have a better "idea," divorced from material reality—then we won't be able to keep pace with developments and maintain a revolutionary orientation and line. And this is exactly because things *are* sharpening up.

By grasping what's involved, we can get a much sharper sense of the importance of this meeting and the questions it is focusing on. I think that, all of us, to one degree or another, have become accustomed to living and working politically in a certain kind of context; and if we really want to be honest about



C.C. Report

it, as much as people have dedicated themselves to revolution and even put their lives on the line in certain situations, how many of us have really confronted until recently the question that maybe it is going to fall on us to actually do this in the period ahead? And that there is nobody else out here that is going to do this.

And this gets even sharper when you start really realizing that the imperialists *are* in a lot of trouble, they're in a *lot* of trouble. And one of the points that we've been stressing on the tour and more generally in talking to the masses is that *you* may not think that revolution is a serious possibility, but the rulers of this country think that it is a real possibility, and they're starting to talk about it more—and act on that understanding, too. That doesn't mean that it is certainly going to happen in the next period. But the question of whether it's a real possibility is something we have to get into very deeply, because it sets the objective stage and the framework for everything else we're talking about. If our basic analysis is wrong, that they're not really getting ready to, and being driven to, go to war and there's not really any serious crisis—already serious crisis and deeper crisis on the horizon, including world war—then what we're doing and what we're talking about doing, our political line and specific policies, etc. are all off, all wrong. They wouldn't fit the circumstances and would in fact subject us to unnecessary risks and sacrifices.

And, again, there is constantly the tendency to want to settle into whatever the present situation and level of our work is. And maybe it seems, subjectively, that every time the Party sort of settles into the tasks at hand, some people in Chicago, or somewhere, just keep upping the ante. But that's not what is happening, if we look at it more fundamentally. The ante keeps getting upped by the development of the objective situation, including what the ruling class is doing. We are coming to gulfs and chasms, and if we don't strain and leap—and maybe grab the other side by our fingernails and pull with every muscle, pull ourselves up, raise ourselves up, and then race and do it yet again—then it's not just that abstractly we're not going to be able to ascend, but we're going to crash and be shattered.

Because, whether or not things develop all the way to a revolutionary

situation in the period ahead, there is certainly going to be a heavy situation developing out here. The question is not whether heavy things are going to be happening, the question is whether they're going to be one-sided or two-sided in a basic sense. Whether there's going to be one program out here or two programs, one answer (with many different variations), or two answers as to which way things have to go. Whether or not things sharpen up all the way, they are *certainly* going to sharpen up. We're going to have to be making leaps. If you don't make these leaps, then you end up with nothing, because conditions change and the ground you've been standing on is continually cut out from underneath your feet, and either you leap or you don't move at all—except down. And the reason the ante keeps getting upped in terms of our tasks and what we're called on to do is that, by and large, the leadership of this Party has been correctly grasping this and formulating the lines and policies to leap ahead in the face of these conditions—and not only the difficulties, but also the increasing opportunities they provide.

The kind of people we bring forward are gonna put some demands on us. It's not like when you go out with a trade-unionist line, and you bring forward another kind of social base. Instead we're bringing forward the *advanced* more and more. And these people are gonna put us to the test—what about this and this, and are you really serious? And so are the intermediate and the backward among the masses, in a different way—they're gonna jump in your shit all the time about every question going down. You're going to have to really read the *Revolutionary Worker*, you're gonna have to study *Revolution* and *The Communist*, you're gonna have to struggle ideologically and deal with questions coming up from all different sections of the masses. You're not going to be able to say, "I don't feel like talking about political questions today, I'm too tired," you're not going to be able to pick and choose *when* you will discuss world affairs. People are going to be coming up to you and *challenging* you, some from a more backward, and some from an advanced position.

We *all* have to study, we all have to strain and put heavy demands on ourselves—or really, struggle to meet the demands that *are* placed on us. Otherwise, you're really accepting—through the back door and self-cultivation—the very outlook that we're being attacked with: that being a revolutionary leader is some kind of question of a career or trying to be a great man or woman in history, rather than rising to

the necessity and the responsibility you have to do what has to be done. And we should accept nothing less than striving to be on that kind of level. We'll let history judge how well we do, but we should do as well as we can.

Because for the first time, we are actually confronting the fact that the situation *might*—not certainly will but *might*—ripen into a revolutionary situation in the period ahead—and what are we going to do about it? This, obviously, is a fundamental question, a decisive question of orientation and political line.

Looking at it in that light, we can see more clearly that we are in no position to be wasting time. This is not a question of hype, but in a real sense we are in a race against time. Things are going to be sharpening up anyway. If we decided to fold up our tents and go out of existence, that doesn't mean that the masses of people are going to have an easy life and that there's not going to be tremendous turmoil, upheaval, and destruction. So if we want to do something about it, if we want to be what we are and lead people to fight for their real interests, if we want to prepare for the future and the real possibility of revolution—and the certainty of greatly intensified conditions—then we've got to race against time in a real sense.

Do we really understand things this way? Do we really understand, for example—and just to take a somewhat arbitrary number—that whether or not a thousand networks of the *Revolutionary Worker* are actually developed might be decisive in determining whether or not we can make revolution in this country in the next decade—*might* be decisive, I don't say "*will* be," but will in any case be extremely important and might even be decisive.

And it goes back to what I raised at the start—how do we view the attacks on the Party, and specifically the battle around the Mao Tsetung Defendants. How do we see the fight to keep them from putting the Chairman of our Party in jail? Is this just another campaign, or is it a crucial battle? Does it have anything to do with the overall class struggle, is it a vital part of that, does it have any effect on building a revolutionary movement in this country and does it play a very important part in advancing that struggle or suffering a setback in it—does it in fact, even have a great deal to do with whether or not we will be in a significantly stronger or weaker position as things sharpen up and if indeed they do ripen to revolutionary conditions—is all this the case, or is it just something we have to do?

How do we look at the May Day demonstration? Do we understand it correctly, in this way: that whether or

not we can make a success of May Day, whether we can actually mobilize many thousands of workers (and thousands of others), will tell us something very important about the situation, and more importantly will significantly and dramatically *change* the situation. Again, just as with the networks, and with the battle around the D.C. trial, (and the fund drive, too), whether or not we succeed with May Day may well have a lot to do with whether or not we can actually push things all the way, if the objective conditions do ripen.

Are all these urgent, do they have everything to do with preparing for revolution—whether the situation ripens sooner or only later—so that we have to study and wage theoretical, and ideological, struggle even while we're carrying out the work of building these battles and campaigns—and in fact, do this all the more deeply and thoroughly?

Somebody told me, for example, that on the leading body in one area, half the people have not yet read the article in *The Communist* on Enver Hoxha's book. I find that criminal. I don't think

that's a situation we can tolerate. I frankly don't know how anybody in that situation could sleep—I couldn't sleep. As soon as I found out there was an article like that in *The Communist*, I don't care if I didn't eat or sleep for two days, I'd have read the goddamn thing. Maybe some people don't have as much freedom, but we're all very busy and working hard, so that's not the reason. There's something wrong with people's understanding if they don't stay up all night if necessary to study, especially something as important as that.

So, it comes back to this: how are we viewing things, how are we viewing the situation that is in fact sharpening up? Because the simple fact is that, until we can move and influence millions, even ultimately tens of millions of people, we can't do what we want to do, we can't launch an insurrection and seize power. And everything we're doing right now, especially the main campaigns and the work to develop and expand *Revolutionary Worker* distribution, build these networks, etc.—all this has everything to do with whether we will be able to

move and influence those millions and tens of millions in the future, whenever the situation does fully ripen. As I said before, it is through this kind of political work that we will know, as the objective conditions sharpen up, what the mood is, what the contradictions are within that, and ultimately when in fact a revolutionary situation has ripened. And, as I also stressed, we are not just measuring the situation and the mood of the masses, we are also significantly *changing* them through this kind of work. We are not merely taking the pulse beat, we are *quicken*ing that pulse beat, accelerating the development of things.

And it is with this kind of understanding, and this sense of urgency, that we have to approach this whole meeting. We have to understand that we are not just meeting to discuss developments in the next few months, or even for the period up to May Day, we are setting a whole orientation for the whole period ahead.

Ideas and Questions on the Points

(1) The objective situation and our work.

Is there a real possibility that a revolutionary situation might actually ripen within this country in the next decade (through the working out of this spiral)? In my opinion, yes. This is not the same thing as saying it certainly will develop—nor that if it does we will certainly be able to succeed. We are talking about prospects and possibilities, not promises and guarantees. But, in any case, as Lenin put it, only the work of preparing for revolution, preparing to seize the time when a revolutionary situation does develop, whether sooner or later, "it is *only* work in this direction that deserves the name of socialist work." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 258, "Collapse of the Second International")

But what leads to the conclusion that the *possibility* is a real one and not something so remote as to make preparation simply long-term and general principle? Our analysis of the "downward spiral"* is not only correct but is being more and more borne out.

* This analysis of a "downward spiral" was made at the time of the founding of the Party in 1975 and has been deepened since. The second plenary session of the first Central Committee (1976) described it this way: "It means that, as opposed to earlier times in the post-WW2 period, when the U.S. economy was hit by recession, things have entered in-

1974-75 was indeed a serious crisis, and more than that did indicate that a qualitative—downward—leap had been taken (actually a few years before). And the "recovery," partial and temporary as it is, has been achieved largely through credit manipulations and inflation of currency—both internally and internationally—on a tremendous scale. This is a case of laying the basis for deeper, more devastating crisis in the future, under the conditions of—and through the recourse to—imperialism and incredible parasitism.

The present new "downturn" very likely will not mean a complete "crash"; and it is even possible that such a "crash" may not happen before the world war—though it may well. But should war come first, that would not at all constitute or signal some resolution of the crisis for the imperialists, in and of itself—for that, they would have to win the war, redivide the world favorably and at the same time prevent or significantly limit revolution leading to socialism in various parts of the world. War in itself is not the end of

to a specific downward spiral (not a straight line down) which will only give way to another spiral through a major change in the relation of forces in the world—redivision of the world, through war among the imperialists, revolution, or—most likely—both, on a world scale." (*Revolutionary Work in a Non-Revolutionary Situation*, p. 3)

crisis (or a particular spiral), but on the contrary represents the extreme concentration of the contradiction of the imperialist system and the crisis that preceded and led up to the war. Lenin was dealing precisely with a crisis occasioned by the first world war when he drew the general conclusion that "it is the great significance of all crises that they make manifest what has been hidden; they cast aside all that is relative, superficial, and trivial; they sweep away the political litter and reveal the real mainsprings of the *class struggle*." (*CW*, Vol. 24, p. 213, "Lessons of the Crisis")

A basic question of great importance that has to be seriously taken up in connection with this: Under imperialism does war essentially, and on a grand scale, exercise the "purgative function" that economic crisis does under premonopoly capitalism; in a basic sense, is it correct to view the (major) spirals of imperialism as spirals from one inter-imperialist war to the next inter-imperialist war—being principal over and conditioning the cyclical development of the economy of the various capitalist countries, which (cyclical development) is not eliminated under imperialism but significantly altered by and subordinate to the spirals determined by inter-imperialist war? Historical analysis and examination of the economic situation in the various imperialist countries since the advent of



C.C. Report

imperialism seems to strongly suggest that this is in fact the basic pattern—our dialectic.

Returning, then, to the question of how the imperialists can resolve this crisis in their interests—and specifically to their necessity to *win* the war and achieve a *favorable new redivision*—our own imperialists in particular are not at all in the same favorable position they occupied before each of the two previous world wars. Then they were able to play the game of “sitting on the mountain top and watching the tigers fight”. Why? Because *other* imperialists found their interests more directly and immediately threatened. But the division coming off WW2 has dictated that this time around it's the U.S. imperialists' turn to be “on the front lines”—even if the war starts in Europe or some other place outside U.S. borders (which it almost certainly will, though nuclear weapons could quickly change that and introduce a new and completely unprecedented element for the American people—massive destruction *in the U.S.* in inter-imperialist war). Already the U.S. imperialists have had to absorb the “preliminary tremors” before the inter-imperialist war—with Indochina being the most outstanding example—and this has taken no small toll on them. Thus, though it may well be true that, at the outset of the war, (if revolution has not prevented war), our imperialists may be strengthened economically, politically and ideologically, this will be fraught with sharp contradiction from the beginning and these contradictions will intensify as the war drags on and no quick victory or easy, “lay back” policy is possible for U.S. imperialism.

It is also possible that a revolutionary situation—occasioned by a serious economic crisis (including a “crash”) and/or a serious political crisis (including the more blatant preparations for world war)—may develop before world war breaks out (and we must bend every effort to prepare for and seize this opportunity if it does arise to make revolution and prevent world war). This requires us to criticize the position taken at our Founding Congress and in the *Programme* adopted there—that only revolution in *both* superpowers could prevent world war. In my opinion, revolution in either superpower would drastically alter the world situation and might prevent world war—though some kind of global conflict resulting from

inter-imperialist rivalry among the remaining imperialists might still occur.

All this is why both the possibility of a revolution in this country within the next decade and the necessity, and urgency, of preparing for this possibility, are real. Here a word must be said about the “weak link” formulation. This is spelled out in Stalin's work *Foundations of Leninism*, where in Chapter III, “Theory,” Stalin says this: “The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link.” (p. 29, Peking FLP, 1965)

A few comments on this. Stalin's main thrust and argument is against the Mensheviks and other social-democrats, as well as the Trotskyites, who, following the outlook of mechanical materialism and in particular the “theory of the productive forces,” insisted that revolution must first take place in one or even a number of countries where capitalism was most developed. It was quite correct and necessary for Stalin to combat this, and not only does the “weak link” analysis have a good deal of truth to it, but it was an especially important weapon of the Marxist-Leninists of that time, particularly in explaining the basis for and consciously fighting to defend the newly emerged Soviet Republic.

But this analysis must not be mechanically applied either. This is important in at least three ways: (1) The “weak link” is not a static thing, but changes with the changes in the overall world situation and the situation in particular countries, which are of course dialectically related; (2) “weak link” should not be taken to mean that place where the imperialist system is literally the weakest, in (mechanical) materialist terms—i.e., where capitalism is the least developed—this would be the mirror opposite (opposite pole of the same stupidity) of the Menshevik/Trotskyite line Stalin is combatting. Weakness refers essentially to the political situation of the ruling class, to its being caught in a severe crisis, and not to the level of development of the productive forces in the particular country (remember, for example, that revolutionary situations and at least one serious attempt at seizing power did occur in Germany at the end of and shortly after WWI); and finally (3) the “weak link” formulation should not be taken to mean that revolutions could not occur in more than one country during the course of a particular crisis, especially a deep-going, international crisis (including world war)—revolutions are extremely unlikely to occur (or at least win victory) at exactly the same time in different countries

(though even this is not impossible), but they may well occur in several countries during the course of the same crisis, if it is significant and long-lasting enough.

All the above should help us to grasp more deeply the meaning and extreme significance of Lenin's analysis of a revolutionary situation and the sudden and dramatic leaps and changes, affecting literally millions in a concentrated way in a brief period of time. Lenin powerfully expressed this point in the following terms: “It is *not so often* that history places this form of struggle [revolution for the seizure of power] on the order of the day, but then its significance is felt for decades to come.” (CW, Vol. 21, p. 254, “Collapse of the Second International”) This emphasizes all the more the importance of preparation, of developing the revolutionary aspects within the non-revolutionary situation, and of the question—raised by the Chinese Communist Party in the “General Line” polemic—of seizing vs. throwing away the revolutionary opportunity. Lenin said that in non-revolutionary situations, to influence and mobilize thousands really means moving and leading “masses”, for as the revolutionary situation develops, thousands become millions, and the thousands we have trained and kept “tense” during “ordinary times” become the *leaders* of the millions who quickly go into motion and learn in weeks what they can't learn in years of “normal times” once a revolutionary situation does ripen.

Even if a revolutionary situation does not mature through this spiral—or even if we are not able to win victory if it does develop—still if we carry out the only kind of work that deserves the name of communist work (to paraphrase Lenin), work to expose the system and prepare for revolution when the time finally does ripen, then even if we suffer severe repression in the short run and take some *organizational* defeats at the hands of the ruling class, we will remain unconquerable *politically*, our roots will go deep and spread broad enough that they cannot be completely pulled up, and our forces will be able to regroup, continue to hold aloft the banner of revolution, rally the advanced and continue the work of preparing for the future trial of strength and the eventual victory. And the significance of *this* will be felt for decades—it will lay the basis for future advances, rather than setting the struggle back for years to come. (Think where we'd be now if the old Communist Party [CPUSA] had consistently carried out a revolutionary line, even if it was for a time dealt a severe blow organizationally as a result of doing so!)

The Chinese Communist Party “Gen-

eral Line" polemic stresses that the Marxist-Leninist party must master all forms of struggle and be able to quickly change from one form of struggle, and one set of conditions to another. Otherwise it will not be able to win victory.

Lenin, in "The Collapse of the Second International" calls sharp attention to the ways in which the German party and others became accustomed to and corrupted by the relatively stable, peaceful atmosphere over several decades in their countries, and how this was dialectically related to the increasing adoption of opportunist policies by these parties—the "boil" which festered for a long time before finally bursting into social-chauvinism during WW1. Lenin also points to a further dialectic: the lack of preparation for the increasing repression against anyone carrying out a revolutionary line with the advent of the war meant that these parties' tendencies toward opportunism were strengthened—they were in no position to carry out a revolutionary defeatist line, except at the price of being virtually decimated organizationally. Of course, it would have been far better, as the class-conscious German workers insisted to these traitors, if they had gone to jail, even been killed, for upholding and educating the masses in a revolutionary line. And had they done so, they would have laid the basis for the regrouping and re-constituting of the revolutionary vanguard, on a more solid basis. But, even so, at best this would have meant that, because of their lack of organizational preparation, they would have suffered far greater losses than necessary. The point, again, is that there is a dialectical relationship between political preparation and organizational preparation, which means that they inter-penetrate with and significantly influence each other. . . .

This is especially important for us to take up in light of the intensifying attacks on our Party and our analysis of the character of the '80s; all this requires us to have the correct organizational as well as political (and ideological) line and methods to be able to meet and counter these attacks and, most important, expand and deepen our revolutionary work.

And to repeat: the possibility of a revolutionary situation actually developing in this country in the next 10 years (through this spiral) certainly cannot be ruled out—nor can the possibility of actually seizing victory if such a situation does develop. And if this occurs, then surely the effects of our revolutionary work to prepare and then our attempt to scale the heights at the decisive moment will be felt for decades—even if that attempt should

constitute a "dress rehearsal" for later victory, as Lenin summed up the role of the 1905 revolution in Russia.

(2) The International Communist Movement

The Second Congress of our Party called for stepped up efforts to make contact, carry on struggle and build principled unity with Marxist-Leninist forces in other countries, on the basis of drawing and upholding clear lines of demarcation. And over the past period we have in fact increased both correspondence and direct contact with representatives of Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations in other countries. At the same time, with the full flowering (weeding?) of opportunist tendencies in the line of the Albanian Party and its degeneration into counter-revolution, we have not only taken up the task of resolutely upholding the immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung against attacks from this quarter but have begun to make a thorough (and continuing) criticism of the dogmatorevisionism of the Albanian Party and its hangers-on, which is an important task because Albania still retains some prestige as a revolutionary and socialist force even among some organizations and parties which, at least up until now, have generally adhered to a revolutionary line. Overall, it is clear that there is a process of clarification and alignment occurring within the international communist movement, and we have an important role to play and responsibility to fulfill in this process, which is in fact a very sharp and crucial struggle.

In general, it can be stated that the situation today in this regard is better than it was a year ago: the Chinese revisionists are widely discredited among all those who have any serious intention toward revolution, and the dogmatorevisionists are overall losing ground among such forces; the number of organizations and parties that have taken a clear stand in support of Mao Tsetung and his contributions to Marxism-Leninism while opposing and exposing the revisionist rulers of China, is growing. But, at the same time, the contacts and level of unity, in theory and practice, among these forces (and some we may not even know of as yet) are still extremely primitive. For both these positive and negative reasons, the need for a qualitative leap in this situation stands out very starkly.

In fact, it calls for not only more consistent and systematic exchanges and increasing practical support and unity in struggle. It calls for step by step (but constantly advancing) progress toward

ongoing and concrete unity in theory and practice, on every level—ideological, political and organizational.

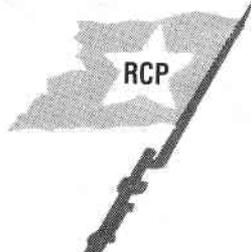
This is a point we must discuss seriously—and urgently. Of course, if we were not able to achieve principled unity with a single force internationally, that would not mean that it would be impossible for us (or others) to make revolution (in this country or others). But we are proletarian internationalists, the working class in this country is in fact one part of the international army of the world proletariat, and we should in no way raise the primitiveness and present low level of concrete unity among Marxist-Leninists to a principle nor fail to recognize that the forging and further development of such unity will greatly enhance the revolutionary struggle in each country and internationally.

(3) The United Front and Proletarian Leadership.

The Second Congress (1978) criticized the "labor aristocratic" outlook as it has been reflected within the revolutionary movement, including tendencies in our Party. In particular, the importance of carrying out work among the lower strata of the proletariat and the urban poor was emphasized, while it was pointed out that strategically we must continue to base ourselves among the more socialized (and generally better paid) workers. And this was linked with the question of carrying out much more systematic, and thoroughly revolutionary, work among the oppressed nationalities. And further attention was focused on the need to carry out revolutionary, communist work among all strata of the people and various social movements, in order to carry out our united front strategy.

Since that time, some very important, if initial, steps have been made along the lines called for at the Second Congress (and since). This is true both as regards the objective and subjective aspects. That is, there have been both increasing struggles of importance among these various strata and social movements and increasing development in our understanding of their importance and in our ability to work among and influence them. Moody Park is an outstanding case in point, and there are other examples as well (smaller-scale battles against police terror, our work in "Rock Against Racism," anti-draft and anti-nuke demos, etc.).

Of course we must avoid any pragmatic tendency to lose patience with work among the basic industrial workers, rather than persisting systematically in carrying out revolutionary work and building revolutionary strug-



C.C. Report

gle among them. We must avoid any tendency to "forget about the workers" and simply direct attention elsewhere "where the action is"—where there is perhaps more political motion, even though most of this political movement is openly reformist. As the article in *The Communist* (No. 5) on *What Is To Be Done?* points out, we have only *begun* to carry out the consistently Marxist work Lenin calls for among the workers. How can we expect, after years and years of nothing but spontaneous trade-unionism, even from so-called communists—and in large part even from genuine communists—that all of a sudden, and through a few months (yes a few months!) of our selling the *Revolutionary Worker* and hardly more time of us systematically breaking with economism and carrying out revolutionary agitation and propaganda in general, large numbers of workers will come forward as the vanguard force in the political struggle? But are there not thousands of advanced workers? And can we not bring them forward and unite them around the Party's line as a class-conscious force marching to the front ranks of the fight against all oppression, and its source, the capitalist system?

This is not to say that this will be a straight-line process or that it is all "smooth sailing." But, really, is that a worse situation than among other strata? To think so is to fall into rank pragmatism. Of course, things will have to develop much further before the working class in its millions steps onto the political stage in its vanguard role, but it is certainly no less true that the tendency to reformism and the general vacillation and other weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie will continue to exert themselves, and very powerfully, until the working class is mobilized in its masses to march to the forefront and more fully infuse its outlook, strength and discipline. And, in the meantime, the more we mobilize the (growing numbers overall of) advanced workers in political struggle, train them politically and keep their revolutionary consciousness tense, the more we will be able to influence both other strata as well as more backward sections of the working class itself and push things forward along the path of building a united front under the leadership of the proletariat and its Party, toward the goal of overthrowing imperialism and establishing socialism.

