

TO WIN 獲得的將是整個世界 **МИР ВЫИГРАТЬ**

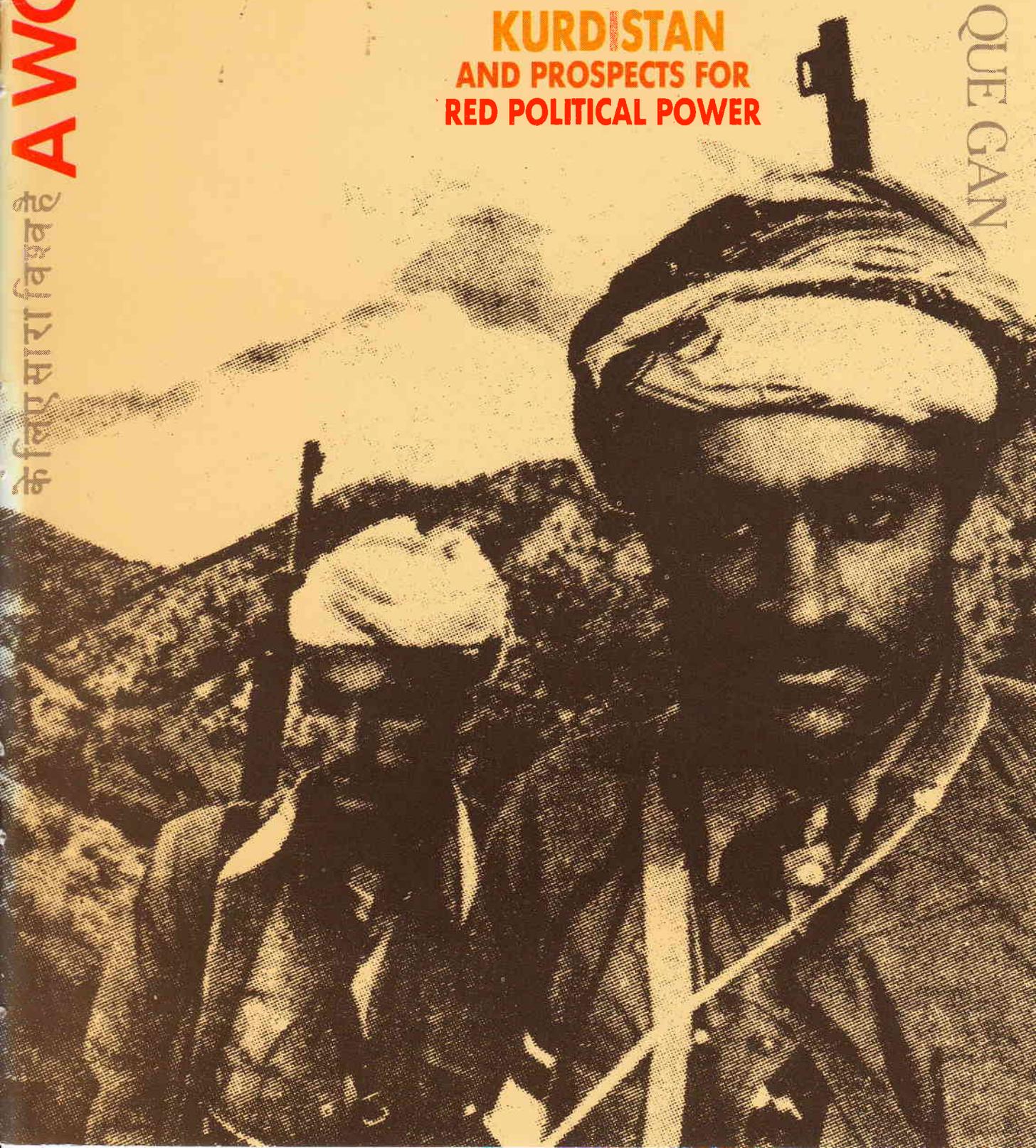
1986/5

UN MUNDO QUE GAN

A WORLD

के लिए सारा विश्व है

KURDISTAN
AND PROSPECTS FOR
RED POLITICAL POWER



Kurdistan



For decades Kurdistan has been rising up in arms against national subjugation; now it faces a new conjuncture: what will it take to hoist the red flag, what difference will it make to the oppressed world around to set the Kurdish prairie afire with a formidable red peshmerga army? Nejimeh Siavush discusses these crucial questions.