This has specific application with regard to the relationship between the struggles of the oppressed nationalities and the overall working class struggle for socialism. It is undeniably true that among the masses of the oppressed nationalities, even today (and not merely at the high tide of the struggle of the oppressed nationalities) there is more of a revolutionary mood and receptivity to revolutionary agitation against the system and the whole rotten way of life in this society. But this is also marked by sharply contradictory tendencies, and in particular it is characterized by strong nationalist influences. If we are not thoroughly scientific, we ourselves will not be able to draw the distinction between nationalism—even in a basically revolutionary form—and proletarian ideology and consciousness (again this is an "old question" in our young movement, but certainly not an "outdated question").

None of what is being stressed here is meant to nor should have the effect of denying the importance of revolutionary work among the oppressed nationalities or of pouring cold water on the efforts and strides that have been made in that direction. In fact, this needs to be developed much more broadly and deeply—but it needs to and must be developed with Marxism and our Party's line in command, and not be slipping into tailing after spontaneity and pragmatism in a new form, for that will only mean, once again, that initial gains will be lost and advances turned into their opposite. On the other hand, by more firmly grasping and adhering to our Party's line and the Marxist-Leninist principles it is based on, in this work and overall, the initial advances can be built on and further advances achieved—through determined struggle, including ideological struggle, and persistent revolutionary work.

This is a question that we should take up as part of the broader question of how to persevere and make further advances in carrying out revolutionary work among the basic industrial proletariat, and correctly handling the contradiction between this and broadening and deepening our revolutionary work among the oppressed nationalities, the lower strata and urban poor and all strata and social movements among the people, guided by the strategic orientation of building the united front and its solid core under the leadership of the proletariat and its Party.

(4) May Day 1980.

The importance of this event and the campaign to build it can be more fully grasped in light of what was stressed in the point just above (3). In fact, while

the beginnings of upsurge among various non-proletarian strata are both positive developments in themselves and indicators of the much greater upheavals in the period ahead—and indicators of the correctness of our analysis of the character of the 1980's as well—on the other hand, work among these strata and in these developing movements reveals (and recalls) not only their positive aspects but also their shortcomings, limitations, vacillations, lack of thoroughgoing opposition to the whole system, etc. Again, this is not to downgrade the importance of such struggles and of our carrying out revolutionary work among them; it is not meant to and should not have the effect of pouring cold water on this. In fact, it points, once again, to the need for us both to step up work among these strata and movements *and* to strive to be even more strictly Marxist and carry out in a lively and non-sectarian way the ideological struggle among them.

But the fact remains: these strata and these social movements can only be thoroughly transformed, powerfully linked to the overall fight against the imperialist system, and directed—or diverted—from the reformist to the revolutionary path, as the material force of class-conscious workers, rallied under the leadership of the Party and its line, increasingly mounts the political stage and shows in practice the revolutionary character of the proletariat and its class interests and its tremendous potential to unite the people to seize control of and remake society. And, along with this (as also noted above), this material force of class conscious workers, even though only thousands at this time, can have a very powerful impact on the rest of the working class, even those sections that remain relatively dormant and backward in the short run and will only be drawn into political life and activity in the years ahead.

In summing up the Battle of the Bicentennial,* we—by and large correctly—summed up this point, referring to the phenomenon of how "revolutionary" came to be identified with "worker" instead of student, intellectual, "hippie," etc. While we must guard against "workerism" (economist philistinism)—and undoubtedly there was, especially on the part of the Menshevik Jarvis/Bergman group who since split from our Party, some influence of this thinking (as well as some reformist

* The "Battle of the Bicentennial" refers to a campaign around the slogan "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years, Let's Get Them Off Our Backs," which culminated in a July 4, 1976 demonstration of 3000 workers and others in Philadelphia. It countered the capitalist Bicentennial patriotic barrage.

tendencies) in our work around and summation of the July 4th demonstration—nevertheless this phenomenon was real, if somewhat limited, and does point to the potential political impact of a force of class-conscious workers beginning to take “independent historical action” as Lenin called it. And this is important both in regard to broader sections of the working class and to other strata.

Given the development of the objective situation and of the subjective factor—the latter referring to the line and work of our Party—there is both the necessity and the basis for this phenomenon, this political impact, to be much greater than it was in the Battle of the Bicentennial. And it is with this understanding that the call for revolutionary May Day 1980 was issued and that our work to build it must be carried out—beginning with the task of arming the advanced we can mobilize now with this understanding and on that basis unleashing them to broadly and boldly build this campaign.

If things are not understood and built in this way, then the question arises: why after all did we pick *May Day* as the time for this revolutionary demonstration? Why indeed, except to emphasize and strengthen, in practice and in popular consciousness, the revolutionary pole of the working class and its power in attracting around its banner the mass of the oppressed, as embodied today in the force of many thousands of class-conscious workers, rallying around them thousands of others of the oppressed. And with this understanding, it can be more clearly seen how decisive the struggle to carry out this campaign is and what a leap—forward, or backward—will be made through the outcome of this struggle.

(5) The Trade Unions, Economic Struggle and Political and Revolutionary Struggle.

First a question: why do all (or almost all) opportunists—from the Soviet-style revisionists, to the Chinese-led revisionists, to the Hoxha-ite dogmatorevisionists, to the open Trotskyites—insist on the notion that capturing the trade unions and transforming them into revolutionary organizations (or smashing the existing trade unions and replacing them with revolutionary ones) is the decisive question for the working class, an indispensable requirement and prerequisite for advancing to socialism? They all fundamentally disagree with Lenin’s whole thesis in *What Is To Be Done?* and share in op-

position to it the economist outlook.

Some—even many—of these various opportunists point to another of Lenin’s well-known works, “Left-Wing Communism,” to justify their position. But what does Lenin actually say there? He does, in fact, say that the struggle against the traitorous leaders of the labor movement “must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unfailingly be brought—as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions.” (Peking FLP edition, 1965, p. 43). But he immediately follows this statement with the important conclusion: “Political power cannot be captured (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until the struggle has reached a *certain stage*.” (*Ibid*, emphasis Lenin’s). Note—“has reached a *certain stage*.” Lenin very carefully and consciously does *not* say—“has been *completed*.”

In other words, Lenin fully recognized that the communists cannot thoroughly win leadership of the trade unions and the allegiance of all the workers in them, especially the more backward, until *after* power has been seized (in fact Lenin also noted that under capitalism even the trade unions could not embrace a majority of the proletariat). And therefore, thoroughly defeating the opportunist misleaders of the unions and capturing leadership of them is not and cannot be a prerequisite for the seizure of power.

What Lenin is emphasizing, as indicated by the title of this particular chapter of “Left-Wing Communism” (Chapter VI—“Should Revolutionaries Work In Reactionary Trade Unions”), is precisely that indeed they should and must work in them, “For the whole task of Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childishly ‘left’ slogans.” (p. 46) What Lenin is referring to in the last part above—fencing themselves off with infantile “left” slogans—is the approach of setting up revolutionary workers organizations in opposition to the trade unions and trying to get the mass of workers to leave the trade unions and join instead in these workers organizations that have as their basis of unity the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin emphatically does not mean that, in working among the mass of workers in the trade unions, or in general, the communists should water down their politics or descend to the level of trade-unionist politics and economism. In this work as elsewhere, he repeatedly stresses just the opposite, putting emphasis on revolutionary agitation and propaganda as the main means for work-

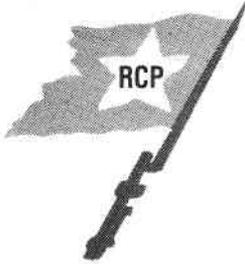
ing among and convincing the backward workers and the mass of workers generally, who are organized on a broad scale in trade unions.

But further, not only is it not a prerequisite for revolution to capture the trade unions, it is not any kind of universal principle that work within the trade unions is the most important focus of communists’ work; in fact, this is often not the case, and to make it some kind of principle is to fall into opportunism. Stalin spoke directly—and correctly—to this point in criticizing rightist tendencies within the German Communist Party in the late 1920’s:

“To say that [communists must work only in the trade unions] is to condemn the Communist Party to the role of a passive observer of the class battles of the proletariat. To say that is to bury the idea of the leading role of the Communist Party in the working-class movement.

“The merit of the German Communists is precisely that they did not allow themselves to be scared by talk about ‘the framework of the trade unions’ and went beyond this framework by organizing the struggle of the non-organized workers against the will of the trade-union bureaucrats. The merit of the German Communists is precisely that they sought for and found new forms of struggle and organization of the unorganized workers... From the fact that we must work within the reformist trade unions—provided only that they are mass organizations—it does not at all follow that we must *confine* our mass work to work within the reformist trade unions, that we must become slaves of the standards and demands of those unions.” (*Works*, vol. 11, p. 314, “The Right Danger In The German Communist Party,” emphasis Stalin’s)

The point and important principle that can be synthesized out of all this, is that when and to the degree that the trade unions are mass organizations of the workers, and especially when and to the degree that they become arenas and vehicles of class struggle involving masses of workers, it is absolutely necessary for communists to work among them, to unite with but more than that to influence and lead these mass of workers in a revolutionary direction, mainly through revolutionary agitation and propaganda (not however through sloganeering and other infantile “left” methods and policies). But in such work, as in all work, communists must not limit themselves to the confines of the trade unions or reduce their political line to the level of the spontaneous trade-unionist struggle (nor still less to the explicitly bourgeois politics of the trade union hacks). Instead they must



C.C. Report

carry out strictly Marxist agitation and propaganda and all-around revolutionary work to raise the workers' sights to the broad and decisive questions in society and the fundamental political struggle for socialism, reaching its highest form in the armed struggle for the seizure of power.

Here it must be noted and stressed that, not only must we especially bring forward and unite the advanced workers around this line and in this work, but in order to do so we must combat the tendency among them toward adopting an economist position. Often they tend in this direction not because they themselves fail to recognize the limitations of the economic struggle and the dead-end of reformism; but because, pragmatically, they fall into the notion that the rest of the workers can only be moved forward by first finding the lowest common denominator around which to unite them. In other words, the advanced workers, in attempting to build a revolutionary movement among the workers, run up against the same backwardness, the same obstacles and difficulties that we do. And if we, as conscious communists, have to more deeply arm ourselves with Marxist-Leninist principles and wage a sharp and persistent struggle against economist tendencies, how can we think that the advanced workers can overcome this tendency unless we similarly arm them and involve them in this same ideological struggle?

But what about the economic struggle? It has not been very long since we have made a thorough rupture with economism in the form of (one or another version of) the "center of gravity" line.* This includes the idea of paying "particular attention" now to the economic struggle. And in criticizing this latter idea, it has been pointed out that, in fact,

*The RCP's founding congress in 1975 adopted the line that the economic struggles around wages and working conditions should be the "center of gravity" of the Party's work. This wrong formulation fed into the spontaneous tendency to reduce the class struggle to the day-to-day economic struggles and lose sight of the goal of revolution, socialism and communism. It made a special stage out of waging the economic struggle and evaluated all the Party's work from the point of view of how it contributed to this economic struggle, instead of judging all of the Party's work and every battle by how it contributed to the goal of socialist revolution. This line was criticized and repudiated in 1978.

the economic struggle will assume more, not less, importance as the situation sharpens and especially in the context of the development of a revolutionary situation. This, of course, does not mean that in such circumstances it will then be correct to make the economic struggle our "center of gravity." Rather, it means that in such circumstances there will be more instances where economic struggles become militant battles, and more than that—and especially in the context of developing political struggle, on the part of class-conscious workers as well as other strata—there will be more likelihood and instances of actually developing economic struggles themselves into political struggles (the oil workers in Iran is a sharp example of this, which occurred, of course, in the context of a developing revolutionary situation and struggle).

As Lenin pointed out in *What Is To Be Done?* and elsewhere, the economic struggle, and the economic exposures, often have the function of drawing the more backward workers into struggle against the bourgeoisie, even though on the most elementary level. And, Lenin insists, this means that communists must precisely carry out strictly Marxist work in relation to these struggles and questions, no less than to all others, if they want to influence and lead these more backward elements coming into action, divert them toward revolutionary politics and political struggle (and if they want to remain communists). And it should be obvious that, with an intensifying situation and especially with developments toward a revolutionary situation, in many cases the first step of the backward workers in coming into political life and struggle will actually take the form of waging economic struggle—and in these conditions hundreds of thousands, even millions, of these more backward, ordinarily slumbering workers will be coming into motion, mainly in this way.

The point of this is not to resurrect the "theory of stages," or to argue that in those future conditions we should adapt our line and politics to the level of understanding with which these backward workers first come into motion and into serious struggle against the bourgeoisie. No, exactly the opposite—it will be even more decisive then, in practical terms, that, in linking up with them, we conscientiously and consistently strive, right from the beginning, to carry out revolutionary agitation and propaganda, direct their attention to the larger and broader questions and context within which these battles are taking place and divert them onto the path of revolutionary struggle around the banner of the class-conscious

proletariat.

And even today, where instances of sharp, militant struggle do break out on the economic front and draw into motion formerly passive and backward workers, it is important to grasp and apply these same principles—keeping clearly in mind what Lenin said about how every minor crisis, even a militant strike, represents in miniature what a major crisis will be like, on a broader and deeper basis, throughout society as a whole, and that even in these "minor crises" the masses involved in such struggles show to some degree the same tendency to learn in a few days or weeks what they do not learn in years of "normal times" (check out the comment of a white steel worker in Levittown about how he had changed his mind about the Black people's struggle, and obviously about the overall situation to some extent—*RW*, June 29, p. 7).

None of this, of course, goes against the understanding that we have struggled to reach, that all-around exposure of the capitalist system must be the main focus of our work, with agitation central to that. Nor, by the same token, does it go against the correct understanding that we must both direct the sights of the workers to the broad political questions and their long-term and general interests and lead them to take up political, especially revolutionary, struggle. And it is on this basis and in this light that the importance of and correct role for the National United Workers Organization must be grasped and built on.

Through the course of deepening our grasp of the revolutionary line in opposition to Menshevism, and economism in particular, we have developed a more correct understanding of the role of the National United Workers Organization (NUWO), and especially of its relationship to the Party. It has been summed up that the NUWO must in fact be built "in the wake of the Party." This means that its political links with the Party must be clear and open (though not used as a club). But more fundamentally, it means that it is the Party that, above all, we must put forward as the driving revolutionary force among the proletariat—and among other strata as well, as the representative of the revolutionary proletariat. It is on this basis and in this context that we can and must build the NUWO as an organization of the working class, based among advanced, class-conscious workers, that has an overall revolutionary thrust and on that basis takes up and mobilizes workers around major questions and key battles in society.

The NUWO can and should be a place where advanced workers (but including

those awakening to political life) can not only take up and build such struggles, but can carry out broad political discussion and struggle, over the questions connected with these struggles and over other questions confronting the class-conscious working class (this doesn't mean the NUWO should also be a study group, but it does mean that it should have broad political discussion, not simply limited to questions directly connected with struggles it is building, though much of this political struggle will focus around and unfold out of questions connected with these struggles, taken up broadly and not narrowly—not simply in the most restricted, tactical sense). Further, the workers we lead to be actively involved in the NUWO should not be stuck in a "slot" there and walled off from other political life and activity; quite the contrary, we should seek—and struggle—to involve them in distributing the *Revolutionary Worker* (including forming the nucleus of a network), in discussion groups around the *RW*, in attending *RW* forums, and in going to political events and struggles centered among other strata (as well as important struggles involving other workers). Advanced workers need such political experience and "atmosphere"—and this need is especially acute now, given the still low level of political consciousness and struggle among the mass of workers—and often it is also important, for them and for the other, non-proletarian forces in these struggles, that these workers go as a group, as the NUWO, while at the same time selling the *RW* at these events, etc.

(6) On the Historical Process of the Proletarian Revolution

Of necessity, only a general summary of some thinking on these questions can be presented here, but it should not only provide a useful basis for discussion of these points but also provide an important part of the overall framework for the discussion as a whole.

Having some sweep in our view of the process of proletarian revolution is important not only in general but also specifically in light of the recent major setbacks of the international proletariat—specifically the reversal in China. The Chinese revolutionaries certainly were a model in approaching it this way, and in arming the masses with this approach: while they fought heroically to continue the revolution, they at the same time stressed that, even if there was a reversal, this could not reverse the general course of history nor the ultimate inevitability of the

triumph of communism (they drew analogy to and lessons from the struggle of the rising feudal class in China to replace the slave system and the struggle of the bourgeoisie to establish capitalism in other countries, pointing out that the process of abolishing all systems of exploitation through the proletarian revolution was bound to be even more complex and protracted, but was also bound to be crowned with victory in the end).

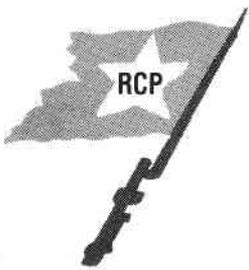
But, as we can learn from them, having this sweeping view is important not merely so as to be able to have a scientific basis for "plucking up our courage" in the face of difficulties (though that is important and necessary, so long as it is on a scientific basis), but more than that to be able to rise to the challenges—and opportunities—that lie more immediately before us. If it is correct to view the major spirals under imperialism as being basically defined from inter-imperialist war to inter-imperialist war, then this also suggests that not only for the bourgeoisie but for the proletariat as well, the outcome of the present spiral is far from determined. In other words, it has not yet been determined that the particular major spiral from (the conclusion of) WW2 through WW3 has resulted (even if only temporarily) in a setback for the international proletariat—it could turn out that the loss of China, on top of the loss of the Soviet Union, might be more than compensated for, if a major imperialist country were ripped away from the imperialists through proletarian revolution, establishing a socialist country in its place. (There is no guarantee of this, of course, and no *immediate* prospect of it, but as stressed earlier, it is not out of the question. But even if this doesn't happen, and even if overall this major spiral should result in setback rather than advance for the proletariat, not only would this not change the course of history in general, it would also not change the fact that through that particular spiral, the contradictions of the imperialist system, and the fundamental contradiction of the bourgeois epoch, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, have been *intensified*, and even the way the imperialists "resolved" things through that spiral only strengthened the basis for their own destruction in the future—if the imperialists manage to hang on for centuries, that will very probably mean that the whole world will by that time be highly developed capitalistically, and Marx and Engels' view on the proletarian revolution will be vindicated anyway.)

The Paris Commune, as we know, lasted only two months. But if it had lasted longer, then what? Would it have

been able to last for long as a workers' state, as a socialist country? That is very unlikely. Undoubtedly it would have suffered a reversal and been transformed in content into a bourgeois state, a capitalist society. To say this now is not the same thing as saying it then—then to adopt such a "philosophical" view and to have sat by with arms folded rather than to have actively supported the Commune would have meant revisionism and betrayal, determinism and capitulation. But to look at it with this understanding now, from the standpoint of historical materialism—applying materialist dialectics to the process of proletarian revolution—is to arm ourselves to fight better now to hasten the victory of the proletarian revolution, not only in this country but world-wide. In this, too, Mao is a great teacher. Here is what he had to say about this process, specifically looking at the defeat of the Paris Commune and the reversal in the Soviet Union (in the context of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China and specifically in arguing that the Paris Commune model was too advanced for the conditions in China at the time):

"If the Paris Commune had not failed, but had been successful, then in my opinion, it would have become by now a bourgeois commune. This is because it was impossible for the French bourgeoisie to allow France's working class to have so much political power. This is the case of the Paris Commune. In regard to the form of soviet political power, as soon as it materialized, Lenin was elated, deeming it a remarkable creation by workers, peasants and soldiers, as well as a new form of proletarian dictatorship. Nonetheless, Lenin had not anticipated then that although the workers, peasants and soldiers could use this form of political power, it could also be used by the bourgeoisie, and by Khrushchev. Thus, the present soviet has been transformed from Lenin's soviet to Khrushchev's soviet." (From the U.S. government collection, "Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought, 1949-1968," Part II, p. 452.)

It is an important fact that socialist countries that have so far existed have existed so far as islands surrounded by a sea of imperialism and reaction (or the situation has been, except for the brief period of the socialist camp following WW2—which won't be addressed in this paper, but is an important subject for discussion—that there has been one major socialist country with a few others "hung up somewhere" between bourgeois democracy and socialism but ultimately being turned around and in any case not in themselves a major



C.C. Report

material force affecting world politics). In the "Communist Manifesto" Marx and Engels briefly trace the rise to power of the bourgeoisie over several hundred years—"An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable 'third estate' of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway" (and even this last assessment is correct only as regards a handful of advanced capitalist countries—see Peking FLP edition, 1970, p. 33).

I think there is a useful analogy here with the process of the proletarian revolution world-wide—though there are obviously differences as well, the most fundamental one being that the proletariat cannot develop the productive relations characteristic of its society until *after* it has seized political power; and it also cannot "share power" with the bourgeoisie in the same way that the bourgeoisie could with the feudal class, both being exploiters, though the proletariat does "share power" with the bourgeoisie under socialism (even within the socialist country) in the sense that the bourgeoisie not only still exists, not only is constantly engendered under socialism, but most importantly is engendered precisely within the proletarian state and its leading force, the proletarian party. With all this, looking at it in historical perspective, it can be seen that the rise to power of the proletariat, beginning only a little more than 100 years ago with the Paris Commune, is still in its early stages and has, so far, always occurred in the conditions where, on a world scale, the proletariat not only has to "share power" with the bourgeoisie (and other reactionary classes) but finds them still dominant.

This has presented the proletariat and the masses of the socialist countries, and specifically the Marxist-Leninists leading them, with serious difficulties and powerful necessity. They are faced with the need to make use of contradic-

tions within the enemy camp, among the imperialists and reactionaries, merely to survive as a socialist state which of course stands in contradiction to assisting and supporting the revolutionary struggle internationally. And experience shows that this becomes particularly acute as the inter-imperialist contradictions heat up and inter-imperialist war rapidly approaches—which, with the existence of socialist countries, is no longer simply inter-imperialist war but now also involves the socialist countries themselves. This makes the handling of different basic contradictions and their interpenetration very difficult and complex.

The rub is this: it is precisely the bringing to a head of the contradictions on a world scale—the approach of the resolution of a major spiral, with the imminent prospect of world war—that at one and the same time creates the very great likelihood that the socialist country will face all-out attack by an imperialist power or powers sharpens, brings into being, or brings closer, the objective conditions necessary for revolution in many countries, perhaps even including the imperialist powers themselves. This raises the contradiction between defending the socialist country and assisting, supporting and accelerating the revolutionary struggle in the other countries to a much intensified level. How have the socialist countries and the international communist movement handled this so far?

Not too well. In general, as we know, the overwhelming tendency has been to subordinate everything to the defense of the socialist country—or even where this might be correct for a certain period, as for example in WW2, to almost completely liquidate the secondary aspect, the class (or national) struggle within the other countries. In short, everything has come to be staked on the defense of the socialist country.

But the problem is not so simple as this. It is not the case that the revolutionaries in the socialist countries, and the international communist movement, have simply forgotten about revolution in other countries or have not attempted to link the defense of the socialist countries with the advance toward socialism in the other countries. The problem is that, besides the outright national chauvinism and writing off of revolution at home and abroad by the revisionists in the socialist countries (the Chou En-lais, et al.), the revolutionaries have basically followed the method of *combining* the defense of the socialist country with the advance toward socialism in the other countries into a *single world struggle*. The enemy becomes the imperialist bloc that is the main danger to the

socialist country, and forces are realigned on a world scale to array against it the socialist country in alliance with the other *countries and peoples* in the world who also, for conflicting reasons, oppose that "main danger" bloc (the "anti-fascist war" and the Chinese's, even the Chinese revolutionaries', approach of building the same model of struggle in the face of the impending World War 3).

The problem here is not that adjustments are called for in the class struggle within various countries, but that what has accompanied all this has been the line that in the countries of the bloc opposed to the bloc that is the "main danger" (to the socialist country), the struggle should become that of a national war against that "main danger" bloc. And this leads to the disorientation of the proletariat and its Party, in those countries and even internationally. Instead, it seems to me that, even if it is correct to temporarily subordinate the class struggle within some countries to the international struggle in a more limited and immediate sense (for in an overall and long-term sense the struggle within each country is generally subordinate to the world struggle, but here we are talking about subordinating it to the defense of a socialist country) then this should be understood and *explained within the Party and to the masses* on the basis precisely of defending the socialist country, and it should be done with the orientation of continuing to expose the reactionary nature of one's own ruling class and continuing to prepare to overthrow it whenever the opportunity actually does ripen.

Why, in such circumstances, can it not be explained to the masses in the following terms: Our ruling class, in pursuit of its own reactionary aims and interests (with concrete exposure of what those are and how it is pursuing them), is allying itself militarily with a socialist country, a homeland of our class, the international working class; but this ruling class has not for a moment or in any way changed its nature—not only does it continue to exploit and oppress the working class and people here, it is right now maneuvering to grab more areas to plunder in the world and will, if it sees the opportunity, stab its socialist ally in the back, in accordance with its vampire-like nature; and more than that, it is right now preparing to do all this at the war's end, or sooner, if and to the degree it can. We, on the other hand, must fight to defend the socialist country, but we must also never lose sight of our own class interests (for the ruling class will never lose sight of its, and if either side does so, it will *only* be ours); and just as they are exploiting and oppressing us

and maneuvering and preparing to strengthen their position to carry out their bloodsucking, predatory interests, at the expense of the working class and people of this country and all others, so we must not only resist this exploitation and oppression but must also constantly prepare and maneuver to strengthen our position to fight for and achieve our class interests—to overthrow this reactionary ruling class, establish the rule of the working class and support and advance the international revolutionary struggle.

Why cannot this be the line that the Party arms itself, and the masses, with, in these circumstances? Of course, it will be only the more advanced, class-conscious workers who, at any time, will fully rally to and take up this line, but since when do communists alter (water down) their line on account of this? Obviously, this is a very complicated situation and actually carrying out such a line—and propagating it in popular terms—is very difficult. But, again, since when do difficulties constitute a valid reason for communists to abandon the correct line?

And more than this, such an approach is correct only if a scientific assessment of the world balance of forces actually demands that some adjustment be made, temporarily, in the class struggle at home. The maneuvering of the socialist country to avoid having to “fight on two fronts” against the imperialists, or even to sharpen up the inter-imperialist contradictions so that one bloc is forced to ally, however conditionally, with the socialist country in the war, really should not be made the line of the Marxist-Leninist parties in other countries. Our Party’s approach to this during the time before the revisionist coup in China was basically correct, and insofar as even the revolutionaries in China promoted the line of “national struggle” in the advanced countries (this requires further investigation, but it seems that they did do so), then they were in error—not traitors, but in error.

It was both very necessary and correct for the revolutionaries in China to make a sober assessment of the situation in the imperialist countries and to conclude that the prospect of revolution there was not so immediate as to eliminate the need for China to make an “opening to the West” and even try to contribute to an alignment among the imperialists that forced the Soviets to face a danger “on two fronts.” But it was not correct to therefore determine that the form of revolutionary struggle, should it develop, in the countries of the U.S. bloc, was “national struggle” against the Soviet “main danger to the people of the world.” If the proletariat

and its Party in the other countries must, under certain conditions, make temporary adjustments in order to defend the socialist country, it is no less true that the socialist country must also take into account not just the struggle in its own country and to defend itself, but must also make “adjustments”—that is, limit the moves it does make toward exploiting contradictions among the imperialists—in consideration of the struggle for revolution in the other countries. Again, this is extremely complex and very difficult to correctly handle, but simply attempting to *combine* everything into one *international struggle against the “main danger”* is not the answer.

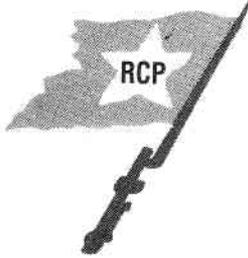
This was Stalin’s error, in a very developed form, and it also seems to have been the error of the revolutionaries, including Mao, in China. It does not need repeating again that this is difficult and complex, but it should be stressed that all this must be much more thoroughly discussed, debated and thrashed out, within our Party and among Marxist-Leninists internationally.

Another, closely interrelated, element in this is the fact that the socialist countries that have so far existed have had a strong legacy of backwardness to overcome. And in China this was further compounded by the fact that the revolution proceeded, and could not but proceed, through a period—and a protracted period at that—of democratic struggle, before it could advance to the socialist stage (in Russia there was a bourgeois-democratic stage, but not in the same way as in China, not as fully or for as long a period). And along with this, the revolution in China matured and finally won victory during a time—the 1930s and ’40s—when within the international communist movement the distinction between communism and bourgeois democracy was, to say the least, somewhat blurred. All this had its negative effects within the Chinese Communist Party and strengthened the bourgeois-democrats to capitalist-roaders phenomenon. (Even Mao, truly great Marxist-Leninist that he was, was not unaffected by all this, in my opinion. He indeed stood out virtually alone—at least at the end—among the “venerable veterans” of the Chinese revolution, as a communist surrounded by bourgeois-democrats. More than that, he indeed stood out as a towering figure within the communist movement historically and internationally, but nevertheless I believe that the national-democratic character of the Chinese revolution over a protracted period, as well as the still backward economy of socialist China and the threat of subjugation by imperialism, exerted some influence in Mao

toward nationalism and bourgeois democracy, and, as stated in the concluding chapter of *Mao Tsetung’s Immortal Contributions*, toward seeing the revolution in other countries through the eyes of the Chinese revolution.)

This is not to say that, in a fundamental sense, Mao did not understand the difference between the revolution in a country like China and that in the advanced capitalist countries. He certainly did have a basic understanding of this, and explained it. In quoting Mao on this point in [a previous report], I inserted the comment that in a country like the U.S. (as opposed to one like China) it takes longer to get to the stage of armed struggle, but a shorter time to win victory once the armed struggle has begun. This is, of course, a reflection and result of the different kinds of conditions in the two types of countries and the different strengths and weaknesses of the revolutionary movement. And along with this, it should be noted that, having seized power in a country like this, there will be real strengths, including the size, both relatively and absolutely, of the proletariat as compared to other classes and strata, its high degree of concentration and socialization and, along with and as the basis for this, the high degree of development of the productive forces.

The point here is not to say that, once we have seized power in this country, everything will be easy. It is rather to recognize the great leap that will be taken by the international proletariat when it does seize power in an advanced country, and the strengths that must be seized on and utilized for the struggle of the international proletariat—and to do this will itself require very intense struggle, especially in the ideological realm. Living within a country like this, with the political backwardness of the proletariat—which is the other aspect of its being an advanced, imperialist country—we can easily lose sight of this potential and its importance for the world struggle (this point was sharply urged on me by an Iranian comrade in discussion about the revolutionary struggle in our two countries). And what a correct understanding of this will lead to is an even deeper understanding on our part of the crucial importance of struggling against the backward tendencies among the masses, raising their consciousness through struggle and training them as Marxists, with particular emphasis on combatting patriotism, national chauvinism, etc., so as to strongly imbue them with proletarian internationalism—the fact that, in order to make revolution here, we have to go so directly and intensely against patriotism, bourgeois democracy, etc., will also be a great strength for the international



C.C. Report

proletariat, especially once political power is won here.

Mao made some important comments on this subject in his "Critique of the Soviet Textbook, *Political Economy*":

"Lenin said: 'The more backward the country, the more difficult its transition from capitalism to socialism.' Now it seems that this way of speaking is incorrect. As a matter of fact, the more backward the economy, the easier, not the more difficult, the transition from capitalism to socialism. The poorer they are, the more they want revolution. In Western capitalist countries, both the employment rate and the wage standard are relatively high, and bourgeois influence on the working people has been far-reaching. It looks as if it is not that easy to carry out socialist transformation in those countries (i.e., the seizure of power). The level of mechanization in those countries is very high, too. After the revolution has borne fruit, boosting mechanization further should present no serious problem. The most important question is the remolding of the people." (Section XIV, "Is Revolution in Backward Countries More Difficult?")

This leads us to the question of the forces and relations of production and the base and superstructure.* This is a monumental question, and further study and writing as well as discussion and struggle should be done around this. Here I will only attempt to sketch the outlines of a few basic points, to lay the basis for further discussion.

When we say that the production relations—or the economic system (base)—are ultimately determined by the level of development of the productive forces,

* The *productive forces* of society encompass the tools and instruments developed by people in their interaction with nature to produce what they need and want, and also, most importantly, the people themselves, with all their skills and abilities, who actually do the producing. The *relations of production* are the social relations into which people enter in the process of production. These production relations, which change in the course of history in accordance with the development of the productive forces, constitute the economic structure of society; they are thus often referred to as the *economic base* of society. And upon this base is erected the legal, political, ideological and cultural *superstructure* of society, which includes not only the legal and political institutions, but the art, philosophies, ways of thinking, etc. of a society.

this is correct and is further a basic principle of dialectical and historical materialism. But what does this mean, especially in today's conditions? Specifically, why is it that socialism could exist in China on the basis of relatively backward productive forces, while in a country like the U.S. a very highly developed level of productive forces exists, but socialism has not yet been achieved? Obviously, the correspondence between the forces and relations of production (and the base and superstructure) cannot be understood mechanically.

But, as stated, this is obvious—because of the Russian and Chinese revolutions and the theoretical as well as practical leadership of Lenin and Mao (before that it was, of course, not "obvious" at all). To get at this more deeply, the principle, or law, involved, can be stated roughly as follows: for socialism to be built, the productive forces must be developed enough that there exists in the country at least some large-scale means of production and a modern proletariat working in a socialized way on this basis. If this minimum condition is present, it will be possible for a party to be built, representing the proletariat and uniting its most class-conscious members, together with revolutionary intellectuals, etc., that can lead the struggle through the necessary stages to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat (in some form or another of class alliance). Further, how rapidly the ownership of the means of production can be socialized, and what intermediate and lower stages (besides state ownership) this must pass through, will be fundamentally determined by the level of development of the productive forces (how advanced the means of production are, how large and socialized the proletariat is, etc.).

Upon seizing power, the next advance along the socialist road must be to socialize ownership, to establish the dominance of socialist ownership. Without this, the dictatorship of the proletariat will have no economic (material) basis and can only degenerate into some form or another of reactionary dictatorship.

But then the crucial question arises: what is the decisive task at this point, to develop the productive forces, or to carry out the class struggle against the bourgeoisie? And, if the latter, what is the main focus of that class struggle?

Through the course of the Chinese revolution, especially in his forging of the basic line of the Chinese Communist Party for the socialist period, and most of all through the Cultural Revolution, Mao developed the understanding that the class struggle is the decisive question, and he further pointed to the struggle

in the superstructure, over politics and ideology, as the main focus of this struggle. This, of course, was in direct opposition to the revisionist line that, upon achieving socialist—i.e., public—ownership, the key thing is to develop production, and that if there must be class struggle it can be reduced to the struggle for production—"socialist" production itself will defeat, or will be decisive in defeating, capitalism and reaction at home and abroad.

Mao, of course, recognized the importance of the struggle for production, and of its interpenetration with the class struggle. But he recognized and insisted that the class struggle is decisive, is the key link. It is decisive specifically in determining *what kind* of production will be carried out. For, to view it from one angle, once the workers are no longer allowed to question and struggle over *what the production is actually serving* and the dialectically related question of *how the production is carried out*, then revisionism is bound to prevail, capitalist relations are bound to take hold, and indeed capitalism is bound to be restored.

But more than that, Mao (and the Four) emphasized, especially through the course of the Cultural Revolution and the lessons learned and deepened in that process, that *in order* for the masses to take up and determine questions like that, in order for them to defend and develop the socialist economic base (not only defend and develop the socialist ownership system, but further socialize the other aspects of the relations of production) they must *first and foremost* pay attention to political and ideological questions, to "affairs of state" and the problems of world outlook and method. This understanding is the basis for the line, "grasp revolution, promote production." Mao (and his comrades) understood—in a dialectical materialist way—that the forces of production are the foundation for the relations of production and that they in turn (constituting the economic base) are the foundation for the superstructure; and they understood by the same token that the relations of production and the superstructure objectively lag behind the development of the productive forces, and *conscious struggle* is required to bring them more into correspondence and thereby further liberate the productive forces.

Even in those unusual circumstances where restoring production is the most pressing task of the proletariat (for example in Russia and China immediately after seizing power throughout the country), the question of *according to which line* and *serving which class interests* is still decisive (this is the meaning of Lenin's statement, in his struggle

against Trotsky and Bukharin, that "without a correct political approach to the matter the given class will be unable to stay on top, and, consequently, will be incapable of solving its production problem either."—see *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 84, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin," emphasis Lenin's). And even where the immediate focus of the struggle involves a question of the economic base (socializing ownership, either initially or to a higher level, restricting bourgeois right, etc.), still this will find concentrated expression as questions of line, of politics (and ideology)—this is a manifestation of the fact that politics is the concentrated expression of economics. Of course, these lines must be not only struggled over in the realm of ideas but must be concretely implemented; but again, in order for the working class and masses to grasp the correct line in opposition to the incorrect line and to defeat the latter with the former in practice, they must first and foremost pay attention to and struggle over the larger questions of politics and ideology and approach the practical struggle from the high plane of two-line struggle.

All this does not deny the ultimate and overall dependence of the mental on the material. Rather it grasps the dialectical

relationship between them, that matter and consciousness can be and are constantly transformed into each other, and that it is only through conscious action—class struggle being the decisive action in class society—that the masses of people can transform the material world (as well as themselves) in their own interests.

Mao developed, fought for and applied this line in the conditions of China, where the pull toward putting emphasis on developing the productive forces above all else was undoubtedly very strong, even among honest revolutionaries, given the backward state of China's productive forces. But, of course, this line developed by Mao does not have any less relevance or application for building socialism in advanced countries. There, as Mao pointed out, "After the revolution has borne fruit, boosting mechanization further should present no serious problem. The important question is the remolding of the people." Certainly, in those conditions, the importance of the superstructure, and of ideological struggle in particular, will not be less than in a country like China.

And, as noted, a major focus of that struggle will be the question of proletarian internationalism vs. narrow, chauvinistic thinking. The material

strengths that the proletariat will have won, upon seizing power in an advanced country like the U.S., can only be strengths for the proletariat if they are utilized as strengths for the *international proletariat*; otherwise they will once again become a powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat—internally and internationally—with the restoration of capitalism.

The strengths that will exist for socialism and the proletariat once power has been seized in this country should not arouse in us great power chauvinism, or disdain for the revolutionary struggle and the battle to build socialism in other, especially more economically backward, parts of the world. Quite the opposite—they should further arouse in us the determination to hasten the overthrow of imperialism here, in unity with the struggle of the proletariat and oppressed people of the world, with the vision clearly before us of what a tremendous leap it will be, not only or even mainly for the working class here, but for the international proletariat and the struggle for communism world-wide, when power is wrested from the imperialists here and a powerful bastion of reaction is transformed into a powerful base area of the international proletariat and the world revolution!

Lenin . . .

(Continued from page 5)

revolutionary left-wing forces internationally in the critical years ahead.

II. The Outbreak of War Puts International Socialism to the Test

World War I was a war between two blocs of imperialist powers that broke out in 1914 over the existing division of colonies and large sections of Europe. With the complete division of the world among the "Great Powers" by the end of the 19th century, the rapidly developing German imperialists (who were joined by Austria-Hungary and Turkey in the "Triple Alliance") pushed outward and demanded a more favorable redivision of the world.

On the other hand the imperialists of Great Britain (which possessed a far-flung colonial empire and needed new outlets for the export of capital), France (which hungrily eyed the Alsace-Lorraine, a rich coal and iron region seized in 1870 by Germany) and of Russia (which wanted to seize parts of Turkey and Poland) put aside their own differences to form the "Triple Entente." (Italy joined this bloc in 1915, creating the "Quadru-

ple Entente"—followed by the U.S. imperialists in 1917.)

Both alliances of imperialist powers had been making feverish war preparations in the preceding years. In 1914, France had just started an extensive program of modernizing the Russian army, and Lenin often pointed out that this was one of the main reasons why the German imperialists decided to strike first. When Archduke Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungary Empire was assassinated in Serbia in the summer of 1914, and the Austrians, with German blessings, invaded Serbia to "extract reparations," the imperialist alliances as they then stood swung into combat.

With the outbreak of war, the socialist convictions of the leaders of the Second International were put to the test, and nearly all of them turned traitor to the international working class. The International Socialist Bureau held a flurry of meetings in the last days of July where they passed a number of weighty resolutions demanding disarmament, international courts of arbitration and called on their respective socialist parties to unite to prevent the outbreak of war. At this point, most of these great "leaders" still couldn't believe what was going on right before their eyes.

Only several days later, nearly all of them supported their own governments'

war measures on the ground of "self-defense." Each imperialist government set out to prove it had not attacked its neighbors, but had been attacked by them. The French Socialist Party declared that France was the victim of "German aggression." The party's deputies voted unanimously for war credits, and a few weeks later, Guesde and Sembat joined the "Government of National Defense." Albert Thomas became the "socialist" Minister of Munitions.

In Belgium, Vandervelde joined the government. The social-democratic parties in Austria-Hungary nearly unanimously surrendered to the government's declaration of war. In Britain, the Labour Party joined the war government, while the Independent Labour Party and British Socialist Party came out in opposition to the war (though with most of their leaders, this did not last long).

On August 4, the Reichstag delegation of the German Social-Democratic Party unanimously voted for war credits, claiming that "we are menaced by the terror of foreign invasion." Fourteen deputies had voted against the credits in the Social-Democratic conference, but no one broke the unanimity principle until left-wing deputy Karl Liebknecht openly defied the party majority and

voted against the credits several months later.

Only in Russia and Serbia did a majority of the socialist parliamentary deputies refuse to vote for their government's war measures. In the Duma, the five Bolshevik and six Menshevik deputies refused to vote for war credits and walked out of the Duma. Only days later, however, the Mensheviks' concealed defencist position that they were to hold during the war was revealed. On behalf of the British and French bourgeoisies, Vandervelde (who was still the chairman of the International Socialist Bureau) was sent to Russia, where he made an urgent appeal to the Russian Social-Democrats to "suspend" their struggle against Tsarism. The Menshevik deputies immediately promised that "we shall not hinder the prosecution of the war," while the Bolsheviks drew up a reply denouncing the imperialist war and Vandervelde's trip, pledging to continue the revolutionary struggle against the Tsarist regime.

The socialist parties of the states not yet involved in the war did not face the necessity of deciding whether they would support their own governments' war measures. Without endangering their party organizations, the great majority of the Italian, Swiss, Dutch, U.S. and Scandinavian parties condemned the war with virtuous enthusiasm and demanded that their governments remain neutral.

With the treacherous actions of the leaders of the socialist parties in the belligerent countries, and with the rapid spread of the war itself, the Second International ceased to function organizationally. But it had already collapsed politically—by becoming, in Lenin's words, "an international alliance for international justification of national chauvinism."¹²

At this moment of widespread confusion, demoralization and even panic among socialists worldwide, the Russian Bolshevik Party led by Lenin stood firm against the tide. The Bolsheviks were the only party that not only refused to join their bourgeoisie's war councils, but openly called for transforming the imperialist war into a civil war.

Even at a time of unbridled patriotic fervor, the Bolshevik Party made a materialist analysis of the devastation and crisis that the masses would be forced to bear in the course of war and declared in its 1914 theses on the war, "However difficult that transformation [into civil war] may seem at any given moment, socialists will never relinquish systematic, persistent and undeviating preparatory work in this direction now that war has become a fact."¹³

The Bolsheviks branded the traitorous

leaders of the Second International as agents of the bourgeoisie, whose social-chauvinism was a direct outgrowth of the reformism and class collaboration they had pursued before the war. Pronouncing the Second International dead, the Bolshevik Party issued a call in November 1914 to build the proletarian Third International, on the basis of splitting with opportunism.

Even while mobilization was underway, illegal leaflets were put out in Petrograd and other cities denouncing the war and calling for the overthrow of Tsarism. The Bolshevik deputies in the Duma started touring the country, organizing meetings against the war. Within several months, the Bolshevik Party Committee in Petrograd started publishing the underground newspaper *Proletarsky Golos* (The Proletarian Voice). In spite of large-scale arrests and repression that broke contact between many party units and the Central Committee, the overwhelming majority of party organizations rallied behind the revolutionary line.

The fundamental line on the war and the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in Russia and other countries that was to guide the activities of the Bolshevik Party during the war was laid out in two articles, both written by Lenin, in the fall of 1914. Lenin had been living near Cracow, Poland when war broke out and was arrested on espionage charges for several days, before he was released through the intervention of Polish and Austrian Social-Democratic deputies.

Within days after his arrival in Berne, Switzerland, a neutral country, on September 5, Lenin drew up his theses on the war, which were adopted by a group of exiled Party members who had joined Lenin and Zinoviev (the two remaining members of the Bolshevik Central Committee Abroad) in Switzerland.

These theses were smuggled into Russia and approved by the Central Committee. In October, Lenin wrote up "The War and Russian Social Democracy" as the definitive statement of the Bolshevik Party on the war. One of the first steps taken by Lenin and the Central Committee Abroad was to revive the publication of *Sotsial-Demokrat* as the central organ of the Party, and the historic issue #33 published on November 1, 1914 carried this statement on the war, as well as the Bolshevik deputies' reply to Vandervelde.

"The War and Russian Social Democracy" stated in no uncertain terms that the European war was an inevitable result of the imperialist stage of capitalist development. It declared that "the collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism." More than that, Lenin did not confine himself

to denouncing the "socialists" who had openly joined their governments. He added that:

"The worst possible service is being rendered to the proletariat by those who vacillate between opportunism and revolutionary Social-Democracy (like the 'Centre' in the German Social-Democratic Party), by those who are trying to hush up the collapse of the Second International or to disguise it with diplomatic phrases." "On the contrary," he continued, "this collapse must be frankly recognized and its causes understood, so as to make it possible to build up a new and more lasting socialist unity of the workers of all countries."¹⁴

Only weeks after the war's outbreak, when tens of millions of workers had been delivered into the hands of their bourgeoisies for slaughter by their "socialist" leaders, Lenin wrote that "it must be the primary task of Social-Democrats in every country to combat that country's chauvinism." Still, he recognized that neither this pressing task nor the revolutionary work of preparing to turn the imperialist war into a civil war could be accomplished without conducting a ruthless ideological struggle against opportunism masquerading as socialism:

"The aims of socialism at the present time cannot be fulfilled, and real international unity of the workers cannot be achieved, without a decisive break with opportunism, and without explaining its inevitable fiasco to the masses."