Bangla Desh



An analysis of the last few years of growing political ferment in Bangladesh (Purba Bangla), where the U.S.-backed regime is confronted by a broad range of opposition forces from diverse classes.

THE PROLETARIAT HAS NOTHING TO LOSE
BUT THEIR CHAINS, THEY HAVE
A WORLD TO WIN



1986/5

Kurdistan

Kurdistan And Prospects for
Red Political Power 4

Ibrahim Kaypakkaya on the Kurdish
National Question 14

Bangla Desh

The Tinderbox of Purba Bangla 27

Why Did Colombia's Government Bomb
Its Own Palace of Justice 16

RIM Committee Message to RCP, USA 22

RCP, USA Celebrates 10th Anniversary 23

Seizing the Imperialist Citadels 40

Britain: Excerpts from *Manifesto of the
Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent* 41

Italy: Excerpts from *For the Revolutionary
Communist Workers Organisation* 41

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A WORLD

MONDE A GAGNER जीतने के लिए सारा विश्व है

UN MUNDO QUE GANAR KAZANILASAK DÜNYA বিশ্ব

A World To Win has been inspired by the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, announced on March 12th, 1984, which has regrouped many Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations from around the world. It is not an official organ of the RIM. Its pages are open to all those on the same sides of the barricades in the fight against imperialism and reaction.

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جهانی برای فتح UN MONDO DA GUADAGNARE



KURDISTAN

And Prospects for Red Political Power

by Nejimeh Siavush

“The best songs are sung to the tune of rifles,” says one popular revolutionary song. The staccato of machine guns ricocheting through the mountain ranges has long been a familiar feature of the Kurdish landscape which spreads through the countries of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Not only has this been the native territory of the Kurdish national movement for decades, but it has also provided favourable political and military terrain for the revolutionary forces fighting to overthrow the reactionary vassal states whose borders divide Kurdistan.

Since the First World War, the Kurdish question has figured prominently in the calculations of the imperialists and their commissioned puppets to establish and hold on to their seats of power throughout the Middle East. Although such calculations have invariably called for vicious national oppression of the Kurds, executed by the lackeys of imperialism and later on of social-imperialism, they ironically only helped to create and train a formidable enemy with a long history of waging armed struggle against oppression and enslavement, in all parts of Kurdistan. No small credit will go to the reactionaries when the armies of red peshmergas charge down the mountains and across the plains from four directions singing their “best songs to the tune of rifles,” orchestrated this time around by the class-conscious proletariat.

Developments over the past several years in Kurdistan and in the region as a whole strikingly confirm the truth of this assessment; beyond that, they have catapulted the international and regional significance of the struggle there, onto a decidedly higher plane. This is what compels veteran executioners of the Kurdish people like the French imperialists to scurry around with a garish pretense of concern for the rights of the Kurds while the bloc leader, the U.S., and its trusted hangmen prefer genocidal suppression campaigns. And of course, the Soviet social-imperialists never pass up an opportunity to support the Kurds...like a rope supports a hanging man, as Lenin once said in another context. Clearly the more that objective developments hurl the Kurdish people towards the centre stage of conflicts in the region, the more variegated becomes the motley array of “the concerned.” This is, at once, both a reflection and a cause of the greatly heightened prospects and difficulties the current situation holds for the revolutionary forces in Kurdistan.

For many decades now a relentless struggle has held sway across the Kurdish landscape. It flares up amidst thunder and gunfire and retreats only to suddenly erupt again where the enemy expects it least.