And in this statement addressed to the workers and revolutionary Marxists of Russia and other countries in November 1914, the Bolsheviks declared with revolutionary optimism that was based on a dialectical materialist view of the forces at work that would propel millions into revolutionary struggle in the coming years,

"The proletarian International has not gone under and will not go under. Notwithstanding all obstacles, the masses of the workers will create a new International. Opportunism's present triumph will be short-lived."¹⁵

In late 1914 and early 1915, it was by no means smooth sailing for the Bolshevik Party to unite its ranks and start doing the difficult political work of preparing to turn the war into civil war. At one extreme, when war was declared, a section of the Paris Bolshevik exile group volunteered for the French army, claiming it was their "socialist duty." Plekhanov, who had become an open

(Continued on page 30)

CEYLON COMMUNIST PARTY

In Defence of Mao Tsetung Thought

by *M. Sanmugathasan, General Secretary*

It has become necessary for all Marxist-Leninists to reassess Mao Tsetung Thought because of late it has begun to be attacked from both the right and the left. It is not difficult to understand why the right attacks Mao. The present revisionist leadership of China, under Teng Hsiao-ping and the imperialists of all kinds have all the reasons in the world to attack Mao because they hate everything he stood for. Teng Hsiao-ping is currently engaged in the process of de-Maoisation of China, of reversing all the policies of Mao, of reversing the correct verdicts of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Therefore he has every reason to attack and abuse Mao.

But, what is more difficult to understand is why the left personified by the Party of Labour of Albania and certain other so-called Marxist-Leninist parties have chosen precisely this moment to lend weight to Teng's elbow by coming out with a wholesale condemnation and rejection of Mao Tsetung Thought.

The present anti-Maoist activities of Teng can only be compared to the denunciation of Stalin by Khrushchov in 1956. It does not need much intelligence to perceive this parallel. Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist who took part, with Lenin, in founding the Soviet state and after Lenin's death, in constructing socialism in the Soviet Union and then defending it successfully against the savagery of Hitler's attack. Khrushchov reversed all these, restored capitalism in the Soviet Union, collaborated with U.S. imperialism and shattered the unity of the world communist movement which Stalin had built. Mao, too, was a great Marxist-Leninist who liberated one-fourth of the world's population from imperialism and feudalism and, thereafter, constructed socialism in China and by means of the Cultural Revolution showed how to carry on the class struggle under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent China from going the way of the Soviet Union.

Teng has reversed this whole process and is now busy restoring capitalism, in reversing all the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution. It is a little insulting to our intelligence to suggest, as the Albanian comrades are doing, that Mao should be compared to Khrushchov and not to Stalin and that Teng is China's Brezhnev.

One question pops up immediately. Why did the Albanian comrades remain silent so long? Nay, why did they hail Mao as a great Marxist-Leninist as late as 1977 at their

Seventh Congress? No convincing reason is forthcoming. The only reason trotted out is that the Chinese Party was a closed book to them and they did not know what really was happening there. If that were really so, despite the fact that both parties were members of the Cominform in the post-Second World War period, who opened this closed book to the Albanians now? Surely not Teng Hsiao-ping?

Recently, our Party delegation which visited the Iron and Metallurgical Works at Elbassan which was built with Chinese aid was told that Chinese economic sabotage had started even during Mao's lifetime, i.e., before September 1976. Then, why did Enver, in his report to the Seventh Congress, refer to Mao not only as a great Marxist-Leninist but also as a great friend of the Albanian people? Surely, Enver must have been aware of the sabotage! He need not have abused him. But need he have praised him if the charge is true?

Even before the detailed questions to be analysed later, let us first answer the central question. What is Mao Tsetung Thought? Mao Tsetung Thought is Marxism-Leninism as applied to the specific, concrete revolutionary practice of China and our era. As the Chinese comrades have themselves put it, "Marxism-Leninism holds that the fundamental question of revolution is political power and that the seizure of power by armed force is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This is the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Whoever denies this or admits it in words but denies it in deeds is not a genuine Marxist-Leninist. But specific conditions vary in different countries. And in what way would this task be carried out in China? On the basis of the great practice after the October Revolution, Lenin, in his Address To the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East in November 1919, told the communists of the Eastern peoples that they must see the characteristics of their own areas and that, relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, they must adapt themselves to peculiar conditions which do not exist in the European countries. Lenin stressed that this was 'a task which until now did not confront the communists anywhere in the world.' Obviously, the seizure of political power and the victory of the revolution are out of the question if the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism is not integrated with the concrete revolutionary practice of a specific country."

Comrade Mao Tsetung set out to integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete revolutionary practice of China. The strategy and tactics that he

In Defence . . .

used to achieve this aim have now come to be known as Mao Tsetung Thought. Unfortunately some European "Marxist-Leninists" do not see, as Lenin did, the specific characteristics of a country like China, which was heir to a very ancient civilisation, and where lived a quarter of the world's population and which was oppressed both by feudalism and by foreign imperialism. They see only the dogma and accuse Mao Tsetung of having allegedly deviated from it. But they do not pause to study and understand the specific characteristics of the concrete revolutionary situation.

What seems to have attracted the Albanian comrades' attention to the mistakes of Mao Tsetung was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which Enver Hoxha describes as being neither a revolution, nor great, nor cultural, and in particular, not in the least proletarian. He calls it a palace putsch on an all China scale for a liquidation of a handful of reactionaries who had seized power.

This is a naive and childish description of, perhaps, one of the greatest revolutionary events of our time. To call a revolution that convulsed the entire Chinese society and involved the militant action of millions upon millions of Chinese people a palace putsch passes one's understanding. Let us try and understand what the Cultural Revolution was all about. In 1965, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, China was poised on the path of capitalist restoration, a path that had already been taken by the Soviet Union. Liu Shao-chi, who was correctly dubbed the Khrushchov of China, was the head of the state. Teng Hsiao-ping was the General Secretary of the Party. Mao was virtually reduced to a minority in the Central Committee. He found working conditions in Peking impossible and had to go to Shanghai to fire his first counter shot.

If Mao had to go outside the Party leadership and appeal to the people to bombard the Headquarters of the Party and thus give a personal leadership to the Cultural Revolution, it was because the leadership of the Party was riddled with revisionists and capitalist roaders. Mao had no other alternative, if he wanted to safeguard his Party and keep China from changing colour.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is an example of how to carry on class struggle under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat in China, to prevent China from changing colour and going down the path of capitalist restoration, and to preserve China as a base for world revolution.

A question that is asked is: Why call it a Cultural Revolution? It was so called because it was in the cultural front that both the revisionists and the revolutionaries fired their first shots. Like the role of the Petofi Club in the Hungarian counter revolution in 1956, cultural activities played a big role in the attempt of the revisionists in China to put the clock back. Besides, the whole revolution was about the question of capturing and influencing men's minds, to create a new kind of socialist man, devoid of selfishness and the lust for personal power and grandeur. That is why it was called a Cultural Revolution.

It was certainly great because nothing like that had ever before happened in history. We repeat that it was one of the most momentous events of our time. It certainly was not a hoax, as Enver Hoxha claims. Nor did it liquidate the Communist Party of China. It only demolished its bourgeois headquarters, that part of its leadership that had gone revisionist. In its place, it introduced new blood. Of course, there was chaos. Every revolution

produces a certain amount of chaos. That is inevitable. As Mao has pointed out, revolution is not a dinner party. Destruction always precedes construction. To say that the revolution was led by non-Marxist elements is simply absurd. It was led by one of the greatest Marxist-Leninists, Mao Tsetung himself.

That Mao and the revolutionaries did not achieve all the aims they set out to achieve by means of the Cultural Revolution is true. This was because, half-way through the revolution, acting on the pretext that the revolution had gone too far to the left, certain leaders like Chou En-lai succeeded in rehabilitating people dethroned by the Cultural Revolution. That this could not be prevented represented the weakness of the social classes represented by Mao and the revolutionaries.

Others ask: Why did Mao call upon the youth to rise up in revolt through the Cultural Revolution? This question has been raised by the Albanian Party. One is tempted to reply: Did not the Albanian Party call upon the youth to construct their railways and to terrace their mountain sides. The youth is not a class by itself. They come from different classes. But they have the common trait, particularly under socialism, of being idealistic, self sacrificing and willing to change society. Therefore, they can play a vanguard role—which means taking the lead in marching in the forefront of the ranks. That is why Mao appealed to the youth.

But this does not mean that working class youth were not in the forefront of the Cultural Revolution. Youth from the working class and peasantry formed the bulk of the Red Guards even though there were small sections of workers who were opposed to the Revolution.

Let us not forget that the driving force of the January Storm in Shanghai—one of the outstanding and pace setting events of the Cultural Revolution—was the organisations of revolutionary workers in Shanghai, led by Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan and Wang Hung-wen.

But this, by no means, suggests the repudiation of the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution. As far as Mao is concerned right throughout his theoretical writings and in practice, he has stressed the leading role of the proletariat and has referred to the peasantry as the main force. He has never deviated. In the very first essay in Volume I of his *Selected Works*, answering the question: Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?, he has stated in his "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," "The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat." In his essay on the May 4th Movement, he has stated "it is impossible to accomplish the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution without these basic revolutionary forces and without the leadership of the working class." He has further analysed in detail this question in his essay "On the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party." Therein, he states, "The Chinese proletariat is the basic motive force of the Chinese Revolution. Unless it is led by the proletariat, the Chinese Revolution cannot possibly succeed." He has returned to this position several times in his writings. In practice, too, he has given prominence to the organisation of workers, e.g. those of the Anyuan coal mines.

But, Enver Hoxha has written that Mao has said that all other political parties and forces must submit to the peasantry and its views. In support of this contention he quotes the following two sentences from Mao's "Report On An Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan": "Millions of peasants will rise like a mighty storm, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back," "they will put to the test every revolutionary party and group, every revolutionary, so that they accept their views or reject them."

This is nothing short of gross dishonesty. Mao wrote this essay not to urge the hegemonic role of the peasantry in the Chinese Revolution; but to urge the then leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to give leadership to the already emerging peasant movement in the countryside. It must be pointed out that the then leadership of the Chinese Communist Party was only interested in the alliance with the national bourgeoisie and neglected the task of forging the worker-peasant alliance. Mao correctly wanted this policy changed. But he has never argued for the hegemonic role of the peasantry in the revolution. He has always described the peasantry, which in China formed between 80 to 90% of the population, as the main force in the revolution and declared that "without the poor peasants there would be no revolution."

Enver Hoxha further cites the thesis about the "revolutionary villages" and that the "countryside must encircle the city" as proof that Mao had elevated the peasantry to the position of the leading role. But what did Mao mean? As far as we could understand it, Mao pointed out that in the semi-colonial countries of the present time, the forces of the enemy were superior to the initially inferior forces of the people and that the enemy forces were concentrated in the cities, e.g. the headquarters of the government, the military, the police, the radio, the railway, the postal department, etc. were all in the cities.

In such a situation, the enemy forces were, at the beginning, superior to the initially weaker people's forces. In such a context, Mao suggested that it would be folly to hit our heads against the stone wall of the enemies' superior might. Instead, he suggested that the people should move away, as far as possible, from the enemies' centers of power. In countries like China where the majority of the people lived outside the cities, this would mean going among the people, organising them and building up revolutionary bases within which a people's army could be built and trained. This would change a disadvantage into an advantage and would oblige the enemy to send his forces in search of the people's forces. In such an event the enemy should be lured deep among the people and destroyed by using the tactic of pitting ten against one. The people's army will learn and grow in actual combat with the enemy till a qualitative change is reached when the people's forces would have become superior to the forces of the enemy. This is the theory known as protracted guerilla warfare. When the people's forces had become superior to those of the enemy it would then be possible to surround the cities and finally liberate them.

This was the brilliant military strategy and tactics worked out by Mao in the course of guiding the Chinese revolution. By no means does it negate the leading role of the proletariat or allocate such a role to the peasantry. The leading role of the proletariat is realised through the proletarian ideology of Marxism-Leninism and as expressed through the Communist Party. It does not mean that the proletariat should numerically be the superior force or that all actions must originate or take place in the cities. This is so because, in an undeveloped and big country like China, the proletariat is numerically weak, while the vast countryside gives ample room for the people's forces to manoeuvre. Neither do these tactics mean doing no work or less work in the cities. In the conditions of illegality that prevailed in pre-revolutionary China, Mao has said that in the enemy occupied Kuomintang areas their policy should be to have well selected cadres working underground for a long period, to accumulate strength and bide our time.

Besides, when we consider the practice of the Chinese Revolution, we find that the greater number of the forces that formed the first Workers and Peasants Red Army

which Mao led to the Ching Kang mountains in 1927 were composed of coal miners from Anyuan among whom Mao had worked earlier.

Nevertheless, Mao did not offer this tactic as a universal solution to all countries. On September 25th, 1956, in a talk with the representatives of some Latin American Communist Parties, he had said that the Chinese experience in this connection may not be applicable to many of their countries, though it can serve for their reference. He begged to advise them not to transplant Chinese experience mechanically.

Comrade Mao Tsetung is also being criticised by Enver Hoxha for alleged non-Marxist conceptions about the two stages of the democratic revolution and the Socialist revolution. None are so blind as those who have eyes and yet do not see. Comrade Mao Tsetung has explained his point of view in several of his writings. The most important one of these is his article "On New Democracy." He has pointed out: "The Chinese revolution is a continuation of the October Revolution and part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution. The Chinese revolution must take two steps. First the new democratic revolution and then the socialist revolution. These are two essentially different revolutionary processes which are at once distinct and interrelated. The second process, or the socialist revolution, can be carried through only after the first process, or the revolution of a bourgeois democratic character, has been completed. *The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution.*"

Thus it is quite clear that Mao had no misconceptions about the existence of a Chinese wall between the democratic and socialist revolutions. He has stressed this when he said, "It is correct and fits in with the Marxist theory of development to say that of the two revolutionary stages the first provides the conditions for the second and that the two must be consecutive without an intervening stage of bourgeois dictatorship.

"It is however a Utopian view, unacceptable to true revolutionaries, that the democratic revolution has not its specific task to be accomplished during a definite period of time, and that this task can be merged and carried out simultaneously with what is of necessity a future task, i.e., the socialist task, thus accomplishing both at one stroke."

Thus Comrade Mao Tsetung has clearly stated that the democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution. This naturally means that during these two different stages of the revolution, the working class will have different allies. Specifically, Comrade Mao Tsetung said that, during the democratic stage of the revolution, it would be possible both to unite and struggle with the national bourgeoisie which has a dual nature. On the one hand it has contradictions with foreign imperialism and domestic bureaucratic capitalism. On the other hand, it has contradictions with the working class and the peasantry. Consequently it has a dual nature in the Chinese people's democratic revolution.

Mao has pointed out, "From this dual nature of the national bourgeoisie, we can conclude that at a certain period and under certain circumstances, it can take part in revolution against imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and warlordism, and it can become a part of the revolutionary forces. But at other times, it may serve the big bourgeoisie by assisting the counter-revolutionary forces."

This view about the temporary alliance between the

In Defence . . .

working class and the national bourgeoisie had earlier been stated by both Lenin and Stalin. In his "Preliminary Draft of the Thesis on the National and Colonial Questions," Lenin has said, "The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement, even in its most rudimentary form." In his "Chinese Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist International," Stalin has concluded that an alliance with the national bourgeoisie was permissible.

Mao was aware of the need for vigilance and of the need to both unite with and struggle with the national bourgeoisie. He has said, "The people have a strong State apparatus in their hands, and they do not fear rebellion on the part of the national bourgeoisie." This is somewhat similar to the sentiments voiced by Lenin when he introduced the New Economic Policy. He said, "There is nothing dangerous to the proletarian State in this so long as the proletariat keeps political power firmly in its hands, so long as it keeps transport and big industry firmly in its hands."

Enver Hoxha denies that such a situation existed in China after the democratic revolution but, apart from making a categorical statement he does not adduce any facts to justify the statement. But it is well known that even in the first years of People's China big banks and big industrial and commercial enterprises were state owned and that enterprises such as banks, railways and airlines were operated by the state. Besides, the most important arm of the state machinery, the People's Liberation Army, was exclusively under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Neither was Mao unmindful of the necessity for the class struggle even after the revolution. In 1957, he said, "In China, although in the main socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, and although the large scale and turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of the previous revolutionary periods have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty bourgeoisie has just started. The class struggle is by no means over."

Earlier in 1952 he had said, "With the overthrow of the landlord class and the bureaucrat-capitalist class, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie has become the principal contradiction in China; therefore the national bourgeoisie should no longer be described as an intermediate class."

The democratic stage of the revolution in China lasted for about seven years. By 1956 privately owned industrial and commercial enterprises had been converted into joint state-private enterprises and the co-operative transformation of agriculture and handicrafts had taken place. Sections of the bourgeoisie had become administrative personnel in joint state-private enterprises and were being transformed from exploiters into working people living by their own labour. But they still got a fixed rate of interest on their capital in the joint enterprises. That is, they had not yet cut themselves loose from the roots of exploitation.

Clearly, the class contradiction had not been completely resolved and was not to be resolved for some more years to come. It was only during the Cultural Revolution that

the Red Guards forced the cancellation of the payment of interest to the national bourgeoisie. This was China's specific method of limiting, restricting and transforming the national bourgeoisie.

Every party in different countries will have to apply different methods in overcoming the contradictions that always arise as society proceeds further and further on the socialist path. The methods each party uses would differ from country to country. The degree of resistance encountered by the Bolsheviks in Russia from the overthrown landlord and capitalist classes was very great. They had to take harsh measures to eliminate such resistance. They were entirely justified in doing so. In China, too, counter-revolutionaries were eliminated. But, in China, Mao advocated using two different methods under the people's democratic dictatorship, one dictatorial and the other democratic, to resolve the two types of contradictions which differ in nature—those between ourselves and the enemy, and those among the people. In his article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" written in 1949 and also published in the *Cominform Journal*, Mao had explained that "The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship."

This method of using persuasion and not compulsion to resolve contradictions among the people may sound non-Marxist to some people. But it is a cardinal principle of Marxism that when working among the masses Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education, and never resort to commandism or force. This method was particularly successful in its application to China as gauged by the fact that when, during the Korean War, the Americans raced up to the banks of the Yalu river, there was not a single Chinese traitor to be found. This contrasts with the situation in Hungary at the time of the counter-revolution in 1956.

Enver Hoxha also finds fault with the theory of contradictions, as outlined by Mao, whereby he asserts that the law of contradictions, i.e. the law of the unity of the opposites, is the most basic law of materialist dialectics and that all other laws spring from it. It would need more space and time than we have at our disposal to reply to all these criticisms.

We will confine ourselves to re-stating what we think are the basic principles of the law of contradiction in things, as enunciated by Mao. Contradiction is universal; contradictions express themselves in a particular form; of all the contradictions there is always a principal contradiction and also a principal aspect of the contradiction which plays the leading role in resolving the contradiction; all aspects of contradiction have identity as well as opposition, and under certain circumstances, can exchange places (identity is temporary and relative while opposition is absolute); finally, inside contradictions there are antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions and they must be handled properly without permitting non-antagonistic contradictions to turn into antagonistic contradictions.

It is the same fundamental failure to understand the theory of contradiction in things that makes Enver Hoxha criticise Mao's views on the two-line theory. According to Enver Hoxha, a party can have only one line and therefore it was un-Marxist to conceive of the existence of two lines inside the party. But what Mao was referring to was the universality of contradiction, i.e. that contradictions exist in everything; even in thought, in parties and even inside an individual. It is correct that at a particular point of time, a party or an individual can and should speak with only one voice. But formulation of that one voice is always the result of the bitter conflict between two con-

tradictory points of view. It is this conflict of contradictions, even in thought, that pushes things forward. In this sense, there have always been two lines inside a party or even an individual. It is on the basis of the contradiction between these two lines, between what is right and what is wrong, that development and progress take place. To deny this is to deny Marxist dialectics.

Similarly, there is a failure to understand the dialectical principle of the unity of opposites between opposite aspects of a contradiction and that, under certain conditions, opposites can change places. Under capitalism, the working class and the bourgeoisie are two contradictory aspects of the same contradiction. They are opposed to each other and this opposition is absolute. But there is also an aspect of unity between the two, i.e., one cannot exist without the other. And, under certain circumstances, i.e. as a result of revolution, the working class and the bourgeoisie can exchange places. That is, the working class, from being a class that is ruled, can become the ruling class, while the bourgeoisie, from being the ruling class, would become the class that is ruled.

Enver Hoxha also criticises the method used by Mao to deal with counter-revolutionaries and contradictory forces among the people. While admitting that the proletariat had no choice but to finish off the bourgeoisie in Russia which was a counter-revolutionary class, Mao pointed out that there was a slightly different situation in China. By 1956, the bulk of the counter-revolutionaries had been cleared out. Therefore, while still advocating harsh treatment against counter-revolutionaries and other enemies of the people, he advocated a different method of democratic persuasion and remoulding through labour for other enemies. He said that too many people should not be shot and that there must be a limit even to the number of people arrested, and that whenever mistakes are discovered they must be corrected. This policy was advocated because of the large number of petty bourgeoisie in China and of the necessity of winning over all non-working class sections of the people (other than the feudal landlords and the big bourgeoisie) to the side of the working class.

Similarly the theory of "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" was put forward in order to encourage struggle between contending schools of thought among the people, but under the supervision of the Communist Party. Mao held that it would be wrong to suppress wrong ideas among the people by administrative actions. Instead he held that such wrong ideas should be allowed to come out into the open and face competition and struggle. He had no doubt that the correct ideas would triumph because socialism was in an advantageous position in the ideological struggle. The basic power of the state was in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party was strong and its prestige high. Therefore the only method of ideological struggle should be painstaking, reasoning and not crude coercion.

This campaign to "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" was an ideological struggle against "poisonous weeds" and for the supremacy of Marxism in the cultural field. The opportunity was used by the rightists to call for western style democracy. There were even ugly incidents, like people being beaten up. As Mao said, "Only when poisonous weeds are allowed to sprout from the soil can they be uprooted." A fierce counterattack was launched against the bourgeois rightists who had jumped out and exposed themselves and they were beaten back. Some of them were punished and dubbed as rightists, one of the five groups who were considered black in Chinese society. This decision was reversed only after Teng returned to power.

The same is true with regard to Mao's policy of permitting all the classes that had participated in the democratic revolution to share in the government after the revolution. This was a peculiar feature which obtained in China as the result of a section of the urban bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie allying themselves with the workers in the revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. This was a historical fact. But such a policy was carried out on the basis of the leadership of the Communist Party and the acceptance by the other parties of the transition to socialism. But this "long term co-existence and mutual supervision" of the Communist Party and the democratic parties is not to the liking of Enver Hoxha.

He forgets that even after the October Revolution in Russia, there were two parties in the government—the Bolsheviks and the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. The alliance with the latter was broken up only after they rose up in revolt against the Bolsheviks. Even in Albania, there exists even today the Democratic Front.

It is useful in this connection to note that this idea of remoulding and re-educating other classes dates back to Lenin. He said in "Left Wing Communism," "Classes have remained and will remain everywhere for years after the conquest of power by the proletariat. . . . The abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it also means abolishing the small commodity producers [whom he considered engender capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale], and they cannot be driven out, or crushed; we must live in harmony with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, continuous organisational work." This, Mao's policy, is by no means an expression of his liberalism.

Enver Hoxha refers to the criticisms of the leadership of the Communist Party of China and Mao Tsetung by Stalin and the Comintern. These criticisms apparently refer to the failure by Mao to implement the principles of Marxism-Leninism consistently on the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, proletarian internationalism, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle, etc. We have already dealt with some of these points.

It is true that there were differences between the Comintern and the Chinese Communist Party. But it must be admitted that in almost all the issues, Mao was proved right and Stalin, to his credit, was one of the first to admit it. There was of course no difference between the two sides about the character of the revolution, which both considered to be bourgeois democratic, and about the key role of the peasantry and agrarian revolution, and the fact that armed revolution was the only solution for revolution in China. For his part Mao considered the USSR as the homeland of the international proletariat and correctly understood the historic importance of the October Revolution and its global impact. But there were differences on the question of strategy and tactics of the Chinese Revolution.

Between 1927 and 1935, through the respective lines of Li Li-san and Wang Ming, the Comintern influence was felt on such issues as the simultaneous capturing of power in the cities, the necessity to resort to positional warfare instead of guerilla warfare, and the refusal to build rural revolutionary bases. In fact, the Long March had to be launched as a method of escaping from the fifth encirclement campaign of Chiang Kai-shek. Today Albanian comrades (in discussion with our Party delegation that visited Albania in April 1979) have taken to belittling the Long March and are asserting that it would have been better if the Red Army had given battle where it was and saved

In Defence . . .

such tremendous losses. One need hardly add, that had such a policy been adopted, there would have been no revolution, no party and no Mao. The Albanians also belittle the Tsunyi Conference which elected Mao to power in 1935 as being unrepresentative. One wonders whether they expected a fully fledged legal and representative Congress to be held in the midst of one of the most hotly contested civil wars in the world.

At the end of the Second World War, too, Stalin had his differences with the Chinese Communists. He doubted their ability to win in an all-out civil war against Chiang Kai-shek (who was being backed by U.S. imperialism) and maintained relationships with Chiang Kai-shek even during the civil war. But, Stalin was gracious enough to say that he had been glad to have been proved wrong.

Despite these mistakes, there is no doubt that Mao considered Stalin to be a great Marxist-Leninist and that fundamentally he was correct. Besides, Mao did not blame the Comintern and its representatives in China for the mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party. He blamed those Chinese Communists who tried to blindly follow the Soviet pattern without paying attention to the peculiar characteristics of the national situation in China.

And, unkindest cut of all, Enver Hoxha suggests that the Chinese Communists' stand against Soviet revisionism was not dictated from correct, principled, Marxist-Leninist positions. This is not merely unkind but also completely untrue. Not only had Mao correctly understood Khrushchov's revisionism as far back as 1956, but it was under his leadership that the Chinese Party initiated the great polemics with the publication of "Long Live Leninism" in 1960. These polemics, which consisted of several letters to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to certain other revisionist parties of Western Europe, were brilliant for the clarity of thought and depth of argument. They schooled a whole generation of Marxist-Leninists all over the world in revolutionary principles and styles of work. To deny this today is to fly in the face of facts.

Albanians would now have us believe that Mao was always pro-American, or that he shifted his positions continuously. They told our delegation this year that, during the Second World War, there was in America a Chiang Kai-shek lobby and a Mao lobby. It is true that there were differences of opinion among the American ruling class as to who should be supported in the common fight against Japanese fascism. Chiang? or Mao? There were honest Americans who wanted support given to the Chinese Communists because they were the only forces genuinely fighting the Japanese, not the Kuomintang under Chiang. This does not mean that Mao was a pro-American.

His attitude to U.S. imperialism has been unambiguous and consistent. During the Second World War, when Japanese fascism became the main enemy of China, he used the contradictions between Japanese fascism and U.S. imperialism and stood for an alliance with the latter. But, no sooner had the war against fascism ended and U.S. imperialism replaced Japanese fascism as the main enemy of China by supporting Chiang Kai-shek in his civil war against the communists, he characterised U.S. imperialism as the main enemy which had to be defeated before China could be liberated. And, defeat it he did!

In the years following, nobody could doubt the anti-U.S. imperialist bona fides of Mao when he sent the Chinese volunteers across into Korea to stem the U.S. led invasion of that country, and when he gave unqualified support to the peoples of Indo-China struggling against U.S. im-

perialism and, in fact, to all peoples struggling for their independence. His famous 1970 statement, calling for the unity of all forces opposed to U.S. imperialism and its running dogs, still rings in our ears.

But, by this time, a new element had entered the international situation. With its brutal occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Soviet revisionism signalled its development as a social imperialist power. A new imperialism has been born and Mao took note of the change in the relation of forces. Thereafterwards, he was to bracket Soviet social imperialism along with U.S. imperialism as the twin enemies of mankind. This was the position to which he stuck to the last when, for the last time he presided over the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China held from August 24th to 28th, 1973.

The Report adopted at this Congress contains this excellent formulation: "Therefore, on the international front, our Party must uphold proletarian internationalism, uphold the Party's consistent policies, strengthen our unity with the proletariat and the oppressed people and nations of the whole world and with all countries subjected to imperialist aggression, subversion, interference, control or bullying, and form the broadest united front against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism, and in particular, against the hegemonism of the two super-powers, the U.S. and the USSR. We must unite with all genuine Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations the world over, and carry the struggle against modern revisionism through to the end."

It is useful to note that there is not even a hint of the theory of the Three Worlds to be found in this report. It is also absolutely slanderous for the Albanians to state now that Mao, at any stage, characterised Soviet imperialism as the main enemy and, therefore, called for an understanding or an alliance with U.S. imperialism. This is a monstrosity born out of Teng's mind and had nothing to do with Mao.

Thus we vehemently repudiate the thesis that the anti-Marxist-Leninist Theory of the Three Worlds was a product of Mao Tsetung Thought. There is no evidence whatever to support such a possibility. Comrade Mao Tsetung is a leader who has expressed his point of view on almost all conceivable subjects that came within his purview. The fact that the apologists for the Theory of The Three Worlds cannot dig up a single quotation from Mao in support of this absurd theory is sufficient proof that he never did advocate the unity of the second and third world against the first world; or, worse still, advocate the unity of the second and third world along with one part of the first world against the other half.

The favourite technique used by Enver Hoxha, right throughout his book, is to attribute to Mao views that are not his and then to proceed to demolish them. This is a most dishonest method of debate.

But, nevertheless, we have to admit that there had been mistakes committed even during Mao's life. These constitute mistakes in the application of Mao Tsetung Thought. Some of them seem to have been committed when Mao was powerless to prevent them. In other cases, Mao himself seems to have participated in the mistakes. We refer specifically to the period following September 1971 when mistakes of a serious nature were committed in the field of foreign policy and in the sphere of relationships with foreign Marxist-Leninist parties.

This was the period when Lin Piao turned traitor, tried to assassinate Mao and died in an air crash in an attempt to flee to the Soviet Union. It was a traumatic experience for the whole of China. This opportunity was seized by the many elements who had been toppled by the Cultural

Revolution to have themselves rehabilitated. Chou En-lai, who was never a genuine follower of Mao, lent his weight to this movement. One of the most prominent to be rehabilitated was Chou En-lai's protege, Teng Hsiao-ping. It was under their influence that many mistakes in foreign policy were committed although, in internal matters, the four leaders who were associated with Mao managed to see that a correct policy prevailed.

We have to refer to one incident relating to our country. In 1972 the Chinese Government gave military aid to the government of Sri Lanka and even sent officers to train the army. It was an indefensible act and we told the Chinese Communist Party so, by letter, in 1973. Similarly indefensible was their attitude to Chile, Iran, etc. But there were also actions in which Mao personally participated and which cannot be defended. Examples are the receptions to the German Fascist leader Strauss and to Nixon (particularly on the second occasion when he was no longer a head of the State and had been discredited by the Watergate scandal) and fascist dictators like Marcos.

This period was also marked by a reversal of policy towards foreign Marxist-Leninist parties. During the period of Cultural Revolution and the period immediately following that and even during the period preceding it, there is no question but that the Chinese Communist Party gave active support to foreign Marxist-Leninist parties even though, at stages, one could not agree with its policy of recognising more than one party in one country—thus contributing to dis-unity. A possible reason for this change could have been a change of personnel in the leadership of the international department of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1972 died Comrade Kang Sheng, an old and trusted follower of Mao, who was the head of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party. His place was taken by Keng Piao, one of Chou En-lai's men and who was opposed to Mao. It was under his

leadership that the policy of indifference to and non-support of foreign Marxist-Leninist parties began.

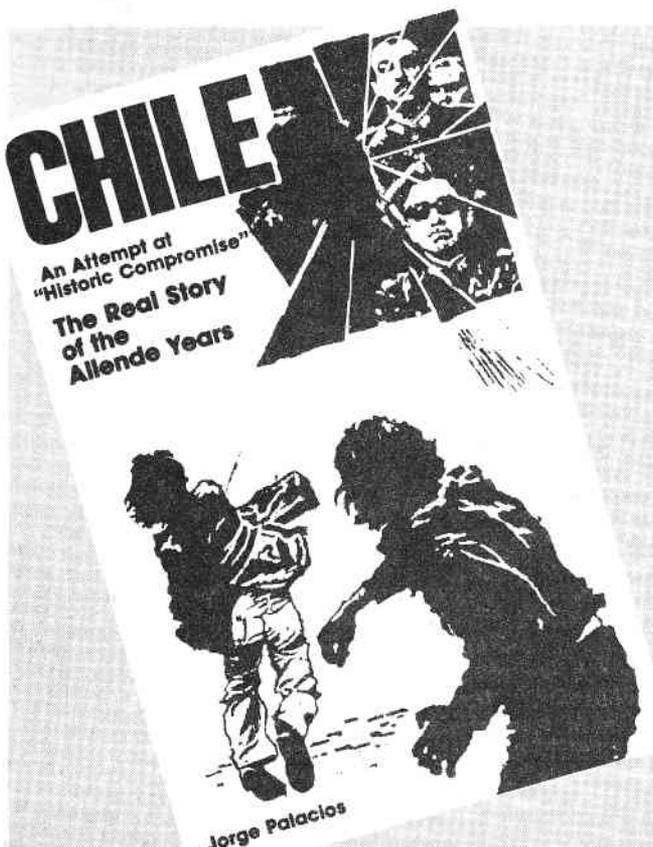
Despite these and certain other mistakes, we do not think that they invalidate the basic tenets of Mao Tsetung Thought. We consider Stalin a great Marxist-Leninist despite certain mistakes he had committed. In the same way, despite certain aberrations in practice, we consider that Mao Tse-tung Thought is Marxism-Leninism of our era and that anyone who attacks Mao Tsetung Thought is in fact attacking Marxism-Leninism.

It gives us no happiness to disagree with the Albanian Party, for whose defense of the purity of Marxism in the past we had had a great respect, and from whom we had learnt much. When Teng Hsiao-ping and the present Chinese leadership dropped the flag of Mao Tsetung Thought, the Albanian Party and Enver Hoxha had a chance to unite parties of the world who had come forward to denounce the obnoxious Theory of the Three Worlds and to inherit the mantle of Mao. But, instead they decided to do the opposite and have given comfort to both Soviet and Chinese revisionists and to all the imperialists and reactionaries of the world.

Let us remember that since the time of Lenin and Stalin, no ideology had claimed such world wide acceptance and mobilised revolutionaries all over the world as Mao Tsetung Thought. The reactionaries and revisionists would dearly love to see it smashed to pieces. That is why they are rushing to the aid of China because of their dread that China might go back to the days of Mao.

In such a difficult situation all revolutionaries must make a choice. We stand by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

[Adopted at a special congress of the Ceylon Communist Party, held in July 1979]



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COMMUNIST PARTY OF TURKEY (ML)

On Mao Tsetung

ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH, WE COMMEMORATE THE IMMORTAL LEADER OF THE CHINESE PROLETARIAT, COMRADE MAO TSETUNG, WITH PROFOUND REVOLUTIONARY RESPECT AND EXUBERANCE!

WORKERS, PEASANTS, OUR PEOPLE OF VARIOUS NATIONALITIES!
PATRIOTS, REVOLUTIONARIES, COMRADES!

The 9th of September marks the third anniversary of the great Marxist-Leninist Mao Tsetung's death. Mao Tsetung embodies as immense an importance for the international proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world as for the proletariat and impoverished people of Turkey, for today a ferocious attack is being unleashed from four quarters against the ideology of the working class in the person of Mao Tsetung. Our Party, TKP-ML (the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist), again on the third anniversary of this immortal leader, Mao Tsetung, loudly declares that the defense of Mao Tsetung is an *indispensable condition* for the further development of the struggles of proletarian revolutions waged worldwide against imperialism, social-imperialism and their hired lackeys. Our Party, TKP-ML, once again firmly announces to friends and foes that the defense of Marxism-Leninism is possible only, and only, through the defense of Mao Tsetung's contributions.

Imperialists, social-imperialists and their running dogs for years have been viciously attacking the name of Mao Tsetung. What is it that drives them into such a rabid hysteria? It is because Mao Tsetung, by firmly marching on the road of Lenin and Stalin, made immortal contributions to the revolutionary theory of the proletariat on the question of how the working class provides leadership to the peoples oppressed by imperialism, comprador-capitalism and feudalism in semi-feudal semi-colonial countries to guide them through the People's Democratic Revolution towards socialism. Furthermore, Mao Tsetung made significant contributions to Marxism-Leninism also in the field of Dialectical Materialism and on the problem of continuing the class struggle under socialism.

Mao Tsetung and, under his leadership, the CPC led the Chinese proletariat and people to secure the successful completion of the People's Democratic Revolution, thus liberated a people of 600 million from the bloody claws of imperialism, at the same time provided invaluable assistance to the Soviet Union, then led by Stalin, in the defense of the socialist motherland, and pointed the road of emancipation in practice to the peoples of semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries. The Chinese proletariat led by Mao Tsetung and the CPC did not rest content at this point but marched forward to also accomplish the socialist revolution. In the struggle for the construction of socialism, the Chinese proletariat guided by Mao Tsetung gave yet another brilliant example of how to continue the

revolution under socialism with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which still strikes terror into the hearts of all revisionists and imperialists. The CPC under the guidance of Mao Tsetung resolutely opposed the restoration of capitalism by Khrushchev-Brezhnev revisionism in the Soviet Union, led the international proletariat in grasping the phenomenon of Russian social-imperialism and pointed the way forward to the world's peoples in struggling against this newly arisen powerful imperialist. Therefore it is only expected and natural that the world counter-revolutionary front hurls itself against Mao Tsetung with all of its guns.

We all know that in our country the state, press and the spokesmen of the comprador-bosses and landlords direct their main assault against those whom they call "Mao-ite." They are doing this to isolate the revolutionaries and to discredit them in the eyes of the people. At one time, they used to attack indiscriminately all patriots, democrats and revolutionaries as "communists." Later when it became clear to the people that "communism" was no boogey-man and that to the contrary those who were branded as "communists" were in fact patriots and revolutionaries who opposed oppression and exploitation, they started attacking with screams of "Mao-ite terrorists/anarchists." In reality, the forces they have tried to slander as "Mao-ite" constituted a broad spectrum of revolutionaries who stood up against imperialism and social-imperialism in varying degrees. These revolutionary organizations, with the exception of our Party, TKP-ML, were essentially only in words defending Marxism-Leninism, which Mao Tsetung firmly upheld, and were pretending to accept, with a few token words, the theory of national and democratic revolution and the only strategy of this revolution, People's War, which is developed by Mao Tsetung and applicable to semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries like ours. Today, by openly denouncing Mao Tsetung as non-Marxist-Leninist, they have averted the pressure of the ruling classes to save their own skin.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

There is no such thing as a "Mao-ite." This is an expression consciously fabricated by the ruling classes in order to confuse and ideologically influence our people and to lead them away from the reality. What exists are the genuine communists, the political vanguard of the working class marching on the road charted by comrades Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung.

The social-fascist organizations like T'K'P (the "Communist" Party of Turkey), TIP (the Workers Party of Turkey) and TSIP (the Socialist Workers Party of Turkey), and the paid lackeys of Russian social-imperialism in our country, are also attacking the Marxist-Leninists as "Mao-ite grey wolves"; their attacks too are normal for we consistently expose their and their masters' counter-revolutionary essence. In the past, certain petty-bourgeois revolutionaries who opposed Russian social-imperialism and upheld the strategy of People's War, although only in words, were also targeted

by this social-fascist attack; however, by beating a retreat from this firing-line, they have now secured their "comfort." And in fact they are already referring to us communists as "Mao-ites" and have begun to organize joint actions together with the social-fascists.

It is not in vain that the comprador-bourgeoisie and landlords are yelping "Mao-ite" and furiously stamping their feet; because in a country like ours, the theories of People's Democratic Revolution, which Mao took over from Lenin and Stalin and further developed, and its strategy of People's War squarely points out the road and the first target of the liberation to the working class and our people. Formulations such as "People's War," "Red Power Bases" and "surrounding the cities from the countryside" all by themselves suffice to frighten the ruling classes out of their wits. Because behind these theories, they can see the road that will surely lead to their defeat and put an end to their bloody reign.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

Presently, the attacks directed against Mao Tsetung are being unleashed not only by the ruling classes. Internationally, the discussion of whether Mao Tsetung was a genuine communist or not has been brought to the agenda. This has been initiated by the PLA (the Party of Labour of Albania) which led the national and democratic revolution in Albania, guided the Albanian proletariat in the construction of socialism, and along with the CPC struggled against Khrushchevite modern revisionism and which we still consider to be Marxist-Leninist. The PLA in an irresponsible manner has declared the struggle of Mao Tsetung and the CPC under his leadership as anti-Marxist-Leninist and counter-revolutionary. It has claimed that Mao Tsetung is responsible for the counter-revolutionary theory of "3 Worlds" and that the traitor Teng-Hua clique is continuing the line of Mao Tsetung. This grave error of the PLA has pleased the opportunists and revisionists of all hues worldwide and become a source of strength for them in sabotaging the proletarian-led revolutions.

In our country, the petty-bourgeois revolutionary organizations are rabidly attacking Mao Tsetung by using this anti-Marxist-Leninist view of the PLA as a springboard. Their attack on Mao Tsetung is in essence aimed at Marxism-Leninism, which stands behind the name of Mao Tsetung, and particularly at its concrete application to semi-feudal semi-colonial social structures, that is land-revolution and People's War. They are pleased with themselves for having cast off the "burden" of People's War on their shoulders by relying on the prestige of a party such as the PLA. They are rubbing their hands together with the anticipation of being able both to hold onto their "Marxist-Leninist" mask and to savagely attack Marxism-Leninism at the same time. But they are sadly mistaken, for the chickens they are counting are indeed never going to hatch. Their renegade faces and their surrendering nature are already being revealed and will be even more thoroughly revealed in the acid test of social practice. Our Party TKP-ML's resolute defense of Marxism-Leninism will beat back these attacks; they will be liquidated amidst the flames of People's War.

WORKERS, PEASANTS, OUR PEOPLE! PATRIOTS, REVOLUTIONARIES!

Mao Tsetung is a communist leader who made many important contributions to Marxism-Leninism. To treat his work in an irresponsible manner would only provide ammunition for the counter-revolution. Our Party is of the opinion that Mao Tsetung may have made certain errors and these should be brought to daylight with an investigation strictly guided by Marxism-Leninism. However such an investigation must be part of an overall

evaluation of the half a century long history of the international communist movement. In the evaluation of Mao Tsetung, to attribute a set of unfounded errors to him by listing them one after another and to reach the conclusion that he is not a Marxist-Leninist is a method far removed from the science of Marxism-Leninism. The work of Mao Tsetung is Marxist-Leninist. To maintain the opposite is not to uphold Marxism-Leninism; it would mean to abandon the defense of the goal of the working class for revolution and social emancipation and particularly to denounce the role of the peasantry, land-revolution and People's Democratic Dictatorship to be established through People's War led by the proletariat in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries. It would mean nothing but to sink into the mire of a revisionist Trotskyite outlook.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

Let us uphold Mao Tsetung and his contributions in heightening the struggle of our people for Independence and People's Democracy. Let us not be taken in by revisionists and opportunists who are trying to sever the contributions of Mao Tsetung from Marxism-Leninism. Leaving the chieftains of petty-bourgeois sects in the swamp of their surrender and capitulation, let us leap forward into People's Democratic Revolution. Let us clench tightly around the red banner held high by our Party TKP-ML marching on the bright road of Marxism-Leninism. Let us get organized! Under the leadership of our Party, let us march forward with determination on the road of People's War!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism!

**Without the Defense of
Mao Tsetung, There Can Be No
Defense of Marxism-Leninism!**

**The Glorious Struggle of the
Chinese Proletariat and the
Chinese People Illuminates the
Road of Our People's
Democratic Revolution!**

**The Chinese Proletariat Will
Undoubtedly Smash the '3
World'ist Modern Revisionists
Who Stole State Power!**

**Death to Modern Revisionism,
Trotskyism and All Kinds of
Opportunism!**

**Death to Imperialism,
Social-Imperialism and
All Reaction!**

**Victory Will Belong to Marxism-
Leninism, Victory Will Belong
To the International Proletariat,
Victory Will Belong to the
Oppressed Peoples of
the World!**

the Central Committee of
**THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF
TURKEY/MARXIST-LENINIST**

September 9, 1979

Lenin . . .

Continued from page 20

social-chauvinist, publicly praised their actions. Many other Bolshevik emigre groups were initially disoriented, as capitulation was the order of the day in most European socialist circles.

In reply to Lenin's original draft theses on the war which he circulated in September, 1914, Karpinsky, writing for a group of "rank and file" Bolsheviks in Switzerland, argued that "we are inclined to consider the events as a temporary capitulation before opportunism in this question, a capitulation which can be explained by an exceptional intricacy, confusion, acuteness, and enormity of circumstances. . . ." This misjudging of the strength of opportunism was no doubt widespread among the Bolsheviks, as well as among left-wing groups in other countries. It was particularly shocking to them that Karl Kautsky, the revered leader of the German Social-Democratic Party, who had led the struggle in the Second International against Bernstein's open revisionism, was defending the treacherous conduct of the socialist ministers. Many thought Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were acting prematurely in pronouncing the old International dead.

There was also a certain amount of confusion and disorientation among the ranks of party workers inside Russia. The line of "revolutionary defeatism" was a particularly sharp question, particularly in the face of charges that the Bolsheviks were working for the victory of Germany. *Sotsial-Demokrat* No. 51 in February 1916 noted that the Bolshevik organization in Moscow adopted the 1914 war theses with the exception of the paragraph dealing with the defeat of one's own country in the war.

This inner-party struggle among the Bolsheviks at times got quite sharp in these first months of the war. At the Conference of RSDLP Groups Abroad (which was in fact a general conference of the Party, since a Party congress couldn't be held during the war) held in Berne from Feb. 27—March 4, 1915, several of the Bolshevik groups from France opposed the line of revolutionary defeatism and advanced their own slogan "fight for peace." In addition, Bukharin raised opposition from the "left" to the resolutions supporting the right of nations to self-determination and democratic demands in general, claiming they were contrary to socialist revolution. Both of these were to become important and critical questions, both in Russia and internationally, in developing a proletarian internationalist line

during the course of the war.

Despite this internal struggle and heavy repression (in fact, a large part of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee, along with the Bolshevik Duma deputies, were arrested in November 1914 while they were holding a meeting to discuss the theses on the war), the Bolshevik Party survived this stiff test with a minimum of defections, holding aloft the revolutionary banner of proletarian internationalism among the masses in Russia—and also providing inspiration to left-wing socialists in other countries.

When war was declared, a generally correct position was taken by revolutionary forces in a number of other countries. Lenin pointed to the Dutch Tribunists (led by Gorter and Pannekoek), the Bulgarian "Tesnyaki" (Narrows) and the Polish Social-Democrats (led by Radek and others) who had all split with opportunist party majorities before the war—as taking a firm stand against the imperialist war, and against their governments and "socialist" tradition. Lenin also pointed to the left opposition in the Swedish party led by Høglund, the internationalist wing of the British Socialist Party, and revolutionary elements within the Swiss and Italian parties.*

Lenin paid close attention to the ranks of the German Social-Democratic Party, for this had been the biggest and most influential party in the Second International. Furthermore, as Lenin commented in 1915, "Of all the big European parties, it is in the German party that a loud voice of protest was first raised by comrades who have remained loyal to the banner of socialism." In October, the German left wing, especially represented at that time by Franz Mehring, Karl Liebknecht, and Rosa Luxemburg, launched a public protest against the capitulation of the party majority to the government. In December, Liebknecht broke party discipline and voted against war credits. Within several months, the German leftists started producing illegal revolutionary manifestos in the face of the military censorship. In early 1915, the Liebknecht pamphlet, "The Chief Enemy is in Our own Country," and the journals—*Lichtstrahlen* (edited by Julian Borchadt of the International Socialist Group) and *Die Internationale* (produced by Mehring, Luxemburg and others) appeared. In commenting later in 1915 on the state of affairs in the German left, Lenin wrote that, "the German Lefts are still in a state of ferment, that considerable regroupings still await them, and that within them some elements are more resolute and others

less resolute."¹⁶ This was certainly true, in large degree, of the Bolsheviks themselves and the ranks of the left-wing internationalists in all countries as they were put to the test during these years.