The revolutionary struggle of the Kurdish people has been on a long march. It has outlasted many of its

sworn enemies and significantly contributed to their demise — from the Ottoman Empire to the dynasties of the Hashemee and Pahlavi Monarchs. And it continues to be a major current that can play an indispensable role in initiating and carrying out the final ushering in of (a) truly revolutionary state(s) in the region. Its historical development has been conditioned by and intertwined with the momentous international events that have punctuated this century. The First and Second World Wars and both the inspiring victories and the bitter setbacks the international proletariat has experienced, particularly in the Soviet Union and in China, have exerted a profound influence over the development of the movement in Kurdistan.

Furthermore, Lenin’s statement that “One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates capitalist development in the most backward countries and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression” (“The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution,” *CW* 23) has proved to be a valid assessment of the historical impetus propelling the revolutionary and national movement in Kurdistan, which has not lost but gained momentum in the face of the suppression and annihilation campaigns led against it.

A bold revolutionary initiative based on a critical evaluation of the movement, of its specific historical character, is urgently demanded of

the revolutionary internationalist proletariat. This is essential if the opening that is greatly magnified by the increasing instability of the crisis-ridden reactionary states, within the overall crisis of the world imperialist system, by the Iraq-Iran war and by the rapidly intensifying rivalry between the war-bound imperialist and social-imperialist blocs, is going to be seized for the revolutionary cause of the oppressed.

With respect to this task and obligation of the revolutionary communist forces in the region, it is instructive to recall one of Lenin's remarks: "The dialectics of history are such that small nations, powerless as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the *real* anti-imperialist force, the socialist [revolutionary communist — *AWTW*] proletariat, to make its appearance on the scene." ("The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *CW* 22)

Although it is undeniably true that the struggle of the Kurdish people against national oppression has already tremendously facilitated the proletariat's ability "to make its appearance on the scene" (particularly the Communist Party of Turkey/ Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) and the Union of Iranian Communists (UIC) Sarbedaran), still much more, qualitatively more, is required from the proletariat to prepare and organise the Kurdish masses for the "general onslaught" against the seats of reactionary power. The predatory and anarchic drive of imperialist economics and politics, despite untold suffering and misery brought down on Kurdistan, have ultimately strengthened the material basis of the revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan. As Lenin pointed out, "Capitalism is not so harmoniously built that various sources of rebellion can immediately merge of their own accord, without reverses and defeats. On the other hand, the very fact that revolts do break out at different times, in different places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement; but it is only in premature, individual, sporadic