At this time, Lenin estimated that "about nine-tenths of [the proletariat's] former leaders have gone over to the bourgeoisie" This was no exaggeration; it was a criminal and bleak situation. There was no international organization of left-wing forces ready made, though some of them knew of each other from the congresses of the Second International. This situation called for a serious struggle to be waged on all the major questions confronting the international socialist movement and clear lines of demarcation drawn to separate the revolutionary from the opportunist wings of Social-Democracy. This is what Lenin chiefly set out to do in late 1914 and 1915.

In the first nine months of 1915, Lenin wrote two major works and a number of important articles expanding on the Bolsheviks' original line on the war and the tasks of revolutionary social-democrats (communists). In these articles, especially *Socialism and War* (written together with Zinoviev) and *The Collapse of the Second International*, Lenin delved deeper into the key questions for revolutionary Marxists.

Lenin's starting point was determining the class character of the war which had broken out and what politics the war was continuing. In direct opposition to opportunist "socialists" who claimed that their governments were waging just wars of "national defense," Lenin demonstrated how the European war that had broken out was a continuation of the political and economic rivalries of the major imperialist powers that had developed and intensified as capitalism had reached its final stage of imperialism. Lenin's thoroughgoing analysis of imperialism was essential for unmasking the social-chauvinists of all stripes who were using the experience of the progressive wars waged against feudalism to form national bourgeois states in Europe in the 19th century—that is, in a pre-imperialist era—and even statements that Marx and Engels made in reference to those wars, to justify their rallying to the national flag and "defense of the fatherland." Lenin labelled this opportunism and rank sophistry, "the method of clutching at the outward similarity of instances, without considering the nexus between events."

In these works, Lenin stripped away

* In December 1914 the Italian party expelled a group of renegades (among them Benito Mussolini) for supporting the bour-

geoisie's imperialist policies and urging Italy's entry into the war.

every rationalization used by socialists for capitulation to their bourgeoisie. When Lenin emphasized that *all* the imperialist powers were predatory and rapacious and none of them were the "main evil," he was taking aim at the French and Russian social-chauvinists who argued that "German militarism" under Wilhelm II posed the biggest threat to "European democracy." He was also targeting the German opportunists who argued that "tsarist barbarism" was the main enemy of the European proletariat. One feature the social-chauvinists of all the European countries had in common was their refusal to systematically expose the predatory, imperialist nature of their own bourgeoisie, and to declare war on it. As Lenin summed up, the working class movement "will remain true to itself only if it joins neither one nor the other imperialist bourgeoisie, only if it says that the two sides are equally bad, and if it wishes the defeat of the imperialist bourgeoisie in every country."¹⁷

This principle was particularly important because there was a great deal of confusion and many pseudo-Marxist arguments were being advanced in Russia and internationally around this question of the defeat of one's own bourgeoisie. Some, like the Russian Menshevik Potresov, argued that the main question for social democrats was determining which countries' victory would be "more desirable" for the proletariat on an international scale. Others, like Trotsky (and even Rosa Luxemburg in the Junius pamphlet), came out with a line of "neither victory nor defeat" for their own country. For Lenin, this question concentrated the attitude taken by revolutionaries to their own bourgeoisies in the imperialist powers. He argued that the masses had to be trained to view their own bourgeoisie's military reverses as a *good thing*, because they weaken its rule and *facilitate its overthrow*. Lenin stressed that a wrong line on the defeat of one's own government would sooner or later paralyze *any* revolutionary anti-war work, for this in itself would weaken the bourgeoisie in wartime.

While Lenin continued to polemicize against the right-wing opportunists such as Plekhanov, Vandervelde, and Sudekum (a notorious German social-imperialist) it was becoming much more necessary to unmask the centrists—Kautsky and Hasse in Germany, Longuet and Pressmanne in France, etc. While they professed their opposition to the war (in Germany they started abstaining from voting for war credits in 1915 as anti-war sentiments spread among the masses), the centrists attempted to theoretically justify the traitorous conduct of their party majorities, as well as

to justify their own refusal to mobilize the masses in revolutionary struggle. As Lenin repeatedly emphasized, the "Marxist" arguments employed by Kautsky and Co. were more dangerous than open social-patriotism because they were aimed at reconciling the workers to the leaders who had openly betrayed them, thus preventing them from breaking away from the opportunist parties of the Second International.

In October 1914, Kautsky made the infamous argument that, "It is the right and duty of everyone to defend his fatherland; true internationalism consists in this right being recognized for the socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation."¹⁸ This was just one of the most transparent of Kautsky's attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable and to justify opportunism. But Kautsky, as opposed to the crude social-patriots, attempted to develop more systematic "Marxist" theoretical arguments that could be used to justify the *Burg Frieden* ("civil peace") declared by the socialist leaders during the war. Among these was the theory of "ultra-imperialism" (about which more below).

Another subterfuge employed by Kautsky was to claim that "the extreme Lefts" in Germany were calling for "the immediate achievement of socialism" in response to the war. He commented that "this seems very radical, but it can only serve to drive into the camp of imperialism, any one who does not believe in the immediate practical achievement of socialism." Lenin replied that Kautsky, like the Russian Mensheviks and other opportunists who leveled the same accusations of "adventurism" and "anarchism" against the Lefts in their countries, knew very well what the left-wing was calling for—not immediate socialism, but immediate propaganda and agitation to mobilize the masses in revolutionary struggle against their own bourgeoisie.

When Kautsky and other opportunists tried to justify their inactivity because their hopes of revolution had "proved illusory" (which they blamed on the masses' chauvinism), Lenin labelled this a "police-renegade attitude towards revolution" in *The Collapse of the Second International*. In response, Lenin explained that revolution is only possible with the development of a revolutionary situation—which he linked directly to objective changes (a severe crisis affecting all classes) and to subjective changes (the ability of the proletariat to take revolutionary action). Already in 1915, Lenin pointed out, even the millionaires' newspapers in Europe were admitting that the war had greatly increased the suffering of the masses and was leading to a change in their sen-

timents. Thus, in response to these opportunist "socialists" who loudly claimed that nothing could be done because there was no immediate prospect for revolution, Lenin noted that a revolutionary situation was definitely on the horizon in many European countries. But at the same time he said of the developing situation:

"Will it lead to revolution? This is something we do not know, and nobody can know. The answer can be provided only by the *experience* gained during the development of revolutionary sentiment and the transition to revolutionary action by the advanced class, the proletariat. There can be no talk in this connection about 'illusions' or their repudiation, since no socialist has ever guaranteed that this war (and not the next one), that today's revolutionary situation (and not tomorrow's) will produce a revolution."

Lenin then concluded:

"What we are discussing is the indisputable and fundamental duty of all socialists—that of revealing to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, explaining its scope and depth, arousing the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary determination, helping it to go over to revolutionary action, and forming, for that purpose, organizations suited to the revolutionary situation."¹⁹

And this is the heart of the question that Lenin drew out to distinguish genuine Marxists from open defencists and their opportunist cousins like Kautsky who developed a thousand and one "Marxist" justifications for not rousing the masses to take revolutionary action during the war and for refusing to support those in other countries who were carrying on the same work.

Lenin then turned to the question of restoring the Second International. Already there was talk of a "mutual amnesty" when the war ended—as he said, of agreeing that during peacetime we live as brothers, but during wartime we call on the French workers to exterminate the German workers and vice versa. Lenin repeatedly underscored the great danger this would represent to the working class and socialist cause worldwide if the opportunists' plans for restoring the International were to succeed.

He made an important point here—that the bourgeoisie actually *needed* parties like the one in Germany for the purpose of reining in the workers and preventing them from taking any independent revolutionary action. After reading a rare truthful article by an avowed social-patriot in a German newspaper, (who argued that it would be *bad* for the bourgeoisie if the German Social-

Democratic Party were to swing to the right—because in that case the workers would desert it), Lenin commented:

“The opportunists (and the bourgeoisie) need the party as it is today, a party combining the Right and the Left wings and officially represented by Kautsky, who will be able to reconcile everything in the world by means of smooth, thoroughly Marxist phrases. In words, socialism and the revolutionary spirit for the people, the masses, the workers; in deed, Sudekumism, adhering to the bourgeoisie in any grave crisis.”²⁰

The conclusion Lenin arrived at was

“We are firmly convinced that, in the present state of affairs, a split with the opportunists and chauvinists is the prime duty of revolutionaries . . .”²¹

Moreover, Lenin emphasized that this political trend “will not die unless it is ‘killed’, i.e. overthrown, deprived of all influence on the socialist proletariat.”²² To charges that the Bolsheviks, the German Lefts and others were trying to split the ranks of the working class, Lenin replied that

“today, unity with the opportunists actually means subordinating the working class to their own national bourgeoisies, and an alliance with the latter for the purpose of oppressing other nations and of fighting for dominant nation privileges; it means *splitting* the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.”²³

This was what the Bolshevik Party, and the other left-wing groups and elements who rallied together during the war, upheld—the fundamental interests of the masses of the workers in all countries as against the imperialist bourgeoisie of all countries. For them, the Third International could only be built on that kind of revolutionary basis, and the struggle to draw sharp lines of demarcation and rally the class-conscious forces was the necessary precondition for this.

At this time, Lenin left open how rapidly and in what forms this split would occur in other countries; but he emphasized that this separation was necessary and inevitable, and that “the entire policy of the workers’ parties must be directed from this standpoint.”²⁴

Writing in the fall of 1915 in *Socialism and War*, on the eve of the first Zimmerwald Conference, Lenin laid out in no uncertain terms what he saw as the chief tasks of revolutionaries at that time:

“To rally these Marxist elements, however small their numbers may be at the outset: to reanimate, in their names, the now forgotten ideals of genuine socialism, and to call upon the workers

of all lands to break with the chauvinists and rally about the old banner of Marxism—such is the task of the day.”²⁵

III. The Bolsheviks and Zimmerwald

In late 1914 and early 1915, Lenin began to actively search out and rally the numerically small left-wing elements in other countries. These efforts were made particularly difficult and hazardous by the wartime situation. In the main belligerent countries, it was a treasonable offense to meet with “enemy socialists.” While the patriotic socialist leaders who had deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie were wined and dined, the revolutionary Social Democrats were hounded, imprisoned and driven underground by the political police. Still, by utilizing all potential forms that were at hand to promote revolutionary Marxism and internationalism, these difficulties were overcome step by step, especially through the untiring efforts of Lenin and the Bureau of the Bolshevik Central Committee Abroad. From Switzerland, where they were based until early 1917, the Bolsheviks were well situated to keep abreast of war developments and trends among socialists in most of the belligerent and neutral countries.

In his article “What Next?” (January 1915), Lenin noted that the European socialist movement generally went through three stages in the wake of the tremendous crisis brought on by the war. He pointed out that it first resulted in enormous *confusion*; secondly, it led to a series of *new groupings* taking shape among representatives of various currents; and finally it raised the question of what changes in the *foundations* of socialist policy were demanded by the crisis.

In most countries, the left-wing elements were still getting reorganized and were just beginning to speak out and formulate their positions on the key questions. This made it all the more critical for the Bolsheviks to propagate their theses on the war and the situation in international social democracy as widely as possible. In the course of struggling to win over honest elements that were opposed to the war and to social-chauvinism over to a revolutionary internationalist line, the Bolsheviks paid close attention to the task of uniting a solid core of left-wing elements—both politically and organizationally—and moving as rapidly as possible towards the formation of a new International.

At the end of September 1914, the Bolshevik Central Committee Abroad sent a copy of its draft theses on the war to the joint meeting of the Swiss and

Italian socialist parties, who were influenced somewhat by the Bolsheviks’ clear analysis of the imperialist nature of the war that had broken out. The same month, a Bolshevik representative presented the Bolsheviks’ theses on the war to the Swedish Social-Democratic Party’s congress, and made contact with left-wing forces in the Swedish party.

In November 1914, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Inessa Armand and other leading Bolshevik women sent a letter to Clara Zetkin (who was the secretary of the International Socialist Women’s Conference) proposing the calling of an unofficial women’s conference to unite the left-wing forces. A month later, this letter (which contained the chief points of the Bolsheviks’ theses on the war and urged women of all countries “to draw the working women into the struggle against every kind of civil peace and in favor of a war against war”), was forwarded as a circular to left-wing and anti-war women’s organizations throughout Europe.

Though Zetkin and the organizers of the conference invited a much broader section of women, including several bourgeois pacifists from Britain, the Bolsheviks sent a delegation led by Krupskaya and Armand to the conference, which was held in Berne, Switzerland in late March 1915. In the course of the discussion, a sharp struggle broke out. In opposition to the clearly worded Bolsheviks’ resolutions, the delegates from the other countries—including Zetkin and the left-wing German women—voted for a “middle of the road” resolution that, while condemning the “defense of the fatherland,” called on the masses to “fight for peace.” The Bolshevik delegation, alone, voted against it.

In *Sotsial-Demokrat* #42 (June 1, 1915), Lenin reproached the left-wing German delegates for failing to take advantage of the first international socialist conference convened since the outbreak of the war to advance revolutionary tactics and tell the workers the truth about the treachery of the majority socialists. Lenin concluded this article by stating that the Bolsheviks preferred to remain in isolation for the time being “rather than join a bloc of this kind.”

“We know that there are many who would follow this path and confine themselves to several Left phrases. However, this road is not for us. We have followed a *different* road, and will go on following it . . .”²⁶

It was with this orientation of seeking unity on a principled basis that the Bolsheviks continued to wage a vigorous political struggle for the next few months, including at the International

this preliminary meeting, he reported that "it is clear that the so-called conference of the Lefts will in reality be a conference of 'conciliators' of the 'Center' with social chauvinists. It is clear that no one cares seriously about the calling of the so-called Left conference."²⁹

Nevertheless, during the summer of 1915, Lenin strained every effort to rally the left-wing elements in a number of countries to attend the conference. He fired off letters to Kollontai in Norway to get in touch with the Scandinavian internationalists and to Inessa Armand in Paris to contact French opposition groups. In spite of the obvious reluctance of the conference organizers to actively involve the Lefts in the conference, this was a favorable opportunity for the internationalists to join forces, and together wage a struggle for their revolutionary line at the conference as a whole.

In letters to Kollontai in preparation for Zimmerwald in July, Lenin wrote: "A common international demonstration of the Left Marxists would be devilishly important! (A declaration of principles is the main thing, and for the time being the only possible thing!)" Several weeks later, Lenin emphasized to Kollontai that "the crux of the struggle will be: whether or not to declare a ruthless (up-to-a-breach) struggle against *opportunism* = 'social chauvinism.'"³⁰

By the middle of August, Lenin and the Bolshevik CC Abroad had drawn up a draft manifesto and resolution which they circulated among left-wing forces in Europe in order to develop the greatest possible unity among them in preparation for the conference. Two days before this historic conference opened, Lenin arrived in Berne and chaired a meeting of left-wing delegates who worked up a draft resolution and draft manifesto of the *Zimmerwald Left*. The eight founding members of the Zimmerwald Left were Lenin and Zinoviev from the Bolshevik CC, Karl Radek of the "Regional Presidium" of the Social-Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania, Berzin of the Latvian Social Democrats, Hogland and Nerman from the Swedish and Norwegian Social-Democratic Lefts, Borchardt from the German International Socialist Party (which took a clear stand against Kautsky & Co., but had few ties with the masses and later disbanded) and Fritz Platten from the Left-wing of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party.

From the very beginning of the Zimmerwald conference, three distinct groups emerged among the 38 delegates from eleven countries. The right-wing of the conference (which Lenin characterized as "semi-Kautskyite") amounted

to 19 or 20 delegates—including most of the German delegation, the French, some of the Italians and Poles, and the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. They were only interested in a general appeal to launch a "struggle for peace," and they opposed an open break with the Second International. In the official report to the press it later made, the Zimmerwald leadership stated, "In no way should the suspicion be aroused that this Conference wished to bring about a breach and to form a new International."³¹

Between the right-wing majority and the left-wing group of eight of which Lenin was the most prominent member, there was a smaller "center" group of five or six, among whom were Grimm of the Swiss party, Trotsky from *Nashe Slovo*, and Roland-Holst from Holland, who all supported much of the program of the Zimmerwald Left but refused to call for an open break with the Second International's leaders and their conciliators. They played the role of attempting to unite the right-wing and the lefts at the Zimmerwald Conference.

The conference opened on a high note with the reading of a letter from Karl Liebknecht, who had been drafted in February 1915 and had been subsequently furloughed and forbidden to leave Berlin. Liebknecht wrote to the conference:

"You have two serious tasks, a hard task of grim duty and a sacred one of enthusiasm and hope.

"Settlement of accounts, inexorable settlement of accounts with the deserters and turncoats of the International in Germany, England, France, and elsewhere, is imperative.

"It is our duty to promote mutual understanding, encouragement, and inspiration among those who remain true to the flag, who are determined not to give way one inch before international imperialism, even if they fall victims to it, and to create order in the ranks of those who are determined to hold out...

"Civil war, not civil peace! Exercise international solidarity for the proletariat against pseudo-national, pseudo-patriotic class harmony, and for international class war for peace, for the socialist revolution...

"The new International will arise; it can arise on the ruins of the old, on a new and firmer foundation. Today, friends, socialists from all countries, you have to lay the foundation stone for the future structure."³²

Liebknecht's message ended with the call, "Proletarians of all countries—reunite!"

The conference applauded loudly, though the great majority of the delegates were actually opposed to his

line. The German delegation appeared to be openly distressed at the place of prominence given to Liebknecht at the conference.

After hearing reports on the situation in various countries, the conference received a joint declaration of the French and German delegations (except Borchardt) titled, "This War Is Not Our War!" In it they pledged to "repudiate the policy of civil peace" and launch a "peace movement" that would be "strong enough to force our governments to stop this slaughter."³³

Then the Left Zimmerwald group submitted its draft of a manifesto (in two parts) to the workers of all countries. The war was characterized as a predatory, imperialist war; it pointed to the treachery of the leaders of the Second International and called for a new International; over the heads of the leaders, a call was issued to the masses to compel the socialist deputies in parliament to vote against war credits and to recall socialist ministers from the bourgeois governments; and a call was issued to utilize every movement of the people produced by the war to fight for the overthrow of their own governments under the slogan of "civil war, not civil peace, between the classes."³⁴

This draft manifesto was rejected by the majority of the conference, most of whom tried to hide behind the official agenda of the conference to avoid discussing specific tactics to be employed against the belligerent governments and to avoid discussing Liebknecht's call for a new International to be built on the "debris" of the Second International. However, in the course of the debate, the delegation of German centrists headed by Ledebour was forced to explain why it was refusing to vote against war credits in the Reichstag. Ledebour and Co. justified abstaining from voting against the credits in order to prevent a split in the parliamentary group and the party as a whole, saying that only "patience" was necessary for the "Lefts" to obtain a majority in the Party. By violating party discipline and voting against credits, Liebknecht was accused of "helping the Rights." Later in the conference, Ledebour and most of the German delegation delivered an ultimatum that they would refuse to sign the Zimmerwald manifesto if there was a demand in it for voting against war credits.

The Zimmerwald Manifesto did not speak directly about the treachery of the parties of the Second International, nor did it call for a revolutionary struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie which had already drafted and sent millions of soldiers to die in the trenches. Still, due to the strong showing made by the left wing, it was undoubtedly further

to the left than the Zimmerwald leaders had originally planned. (The final manifesto most closely followed the draft submitted by Trotsky for the "center" group.) While the Bolsheviks and other members of the Zimmerwald Left signed the manifesto, they attached their own independent statement to it which summarized its shortcomings.

Furthermore, while the Zimmerwald conference elected an International Socialist Committee (chaired by Robert Grimm and composed of centrists) to publicly represent the decisions of the conference, the left wing, before leaving Zimmerwald, organized its own Bureau of the Zimmerwald Left, which was composed of Lenin, Zinoviev and Radek. The Bureau immediately published the declarations of the Zimmerwald Left in *Internationales Flugblatt*, No. 1, which appeared on November 1, 1915. Along with the publication of these declarations in several other languages during the war, the Zimmerwald Left also initiated the publication of the German-language journal *Vorbote* (the Herald) in the early part of 1916.

In his article "The First Step," Lenin evaluated the struggle that had taken place at the conference and its results. Overall, he summed it up a success, with important shortcomings. First, he considered that the unity built among the left internationalists was "one of the most important facts and greatest achievements of the conference."³⁵ The conference as a whole did objectively represent a step forward in developing international opposition to the imperialist war and in breaking with the open traitors of the Second International.

Lenin also concluded that the Bolshevik Party and the Zimmerwald Left had been correct in signing the Zimmerwald Manifesto—in spite of its serious shortcomings—since it represented "a step forward towards a real struggle against opportunism, towards a rupture with it." "It would be sectarianism to refuse to take this step forward together with the minority of German, French, Swedish, Norwegian, and Swiss socialists, when we retain full freedom and full opportunity to criticize its inconsistency and to work for greater things."³⁶

Thus, Lenin made it clear that this could not have been done without the Zimmerwald Left's ability to openly express its views and disagreements with the centrist majority and maintain its organizational independence within the Zimmerwald movement. Lenin had no illusions about the right-wing Zimmerwald majority, but he emphasized what was *developing*, that social-chauvinism and Kautskyism on the one hand, and internationalism and revolutionary Marx-

ism on the other, were dividing more and more deeply.

In conclusion, Lenin, writing at the end of 1915, pointed to the great advances that had been made in uniting the revolutionary left-wing forces internationally and in developing the struggle against the imperialists and their "socialist" servants—both politically and organizationally. He pointed out that in September 1914, the Bolsheviks' Central Committee Manifesto "seemed almost isolated", but that a year later "we rallied in a whole group of the international Left wing" that had already begun to play an independent political role within the Zimmerwald movement.

IV. Zimmerwald to Kienthal

In the second half of 1915 there was a general shift among the masses of people in the main belligerent countries towards disillusionment with and outright opposition to the war. The chauvinist intoxication built up in the first few months of war had begun to wear off. Italy and Bulgaria had entered the war, and military operations had spread into the Middle East and Asia. As casualties mounted and inflation and shortages of necessities grew more severe, a growing section of the masses began to understand that this was a war of plunder in which millions of workers were being sent off to slaughter each other to enrich their capitalist masters. In defiance of martial law, street demonstrations broke out in Germany. The first political strikes in Russia began in April 1915; five months later, 113,000 workers took part in strikes in one month alone.

The Bolsheviks and left-wing forces in other countries stepped up their revolutionary agitation, extending their influence among the masses and among rank and file socialists who were coming into opposition to their traitorous party leaders. The Bolsheviks and the Zimmerwald Left rallied new forces who had become convinced that nothing could bring this criminal slaughter of millions to an end—and prevent such wars in the future—short of launching revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism itself.

The forces of the left wing internationally were bolstered by the formation in January 1916 of the Spartakusbund (Spartacist League), under the leadership of Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Mehring, Tzsyka and others, which rallied the main group of left-wing Social Democrats in Germany. It began to publish and circulate a series of *Political Letters* which were signed "Spartacus"—after the famous leader of an uprising of Roman slaves—and set out to organize anti-war strikes, demonstrations and

revolutionary struggle among the masses. The theses that the Spartakusbund adopted in January 1916 placed them in the camp of the Zimmerwald Left on most questions. However, they did not openly advocate civil war, and were not yet ready to make a final organizational break with the centrist section of the German Social-Democratic Party.

In Russia, the Bolshevik Party boldly developed the revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war and Tsarism, reconstituting its organizations among the workers, and setting up illegal revolutionary nuclei in the army and navy, at the front and in the rear. Already there were reports of fraternization and of whole units of troops refusing to fight, as the poorly trained and equipped Tsarist army sustained defeat after defeat, giving up Poland and part of the Baltic provinces to the German forces by 1916. Faced with these military reverses and fresh outbreaks of strikes and mass unrest, the Russian bourgeoisie set up War Industries Committees in July 1915, with seats set aside for "workers' representatives," to enlist the workers in the war effort. The Bolsheviks led a successful boycott of these committees. In Petrograd, the main industrial center in Russia, the Bolshevik workers who ran on the program of opposing the tsarist regime and boycotting these war committees received the votes of more than 100,000 workers, out-distancing the defencists and Mensheviks combined. The Bolsheviks' use of these elections did much to prepare the Petrograd workers politically for the decisive battles that lay ahead.

At the same time, the position of the Kautskyite center in the parties of the belligerent and neutral countries also grew in strength. The centrist leaders had to take a more openly anti-war stand in order to keep their influence over the increasingly war-weary masses, but they continued to refuse to take revolutionary action and to split with the openly social-chauvinist wings of their parties.

The most striking example of this shift was in Germany. Only three months earlier, Ledebour, Haase and other German delegates at Zimmerwald had adamantly refused to bind themselves into voting against war credits. Now, in December 1915, they were part of a group of 20 deputies who defied the unanimity principle of the party leadership and voted against credits in the Reichstag. According to their barely disguised chauvinist reasoning, due to the fact that "Germany's borders were secure" (the Triple Alliance had a favorable military position at that time) it was thus correct to vote against credits. In Britain, the most significant development was an open split in the

British Socialist Party, with the openly pro-war Hyndman group being expelled by a slight majority.

In response to these developments, Lenin devoted his attention all the more to the unmasking and exposure of the Kautskyite center. The line of the Bolsheviks and the left Zimmerwaldists was to *utilize* the masses' striving for peace to explain that the peace proposals that the centrists were advancing were nothing but the utmost hypocrisy, for all they amounted to were talk of renouncing annexations in general (without focusing on, even referring to, their *own* countries' annexations), and calling for disarmament—when the only correct position was to call for turning the guns around. More than that, Lenin and the Bolsheviks emphasized that the imperialist powers themselves could not grant a democratic peace (a peace without annexations, grabbing up colonies, etc.), for even a negotiated peace would only be a new imperialist division of the spoils of war. In "The Peace Programme" (March 1916), Lenin wrote that "Whoever promises the nations a democratic peace, without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it—a struggle now, during the war—is deceiving the proletariat."³⁷

This was the main theme of the proposals drawn up by the Central Committee of the RSDLP and circulated among the Zimmerwald Left groups, in preparation for the second Zimmerwald conference, held at Kienthal, Switzerland in April 1916. The Bolsheviks' Central Committee statement made it clear that this "cheap peace programme... reinforces the subjection of the working class to the bourgeoisie by 'reconciling' the workers, who are beginning to develop a revolutionary struggle, with their chauvinist leaders... The fact that this 'Kautskyite' policy is clothed in plausible phrases and that it is being conducted not only in Germany but in all countries, makes it all the more dangerous for the proletariat."³⁸

It was during this period that Lenin wrote his work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. He had been preparing to write such a pamphlet for some time, in order to provide an exposition and explanation of the development of imperialism. A correct understanding of this subject had become of pressing importance due to the outbreak of the war and the revolutionary tasks and possibilities of the proletariat in this new era. As Lenin explained, he wrote *Imperialism* in order to make clear

"...the fundamental economic question, viz., the question of the economic essence of imperialism, for unless this is studied, it will be impossible to under-

stand and appraise modern war and modern politics."

It was necessary to show the economic base of the fact that imperialism means war and that

"Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics."³⁹

Thus the imperialist peace which would follow the war would be inextricably linked to another war, unless proletarian revolution succeeded in putting an end to the whole imperialist system. It was of great necessity to demonstrate these facts because precisely the opposite expectation—of the possibility of a democratic and lasting peace—was being energetically fostered by the opportunists.

To combat these ideas, it was particularly important to refute Kautsky's pseudo-Marxist theory of "ultra-imperialism." Soon after the war broke out, Kautsky advanced the theory that imperialism was "a policy preferred by finance capital" and hypothesized that the major imperialist powers were being driven increasingly towards a "phase of joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital... a phase when wars shall cease under capitalism." Lenin explained that this theory of "ultra-imperialism" was directed at obscuring and glossing over the enormous *intensification* of all the fundamental contradictions of capitalism with the development of imperialism—and thus denying the inevitability of inter-imperialist wars, revolutionary crises, and the conclusion that "imperialism is the eve of socialist revolution."

Lenin drove the point home that Kautsky's theory and practice were closely related, that his "ultra-imperialism" provided a Marxist-sounding theoretical cover for the social-chauvinism and class collaboration being practiced by the leaders of the Second International. After all, if the imperialists themselves are capable both of bringing the war to a "democratic" conclusion and solving the crisis which the war had intensified without being overthrown by the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, why not "fight for peace," and wait until the war ends, and then resume the "struggle for socialism," when the socialists of all countries can forgive each others' sins and reunite in the old International?

Amidst this background of rapidly spreading anti-war sentiments among the masses and the revolutionary work

and ideological struggle being carried forward by the Bolsheviks and other left-wing forces, the Second Zimmerwald Conference was set for Kienthal, Switzerland in April 1916. The Kienthal conference had actually been officially called in February by an expanded meeting of the International Socialist Committee established by the Zimmerwald conference. There was general agreement that the first conference had failed to map out a concrete course of action to bring about an end to the war.

At this meeting, the Zimmerwald left forces were able to put out a circular letter that went much further than the Zimmerwald resolutions in denouncing socialists who had voted for war credits or upheld civil peace. Still, Zinoviev's report on the meeting to other Bolsheviks abroad emphasized that there was intense struggle to come. "The Right Center of Zimmerwald is mobilizing its forces. We should mobilize ours."⁴⁰

Immediately, the Bolsheviks drew up their proposals to be submitted to the Second Zimmerwald Conference and circulated them in advance for discussion among Bolshevik organizations and left-wing elements abroad. These were to be the basis for the struggle waged by the left wing at Kienthal.

Of the forty-three delegates from ten countries, the left wing had a stable core of 12 (Lenin, Zinoviev and Armand for the Bolsheviks; three Poles, led by Radek; the Serbian deputy Kaclerovic; Serrati [editor of *Avanti*] from Italy; Frolich from the Bremen Radical group in Germany; and three Swiss, led by Platten). A number of left-wing elements were not able to attend, including those from Holland, Latvia, Scandinavia and Bulgaria. In addition to this core, there were at least seven other delegates, including the French syndicalist Guillbeaux and Munzenberg from the Socialist Youth International who were prepared to support the Left at times. This meant on some issues that they obtained nearly half the votes.

During the course of the Kienthal conference, the left wing held several meetings to discuss the Bolsheviks' proposals. The Zimmerwald Left's draft resolution at Kienthal on the question of peace was quite similar to the Bolsheviks' position except that it avoided a definite statement on the question of self-determination of nations and did not include any mention of revolutionary defeatism, both of which continued to be subjects of heated debate within the Zimmerwald Left. This resolution was basically adopted by the conference as a whole, condemning the peace programmes being advanced as a deception of the masses, but stopping short of explicitly condemning the

centrists and calling for civil war.

But even more controversial than the peace question, on which the right-wing majority had basically given in to the Lefts in order to avoid a breakdown of the conference (and because they knew they could vote for the resolution without carrying it out), was the struggle over reconvening the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) of the Second International. Not long after the first Zimmerwald Conference, the Zimmerwaldist leadership (which was dominated by centrists from the Swiss and Italian parties) had promised to dissolve itself as soon as the old International's Bureau started meeting again. Though all the ISB's efforts to get the French and British social-chauvinists to meet with their German counterparts continued to meet with failure, the right-wing majority at Kienthal continued to demand the right to jump back on board the sinking ship of the Second International. As opposed to the Left's demand for an immediate split with the social-chauvinists, the Zimmerwald majority proposed to call for the immediate convocation of the International Socialist Bureau, where the Zimmerwaldists would supposedly battle it out with the pro-war socialists for control of the Second International.

According to one report on the debate, the conference majority made two main arguments—the “principled” and the “practical” approach. Axelrod for the Russian Mensheviks admitted that the socialist leaders had indeed allowed patriotic sentiments to warp their socialist faith, but he insisted that if a split were avoided, with pressure from the masses, “their leaders” could be brought back to international socialist principles. “Not a single method of cure should remain untried when surgery is finally resorted to,” Axelrod appealed.⁴¹ The “practical” approach was advanced by the Italian and German centrists who argued that with the growing strength of the Zimmerwald movement, it would only be a matter of time before they could outvote the social-chauvinists on the International Socialist Bureau.

To all this the Bolsheviks and the Lefts replied that this was not the question at all. Instead there were two irreconcilable camps and programs that made it an urgent necessity to brand the old International as political detachments of the imperialist bourgeoisie and to call for a new proletarian International.

Furthermore, Lenin emphasized that those who were refusing to break with the “International Social-Chauvinist Bureau” as he called it, were not carrying out the actual work of class struggle against their own bourgeoisie that was called for in the Zimmerwald Manifesto

they had themselves signed, while the “actual work in the spirit of Zimmerwald” (and here Lenin pointed to the work of the left wing in Germany in carrying on revolutionary agitation against the will of the party majority) “is bound up throughout the world with the split that is becoming deeper and wider.”⁴²

Later in 1916, Lenin wrote an open letter to a French centrist, B. Souvarine, who had asked, “What useful purpose could now be served by the foundation of a new International? Its activity would be blighted by sterility, for numerically it would be very weak.” Lenin replied that the activities of the French centrists and Kautsky and Ledebour in Germany were *already* blighted by sterility, “precisely because they are afraid of a split.” Referring once more to the revolutionary example set by the two left deputies in the German Reichstag, Liebknecht and Ruhle, Lenin explained that

“their activity is of vast importance for the proletariat, *despite their numerical weakness* . . . [Though they were] only two against 108 . . . these two represent millions, the exploited mass, the overwhelming majority of the population, the future of mankind, the revolution that is mounting and maturing with every passing day. The 108, on the other hand, represent only the servile spirit of a handful of bourgeois flunkies within the proletariat.”⁴³

The Second Zimmerwald Conference represented a further step forward for the left-wing internationalists. The conference resolutions hit especially hard at social-pacifism. Kienthal had also been an advance over Zimmerwald by indicating more specifically the actual forms of class struggle—strikes, street demonstrations, fraternization—that were to be employed against the war and the bourgeois governments, thus further exposing the Zimmerwald right wing for not carrying out this program of “class struggle.” In addition, among the Zimmerwald parties and groups, the question of reviving the Second International vs. forming the Third International was further sharpened up.

Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks were quite clear that, in spite of these important steps forward, the majority of the parties at Kienthal were “fellow travelers” at best, and unity with them was conditional on their continued opposition to social-chauvinism. Thus, while the Bolsheviks continued to struggle within the Zimmerwald movement to win over wavering forces and to expose and isolate the right-wing majority, it was all the more critical to strengthen the forces of the left wing and unite them more firmly around a revolutionary Marxist line in order to lay the

basis for the formation of the Third International.

V. Struggle Among the Left-Wing Forces

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party paid a great deal of attention during this period to waging comradely but sharp political and ideological struggle around several key questions among the Zimmerwald Left and other internationalist forces. The sharpest among these were the right of self-determination of oppressed nations, revolutionary defeatism, the use of the disarmament slogan, and the strategy and tactics to be employed in the building of a new proletarian International. Within the ranks of the Zimmerwald Left, there were important differences of line on these and other questions that had to be resolved correctly in order to maintain a revolutionary course.

For example, though the groups making up the Zimmerwald Left all advocated revolutionary struggle to overthrow their own bourgeoisies during the war, only the Bolshevik Party actively propagated *revolutionary defeatism*, welcoming the military defeats and general weakening of their own ruling class in order to provide more favorable conditions for the proletariat to seize power. Among other revolutionaries, the argument was made repeatedly that this line would only open up the revolutionary forces to charges that they favored the victory of the other side. Thus, at this time, most of the left-wing forces were quite confused on this question, and as a rule held positions similar to that taken by the Spartakusbund in 1915—“both victory and defeat in the present war are equally fatal for the German people.”⁴⁴

It was only in 1917, when the Bolsheviks' revolutionary line and tactics were tested and proven correct in practice, that the prevailing confusion among the Lefts was cleared up on this critical question—which had everything to do with whether the proletariat and the masses of people in each country would be politically trained to take advantage of the crises caused by the war and the defeats suffered by their own bourgeoisie to advance their revolutionary struggle to the greatest degree possible.

At this time, Lenin paid a great deal of attention to the German revolutionaries, particularly to the Spartakusbund. The left wing in Germany occupied an important position due to the fact that Germany was one of the main belligerent countries and the German Social-Democratic Party had been by far the biggest and most influential party in the Second International. Every step forward taken by the German Lefts was an important blow to the imperialist bourgeoisie and the Second Interna-

tional.

The German Spartacus group had been much slower to break, both politically and organizationally, with the Kautskyite Center than the groups that formed the Zimmerwald Left. At the first Zimmerwald conference in late 1915, the *Internationale* representatives (as they were then known) voted at times with Ledebour and Co. against the left wing. Lenin commented directly on the theoretical and practical errors that the German Lefts were making, particularly in response to the "Junius pamphlet" written by Rosa Luxemburg in 1915. While welcoming this pamphlet as a new blow to the "ex-Social Democratic Party of Germany," Lenin criticized Luxemburg for not openly exposing the centrists and for attempting to replace the slogan of civil war with an eclectic "national programme." The Junius pamphlet called on the proletariat to fight for demands such as immediate arming of the people, a permanent parliament to allow the people to decide questions of war and peace, all in order to demonstrate that the proletariat can best defend the true interests of the fatherland. In response to Luxemburg's argument that "there is complete harmony between the interests of the country and the class interests of the proletarian International," Lenin demonstrated that in an imperialist country such as Germany, the proletariat had no national interests to defend, and that to raise demands suggesting a stage short of socialist revolution in an imperialist country could only lead to directing revolutionary program of waging civil war against the bourgeoisie.

In conclusion, Lenin pointed out that the errors of the Junius pamphlet reflected the fact that the German left as a whole was still operating in the "environment" of rotten German Social Democracy, and thus was hesitant to split with the party. Lenin noted that "a very great defect in revolutionary Marxism in Germany as a whole is its lack of a compact illegal organization that would systematically pursue its own line and educate the masses in the spirit of the new tasks"⁴⁵—which in turn reinforced the German left's tendencies towards vacillation on key political questions. Nevertheless, Lenin hailed the illegal revolutionary work that the German Lefts had started to carry out and expressed confidence that, in the course of struggle, they would correct these errors.

Another weakness of the Spartakusbund (and most likely a reason why it did not join the Zimmerwald Left) was that it tended to downplay the importance of the political struggle on the international level and the progress being made, largely through this struggle, in uniting the left-wing forces from a

number of countries. After the Kienthal conference, the Spartakusbund wrote that

"the participation in the May demonstration in Berlin (1916)... was more important than the dignified participation in the Second Zimmerwald Conference, and Karl Liebknecht in his quiet prison cell is doing more for the restoration of the International in all countries than ten yards of the Zimmerwald manifesto."⁴⁶

The resolution that the Spartakusbund submitted to Kienthal stated that the new International would rise "from below," that "it can be born only of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletarian masses in the most important capitalist countries."⁴⁷

During this same period, the Bolshevik Party worked resolutely to fan every spark of resistance against the war into conscious revolutionary struggle against the tsarist regime, but the Bolsheviks had a more dialectical and correct understanding that this struggle, in Russia and other countries, could not continue to advance *without* waging a ruthless struggle against international opportunism that still had a grip on millions of workers, and without uniting with other left-wing forces to carry out this task. Still, in 1916, when the Zimmerwald right-wing majority talked more militantly than ever about class struggle and socialism, but studiously avoided carrying out such a program in practice, there was much to be united with in the Spartakusbund's emphasis on revolutionary action.

Within the Zimmerwald Left, sharp struggle also broke out around upholding the right of all oppressed nations to self-determination. This question had been the subject of sharp disagreement between the Bolshevik Party and the Polish Social-Democrats (including Radek, Luxemburg and others)* all the way back to the RSDLP Second Congress in 1903. At Zimmerwald, the Polish Social-Democrats had indicated their opposition to the demand for the right to self-determination in a separate resolution. In this they were joined by the left-wing Dutch Tribunists, who refused to sign the Manifesto on this basis. At that time, in early 1916, an open debate was carried out in the pages of the journal *Vorbote*, the Zimmerwald Left's journal (only two issues of which appeared).

* Due to the repeated carving up of Poland by German and Russian imperialism, many Polish revolutionaries were at various times members of the social-democratic parties of Poland, Germany and Russia. (Thus, Luxemburg became a prominent member of the German Spartakusbund and Radek went on to join the Bolshevik Party.)

In this debate, Radek (under the name of Parabellum)—representing the position of the Polish and Dutch Social-Democrats—argued that raising the slogan of the right of self-determination for all oppressed nations in the era of imperialism was a concession to bourgeois nationalism and could only be an impediment to socialist revolution. This thinking was widespread among the German lefts as well. The *Internationale* group held the position that "national liberation wars are no longer possible in the era of unbridled imperialism."⁴⁸ In the Junius pamphlet, Luxemburg had argued that every national war against one imperialist power leads to the intervention of a rival great power, and thus every national war is turned into an imperialist war.

In his reply, Lenin laid bare the rightest essence of this "left"-sounding line. He demonstrated that national wars in certain parts of Europe and in the colonies are not only "possible" but are inevitable, progressive, and revolutionary, and that they were taking place right before Radek's and Luxemburg's eyes—in the Irish Rebellion of 1916, in the bourgeois-democratic revolutions that started before the war in China, Persia, and Mexico, and in the colonial rebellions that flared up during the war in Morocco, India, Indochina, etc. While the struggle over the question of the right of self-determination was not a new one, the importance of the question had become all the sharper with the outbreak of the world war and the collapse of the Second International into the swamp of social-chauvinism. Revolutionary Marxists had to base themselves particularly firmly on a line of opposition to the social-chauvinism of the imperialist great powers, who had gone to war precisely for the purpose of determining who would gain the right to plunder and oppress the nations that made up the vast majority of the world's population.

Lenin noted that the Polish and Dutch Social Democrats were arguing for this position in reaction to the misuse of the slogan of the right of self-determination by the opportunist socialists in the imperialist countries to justify the "defense" of their own fatherlands and the "liberation" of the nations annexed and oppressed by their *rivals'* bourgeoisies. But by discarding this slogan altogether, Lenin emphasized, the Polish and Dutch revolutionaries were in fact playing right into the hands of the social-chauvinists and making a serious theoretical error with counterrevolutionary consequences. In reference to Luxemburg's denial of the possibility of national war under imperialism, Lenin replied that this was "tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we

who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia etc. are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is 'impossible' for them to wage war against 'our' nations."⁴⁹

For Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, in order to educate the workers in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, it was absolutely necessary to recognize that with the development of imperialism, the world had been divided into oppressor and oppressed nations. Lenin summed up very sharply that any Social Democrat who failed to recognize this fundamental fact and failed to raise the right to self-determination of the nations oppressed by his own bourgeoisie, and did not grasp the revolutionary potential of a national struggle waged by these oppressed nations, "would be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice."

Lenin was blunt with the Polish and Dutch Social Democrats, whom he considered to be among the best revolutionary elements in international social democracy, for good reason. The utmost clarity was needed on this question to unmask the hypocritical promises of "peace without annexations" being made by the imperialist powers and their socialist apologists. Moreover, it was necessary to wage this battle at this time in order to clarify both theoretically and practically what the new International's position on this question would be in order for it to be a revolutionary instrument in the struggle against imperialism.

Lenin not only demonstrated how the Polish-Dutch position was a mass of errors, but explained that it had arisen out of "the specific objective conditions in their countries." Both Poland and Holland were small nations caught in the middle of the fierce rivalries between imperialist great powers, both were at one time great powers themselves (Holland still possessed colonies). Thus Lenin noted that the Polish and Dutch revolutionaries' opposition to the use of the slogan of self-determination by their own bourgeoisies so they could defend and expand their own oppression of other nations (Indonesia, Ukraine) was quite correct. But by generalizing it onto an international scale, Lenin emphasized, this "caricature of Marxism" could only play into the hands of the great nation chauvinism of the imperialist countries, ignoring the development of national revolutionary wars against imperialism—all in the name of a "pure" struggle for socialism. Instead, Lenin wrote:

"The social revolution can come about only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced



German and Russian soldiers fraternize on the Eastern front. Due to the determined work of the Bolsheviks and German revolutionaries, a great many of these soldiers not only refused to fight and often killed their officers, but also returned home to fight on the front lines of the civil war against the bourgeoisie.

countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations.

"Why? Because capitalism develops unevenly, and objective reality gives us highly developed capitalist nations side by side with a number of economically slightly developed, or totally undeveloped, nations..."⁵⁰

These polemics within the Zimmerwald Left became very heated, and undoubtedly limited the role it was able to play as an organized tendency. A higher level of organization could not be developed until a greater degree of political unity had been achieved. Thus, Lenin was convinced (and rightly so) that it was necessary to openly debate these critical political questions in order to guide the revolutionary work of the left-wing forces in their countries (for which greater opportunities were rapidly developing); to carry through the ideological struggle against the reformist, social-chauvinist leaders of the Second International to the end; and to lay the firmest possible theoretical basis for the formation of the Third International.

VI. Bankruptcy of Zimmerwald Movement—Onward to the October Revolution and the Third International

Throughout 1916 and early 1917 the revolutionary left-wing forces were steadily gaining in strength in a number of countries. The Spartakusbund had set up an extensive illegal network for the distribution of revolutionary literature to the workers and soldiers throughout Germany. Recognizing this new threat, the German government arrested Liebknecht at the May Day rally in 1916 in Berlin, sentencing him to a long prison term. In 1917, the Swedish Lefts (along with many pacifists) founded the Left Social-Democratic Party of Sweden. In Britain, a group of internationalists in the British Socialist Party who had split with the party's right wing carried out active revolutionary anti-war work. The Scottish socialist McLean was arrested for organizing mass strikes at munitions works and sentenced to a hard labor prison term.