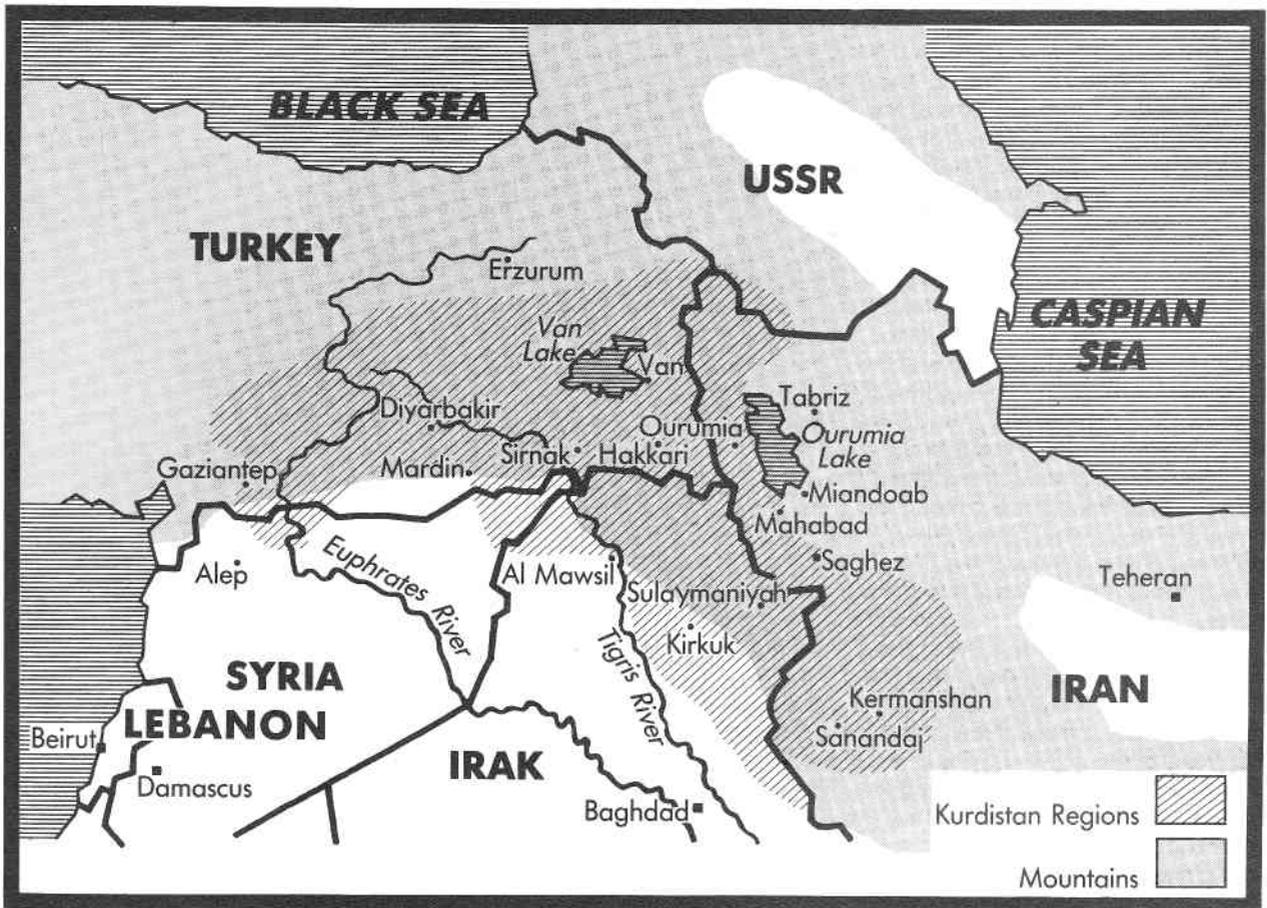
and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders, the socialist [revolutionary communist — *AWTW*] proletarians, and in this way prepare for the general onslaught...." ("Self-Determination Summed Up," *CW* 22) Without overlooking or legitimising the past shortcomings and weaknesses of the international communist movement and the national movement in Kurdistan, it can be said that the revolutionary struggle has accumulated immeasurable valuable experience and acquired the raw material necessary for a deeper knowledge of its open and disguised enemies and of its true leader, the international proletariat, in a long and tortuous ascent to maturity. Now, from the terrain of Kurdistan, history presents great opportunities for the proletariat to coordinate a crippling onslaught against imperialism and reaction.

The Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925, the Agri Rebellion of 1928, the Zilan Rebellion of 1930 and the Dersim Rebellion of 1938 in Turkey; the armed rebellions raging through the decades of the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s in Iraq; the struggle for the Kurdish Autonomous Republic of Mahabad during the early '40s in Iran: in spite of their weaknesses, all these have contributed tremendously to the political awakening and preparation of the terrain in Kurdistan and the revolutionary movements in general in the countries containing Kurdish regions. Though the terrain in Kurdistan can by no means be considered asleep, the assessment of the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* that "The heightening of contradictions is now drawing and will do so even more dramatically in the future, all countries and regions of the world and sections of the masses previously lulled to sleep or oblivious to political life into the vortex of world history" highlights the regional and worldwide significance of both the potential and the impact of the struggle in Kurdistan. With their militant history of armed struggle, the Kurdish people stand as one of the prin-

cipal actors capable of exerting powerful influence in determining the resolution of the worldwide contradictions in the region.