In France, where the Zimmerwald-affiliated Committee for the Resumption of International Relations continued to

oppose the revolutionary line of the Zimmerwald Left, the Bolsheviks' Paris representative, Inessa Armand, paid close attention to developing contacts with newly formed groups of left-wing youth, dock workers and soldiers. The Bolsheviks and French Left Zimmerwaldists in 1916 together established a secret printing plant which issued and distributed illegal leaflets and literature, including the French translation of Lenin's *Socialism and War*. By the spring of 1917, a considerable part of the Committee, led by F. Loriot, had adopted the Left Zimmerwald program—openly declaring that “the masses must utilize the war for a revolution” and calling for a Third International.⁵¹

As was the case in France in 1916 and early 1917, the contact of the Zimmerwald Left with American socialists was largely through Bolsheviks such as Alexandra Kollontai, who visited the U.S. twice during this period. Lenin often referred approvingly to Debs' anti-war speeches, but he was in closer contact with the Boston-based Socialist Propaganda League, composed of intellectuals and workers of foreign birth or descent who had adopted the program of the Zimmerwald Left when they received it in early 1916 and had begun to publish *The Internationalist*.⁵²

In her letters to Lenin, Kollontai also described the activities of the “New York Opposition,” which was influenced by Trotsky (who was living in the U.S. in the winter of 1916-17) and inclined towards the Zimmerwald Center. They drafted a manifesto attacking Wilson's 1916 peace proposal, exposing the imperialist character of the war, and called on the workers to struggle against militarism and for immediate peace. After the declaration of war by the U.S. in April 1917, the American Socialist Party held an emergency meeting in St. Louis, which resulted in a split with the most chauvinist pro-war elements. In the following months, the Socialist Party divided more clearly between the right wing led by Hillquit and a small but growing left wing that agitated for opposing the war and continuing the class struggle against the bourgeoisie during the war.

Lenin, in late 1916, particularly centered his fire on ISC chairman Robert Grimm, who had moved towards an openly social-pacifist position and proved to be a past master at issuing revolutionary and internationalist salutations to socialists of other countries while doing absolutely nothing to oppose the bourgeoisie in his own country, Switzerland, which was preparing to enter the war. This struggle came to a head in January 1917, when the leaders of the Swiss party indefinitely postponed a party congress that was being

demanding by the left wing to hammer out a revolutionary, anti-war program. Grimm, the leading international representative of the Zimmerwald movement, claimed that the Swiss workers were not “prepared” to decide these questions and agreed that it was more important to launch a big campaign against the high cost of living!

The end of 1916 was in fact a major crossroads for the Zimmerwald movement, after which the differences between the rightist majority and the left wing steadily deepened and developed into open opposition. In December 1916, a set of vague peace proposals were advanced by the German government, which at the time was in a relatively strong position (occupying Belgium, Poland and part of France) to start up peace negotiations. Moreover, the German bourgeoisie and the ruling classes of the other belligerent countries, especially the tsarist regime in Russia, were concerned about the spread of anti-war sentiments among the workers and soldiers. The same month, President Wilson of the U.S., which was in fact preparing to enter the war against Germany, offered to act as intermediary between the belligerent powers. These peace programs were quickly picked up by the leaders of the Swiss and Italian parties as well as other Zimmerwald-affiliated parties, who began to actively promote these bourgeois pacifist promises of a “democratic peace,” disarmament, no annexations, etc.

The Zimmerwald Right was capitulating to the social-chauvinist leaders on a joint platform of empty pacifist phrases—a program that was being advanced in order to derail the growing anti-war sentiment and revolutionary struggle in many countries, and to provide a cover for further escalating the war in order to divide up the spoils on the most favorable terms in the coming imperialist peace. Now more than ever, Lenin emphasized, the left-wing forces had to center their activity on the struggle against reformism—“namely: reliance on the reforms the bourgeoisie is supposed to carry out after the war!”

In an appeal written to Grimm and the ISC in December 1916, Lenin made it clear that the Bolshevik Party was prepared to leave Zimmerwald if it continued on the reactionary course it was taking. Only several months later, Lenin reached the conclusion that the Zimmerwald movement had collapsed politically, and that staying within it could only hamper the formation of the Third International.

At the beginning of 1917, the attention of Lenin and the Bolshevik CC Abroad turned increasingly to Russia, where conditions for revolution were ripening at a rapid pace. In Russia, the

disintegration at the front and in the country as a whole was most severe; there was an exceptionally class-conscious proletariat; and the old tsarist regime was itself in a greatly weakened position (all the more so due to the fact that, as Lenin noted, the Anglo-French imperialists, in league with the Russian bourgeoisie, hatched a plot against the Tsar to ensure that the Russian government would continue to wage war against Germany). All this provided the conditions for the revolution in Russia which exploded in February 1917, the great uprising of workers, peasants and soldiers that swept away the rotten tsarist regime in the space of a few days. The result was a situation of dual power that was shared by the bourgeoisie's Provisional Government and the Soviets of Workers and Soldiers.

With this electrifying development, the eyes of the world turned to Russia. In April 1917, Lenin and other Bolsheviks who had been exiled abroad for so many years returned to Russia. Everywhere the Bolshevik Party conducted revolutionary agitation, exposing the class nature of the Provisional Government and its predatory war aims, and explaining to the masses that this capitalist government could not and would not satisfy their basic demands for bread, land and peace.

The Bolshevik Party's revolutionary internationalist line, strategy and tactics were put to a severe test. For a period of several months, particularly between February and the collapse of the Kerensky government's June military offensive, the Bolsheviks had to combat the rapid spread of “revolutionary defencism,” which Lenin called “the worst enemy of the further progress and success of the Russian revolution.”⁵³

With the downfall of the hated Tsar, the Russian bourgeoisie did its all to tap the patriotic sentiments among the Russian masses by announcing that, with the revolution, Russia was no longer waging an imperialist war. The bourgeoisie received valuable assistance from the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (S-Rs) in gaining renewed support for the war. They told the workers, peasants and soldiers that it was their “internationalist duty” to keep fighting “to defend the gains of the revolution.” According to these opportunists, it was now necessary to work with the bourgeoisie's Provisional Government to “move it to the left” and bring pressure on it to conclude peace. In early May, the Mensheviks and S-Rs bailed the Provisional Government out of an acute crisis (brought on by the government's agreement to keep the secret treaties with Britain and France in effect) by joining the government and

supplying six "socialist" ministers to better hold back the rising tide of street demonstrations and strikes against the war.

In Lenin's speech on the war at the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the RSDLP, he reported that revolutionary defencism is "an extremely broad mass movement which has now united against us the overwhelming majority of the nation."⁵⁴ The pull to capitulate to bourgeois nationalism was indeed strong at this juncture—all the more so because the Bolsheviks were in a decided minority in nearly all the Soviets, even in Petrograd, the stronghold of the revolutionary proletariat.

At this time, even defencists like Plekhanov in Russia were calling themselves "internationalists," and the right-wing and centrist socialists throughout Europe were launching new attempts to convene a major conference to discuss "international peace actions" and the restoration of "international socialist unity." In his report to the Bolsheviks' April Conference, Lenin wrote that this "internationalism in words" was nothing but a cover for class collaborationism and cowardly opportunism unless a revolutionary struggle were carried out against one's own bourgeoisie *in deeds*. For Lenin, this was the crux of the matter:

"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."⁵⁵

Lenin went on to point out that "it is not easy to be an internationalist in deed during a terrible imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people *alone* that the future of socialism depends."

Thus, in response to the charges hurled by the bourgeoisie and echoed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries that the Bolsheviks' line of revolutionary defeatism was "disintegrating the army" and aiding the German imperialists, the Bolsheviks explained to the masses that genuine revolutionaries desired and were working for the defeat of the bourgeoisie in Russia and in all the other imperialist countries, and that a revolutionary Russian worker could only support the Liebknechts in Germany—the revolutionaries who were fighting to overthrow their own rulers. In their work at the front, the Bolsheviks openly called on the Russian and German troops to fraternize, not just to stop fighting each

other, but to carry the struggle back to overthrow their own warmongering capitalists.

Against this background of sharpening class struggle and the spread of revolutionary consciousness and organization in Russia, the traitor socialists of the Second International went to work in the service of their capitalist masters. Delegation after delegation of French and British socialist leaders arrived in Russia in the spring of 1917 to try to persuade the Provisional Government to reinforce its war effort and to refuse to consider a separate peace with Germany. With the entry of U.S. imperialism into the war in April 1917, the British and French were hoping to break the military stalemate and win a decisive victory.

At this point, the majority socialist leaders in Holland and the Scandinavian countries, among whom were several leaders of the still-paralyzed International Socialist Bureau, decided that conditions were favorable to convene an international conference of belligerent and neutral socialists—to be held in Stockholm in the spring of 1917—in order to reach agreement on a joint peace platform. The Dutch-Scandinavian committee dispatched Bjordberg, a Danish right-wing socialist who favored Germany (which wanted to negotiate a separate peace with Russia) to Petrograd in late April 1917 to gain the cooperation of the Petrograd Soviet, where the Mensheviks and S-Rs had a sizeable majority at that time. The Bolsheviks, together with the Poles and Latvians, were the only parties in the Soviet who came out in opposition to this conference.

At the same time, the Zimmerwald ISC, while continuing to uphold the Zimmerwald program of class struggle in words, totally hinged its work around this proposed conference of social-patriots. Grimm and the ISC moved their headquarters to Stockholm and called for a Third Zimmerwald Conference to be held in Stockholm several days before the main event began. The stated purpose of this conference was to determine the Zimmerwald parties' attitude towards Stockholm, but in fact the rightist Zimmerwald majority had already made up their minds to attend the Stockholm conference anyway—where they were pinning their hopes for "a just [imperialist] peace" and a speedy restoration of the Second International.

The Bolsheviks and the other Left Zimmerwaldists worked as closely as possible to expose the real aims of the proposed Stockholm conference, issuing a joint statement denouncing it on July 20. This was signed by the Bolshevik Party, the Polish Social Democrats, the Bulgarian Social Democrats

("Tesnyaki"), the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party, and the Swedish Youth League. The German Spartakusbund released its own statement in opposition to the conference.

As it turned out, the Stockholm conference never met, due chiefly to the opposition of the British and French imperialists to any moves toward peace when their armies were beginning to take the military offensive, and because the majority of the Anglo-French socialists approved of this "victory to the end" policy. The Third Zimmerwald Conference did finally meet, September 5-12, 1917, in Stockholm, more out of desperation than anything else. It was split so sharply among rightist, centrist, and left-wing elements that it could only agree on an appeal for an international general strike in favor of peace (that is, if the Zimmerwald parties in all the belligerent parties agreed to it—which was unlikely, to say the least).

The conference manifesto could not even be made public, for the German Independent Social-Democratic Party (which had been formed in early 1917 by the German centrists)—accused of inciting mutinies in the German fleet and afraid of losing their legal status—demanded that publication be held up until they could regain the trust of the German government. After the conference refused to condemn the Mensheviks' active participation in the repression of the Bolshevik Party since July (which the two Bolshevik representatives brought up before the delegates), another long nail was driven into the coffin of the Zimmerwald movement.

In the spring of 1917, there had been a sharp struggle within the Bolshevik Party over how to deal with the Zimmerwald movement and its proposed third conference. At the Seventh (April) Conference of the RSDLP, this subject was debated vigorously. Lenin argued in his article, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," written in preparation for this important conference, that the Zimmerwald movement had already collapsed politically by the beginning of 1917, and that it was necessary to break with Zimmerwald immediately. His position was that the Bolsheviks should remain inside Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information, for keeping open the possibility "to use Zimmerwald should circumstances make it possible." Particularly in view of the waiting game being played by the Zimmerwald Kautskyite majority in relation to the Stockholm conference, Lenin argued that the Bolshevik Party could not wait, but that it was now their *duty* to make use of the position the revolution had placed the Party in to move directly towards convening "the first international conference of Lefts."⁵⁶ Lenin saw

this as the first step in actually founding the Third International.

However, this Party Conference overruled Lenin's position and decided to stay in Zimmerwald and attend the Third conference when it was held. This, apparently, was the position held by Zinoviev and others. (Kamenev, Zinoviev's close associate, was publicly advocating at this time that the Bolsheviks should participate in the social-patriots' Stockholm conference as well!) Lenin was clearly aware of the amount of opposition within the Party to leaving Zimmerwald and founding the Third International as rapidly as possible, for he concluded the section in his report to the April Conference with these words: "Whoever wants to *help* the waverers must first stop wavering himself."⁵⁷

A month later Lenin commented that the Central Committee went "half-way towards correcting the mistakes" on May 12 by resolving to walk out of the Third Zimmerwald Conference if it decided to participate in the Stockholm conference. Still, Lenin was clearly not satisfied, being of the opinion in late May that by remaining in Zimmerwald, the Bolsheviks were tying their hands and were "indirectly hampering" the foundation of the Third International.⁵⁸

However, the struggle in the Bolshevik Party over the question of forming the Third International was soon overshadowed by the rising tide of revolutionary struggle throughout Russia.

In the next few months, the war dragged on and the revolutionary crisis further intensified. All other parties had compromised themselves in the eyes of the class-conscious proletariat. As conditions for the proletariat to seize power rapidly ripened, the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, made active preparations to launch an armed insurrection—the crowning point of the revolutionary internationalist line it had taken just three years earlier when the war broke out. The Russian contingent of the new "international of deeds," as Lenin called it, was on the verge of an earthshaking victory, the first socialist revolution in the world.

Indeed, the new International was receiving its most powerful impetus in the streets of Petrograd in October 1917. The salvos of the October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to hundreds of millions of the exploited and oppressed worldwide. The balance of forces in the world changed radically, as did the situation among those who called themselves socialists. With new determination, the left-wing forces pressed ahead in the revolutionary struggle against their own ruling classes. In country after country, they split with the old bankrupt socialist parties and

founded new communist parties. All over the world, revolutionaries actively opposed the imperialists' attempts to strangle the proletarian dictatorship in Russia.

The attempt to seize power in defeated Germany in the winter of 1918-19 (in which Liebknecht and Luxemburg fought heroically until their last breath, being executed by a right-wing "socialist" government), and those in Austria, Hungary, Finland and elsewhere—although unsuccessful—were an important fruit of the revolutionary internationalist line fought for by the Bolshevik Party and other left-wing forces during the war, and left their mark on the future. In the year and a half following the October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party itself laid an even firmer basis for the founding of the Third International in March 1919 by putting its internationalist line into practice, by aiding the revolution that was maturing and breaking out in much of Europe by propaganda, material aid and sympathy, and by leading the masses of workers and peasants in Russia to defend their political power against the counter-revolution and imperialist intervention.

Meanwhile, the social-chauvinists and Kautskyite parties' paralysis lasted until the war was finally over. It was only in February 1919 that they were able to agree on meeting once again to revive the Second International. With Kautsky, the world-renowned "Marxist," leading the way, the "yellow" International proceeded to denounce the Bolshevik "dictatorship" in Russia, declare itself for "democracy" and do everything short of openly supporting the imperialist intervention to overthrow Soviet power. For the handful of parties who couldn't stomach these open attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat and who still hoped to reunite the ranks of "socialists" internationally, (!) there was the short-lived "2½ International."

But the revolutionary interests of the proletariat and oppressed masses were finding expression in neither of these bankrupt "Internationals." These interests were embodied in the dictatorship of the proletariat which had been established in one sixth of the world, in the further development of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world, in the formation of communist parties in many countries, and in the founding of the Communist International in 1919 in Moscow.

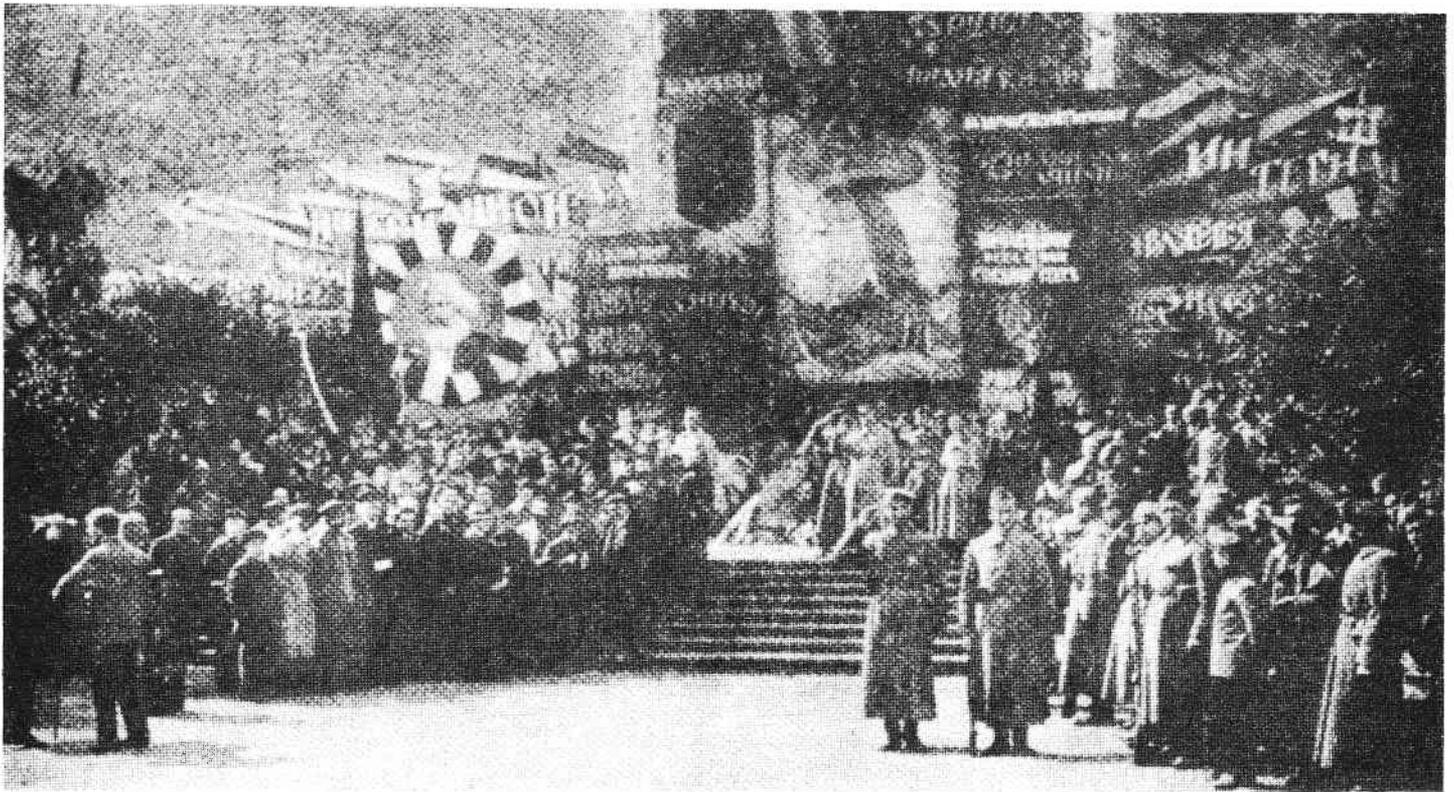
Conclusion

What appeared to be an extremely unfavorable situation for Marxism and rev-

olutionary Marxists in August 1914 was in fact not so bad. In 1912, the German Social-Democratic Party had 1,000,000 members, yet only several years later it was a stinking corpse that had placed itself at the service of the German bourgeoisie in suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. In 1912, the Bolshevik Party in Russia probably had less than 1% of the German Party's membership, yet five years later it placed itself at the head of a revolutionary torrent and led the proletariat in seizing power.

The opportunists—who prided themselves on being "practical men," who called the Bolsheviks' aim of turning the imperialist war into a civil war a "far-fical dream"—based everything on the idea that the relative strength of the bourgeoisie and weakness of the revolutionary proletariat at the beginning of the war would remain unchanged. The whirlwind that arose tore their house of cards to bits. The Bolsheviks, who based themselves on the fundamental and long-range interests of the masses and on what was rising and developing within that situation, were able to play the crucial role in bringing out of this crisis a profound change in the relative strength and weakness of the two opposing classes on a world level, by upholding the banner of revolutionary Marxism and enabling it to become a material force in the hands of the masses of people themselves in transforming the world. It is *especially* during the most severe crises that "what is outmoded and rotten in socialism" is in fact "shown up in the sharpest light," and new and clearer lines of demarcation must be drawn between Marxism and revisionism to defend and further develop the science of revolution that alone can lead the masses to revolution.

This historical experience, and especially the uncompromising ideological and political struggle waged by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in defense of revolutionary Marxism, is now more than ever extremely relevant. Since Khrushchev, pro-Soviet "communist" parties have spread revisionism and willingly offered themselves in service to the once socialist Soviet Union, now an imperialist superpower and a chief contender for world domination. More recently, after a clique of revisionist capitalist-roaders seized power from the Chinese proletariat in 1976, there has been another rush among what made up the international communist movement to conciliate, either directly or indirectly, with imperialism. Today, as in Lenin's time, the ranks of genuine communists who uphold Marxism-Leninism and the contributions of Mao Tsetung are, on an international scale, although



The historic founding meeting of the Third (Communist) International in Moscow in March, 1919, just five years after Lenin first declared, "Notwithstanding all obstacles the masses of workers will create a new International."

growing, relatively weak. All the more reason to stand firm. While no party today occupies the same position as that of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in his time, still, without a doubt, the outcome of the current struggle between Marxism and revisionism will be decisive in determining whether the international proletariat will be able to seize the great opportunities that will arise in the years ahead—as conditions for revolution ripen in many parts of the world.

The defense of Marxism-Leninism on an international level and the practice of internationalism has a very real material effect on the revolutionary struggle in various countries. This was all the more dramatically demonstrated during World War 1, when it was particularly important for the workers in one country to see the workers inside their "enemy" putting the same revolutionary defeatist line into practice and turning their guns around on their own rulers. Without applying such a line, as the Bolsheviks did in Russia, it would have been impossible to keep socialism alive among the masses. Otherwise, it would have been viewed, as it was viewed by many, as a good idea during peacetime, but an impossible dream during times of war.

Over and above the immediate effect the development of internationalist unity does have on the masses and the revolutionary forces themselves within a particular country, this struggle against

opportunism and to forge unity among revolutionaries worldwide is a duty that falls on all genuine communists, exactly because the proletariat is one class, worldwide, whose historic mission is the achievement of communism. In order to advance as rapidly as possible to this goal, the proletariat must be educated in the spirit of internationalism, must live and breathe it. While revolution is made country by country, and the genuine communists must mobilize and prepare the masses to make revolution in their own countries, the revolutionary struggle in each country has to be conducted with the goal of promoting the international struggle of the proletariat in mind. Every victory won by the proletariat, every country ripped out of the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie, belongs to the international proletariat—a lesson that must be kept in mind particularly by communists inside the imperialist countries themselves. For in fact, communism can only be achieved when capitalism is overthrown and uprooted thoroughly and finally all over the world—when the international working class will be the human race.

This was the stand that guided Lenin's struggle to lead the revolutionary forces to break with opportunism, regroup under the red banner, and march forward to found a new era in history. ■

Footnotes

1. Lenin, "The Question of the Unity of Internationalists", *Collected Works (CW)*, Vol. 21, p. 188.
2. Lenin, "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *CW*, Vol. 13, p. 81.
3. Quoted in *The Bolsheviks and the World War* by Olga Hess Gankin and H. H. Fisher (Stanford University Press, 1940), p. 54.
4. Stuttgart resolution "On Militarism and International Conflict", reprinted in *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, p. 59.
5. Lenin, "Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy", *CW*, Vol. 15, p. 194.
6. Quoted in *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, pp. 64-65.
7. Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
8. Basle Manifesto "On the International Situation", reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 84.
9. Lenin, "What Has Been Revealed by the Trial of the R.S.D.L. Duma Group", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 176.
10. "Resolution on Russian Unification", reprinted in *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, p. 132.
11. "The Socialist Party Declaration on Voting for the War Loan", reprinted in *The Socialists and the War*, by W. E. Walling (New York, 1915), p. 144.
12. Lenin, "A German Voice on the War", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 93.
13. Lenin, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 34.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
16. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 326.
17. Lenin, "Under a False Flag", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 144.
18. Quoted by Lenin in "The Collapse of the Second International", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 219.
19. Lenin, *ibid.*, pp. 216-17.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
21. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 329.
22. Lenin, "The Voice of an Honest French Socialist", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 356.
23. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 311.
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25. Lenin, "Socialism and War", *CW*, Vol. 21, p. 328.
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