Considering the highly charged terrain in Kurdistan, where all contending political forces with their corresponding ideologies are being compelled to deploy and manoeuvre troops amid increasing tension and where issues have a long history of being settled by force of arms even though not often commanded by revolutionary proletarian politics, it has become absolutely imperative for the genuine proletarian forces to establish and fortify a decisively stronger presence. The objective conditions are more than favourable for this since the proletariat alone is capable of taking and fighting for the consistently revolutionary stand that is required to unite and lead the vast majority of the Kurdish masses, especially today. The history of the national and revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan is itself forceful testimony to the necessity of proletarian leadership for the victory of the liberation struggle. Powerful upsurges as well as bitter setbacks experienced by the Kurdish people in the past along with the currently despicable and patently counter-revolutionary practices of some of the forces there have awakened among the masses a keen sense of yearning, even if in a spontaneous form, for truly revolutionary politics and ideology. Only the class-conscious proletariat and the revolutionary communists with the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought can respond to and satisfy this yearning and thereby unleash the masses to generate a tremendous fighting capacity, both politically and militarily, that can transform the Kurdish landscape into an un-suppressable red base area for the world proletarian revolution. That can and will be a thunderous blow to the imperialist and social-imperialist war preparations and to the ongoing strife for strategic entrenchment which has taken on particularly feverish dimensions in the region.

All the reactionary intrigue and sanguinary measures employed against the revolutionary forces in Kurdistan by imperialism and its regional puppets reveal their deep-



seated and well-founded fear that the emergence of red political power in any part of Kurdistan would inexorably spread its influence not just throughout the Kurdish territory in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey but through the whole of these countries and even beyond. That is the fear that sends chills down the spines of these reactionaries at the sight of a peshmergas (the Kurdish word for fighter), particularly one armed with the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. The material basis for this agonising fear is yet to be fully appreciated and acted upon by the revolutionary forces. A vigorous presence of the proletarian internationalist line is both possible and desirable. Moreover it would induce a new alignment of forces, particularly among the revolutionary and progressive elements active there. The current intensification of the international contradictions has already impelled a high degree of polarisation among the various forces, and the middle ground between revolution and counter-

revolution is rapidly disappearing.

Furthermore, on such terrain, a qualitatively more powerful injection of revolutionary communist politics could only be given and sustained through revolutionary warfare that is capable of fully realising and developing the revolutionary potential of the masses politically and militarily. Mao Tsetung did in fact sharply state that, "Without a people's army the people have nothing," and "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." The Kurdish masses' experience has borne out these basic truths. Now, more than ever, the question is to take up and wield revolutionary communist politics, which, to paraphrase Mao, can direct the performance of many a drama, full of sound and colour, power and grandeur. The formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, which already embraces 21 genuine communist parties and organisations, including the TKP/ML and the UIC (Sarbedaran), has qualitatively

enhanced the ability of revolutionary forces to provide leadership for such a "performance" in all parts of Kurdistan.

I. Kurdish Cauldron

Such a spectre is indeed haunting the regimes and their imperialist mentors from both blocs. The *Declaration of the RIM* points out that "The current intensification of the world contradictions while bringing forth further possibilities for these movements also places new obstacles and new tasks before them. Despite efforts and even some successes of the imperialist powers in subverting or perverting the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed masses, especially in the hopes of turning them into weapons of inter-imperialist rivalry, these struggles continue to deal powerful blows to the imperialist system, and to accelerate the development of revolutionary possibilities in the world as a whole."

Despite a certain unevenness, the Kurdistan region remains the achilles' heel of these states. This fact, bearing crucial significance for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, has by no means escaped the attention of the contending imperialist powers, even as they frantically try to undermine each other's strategic positions in the Middle East and project and entrench themselves according to the requirements of their global calculations. This makes Kurdistan a most coveted piece of territory, one where the contradiction between the Western imperialists and the social-imperialists, and the contradiction between imperialism as a whole and the oppressed peoples and nations, sharply interpenetrate and aggravate each other.

The fundamental difference between the thorough-going revolutionary internationalist outlook of the class-conscious proletariat and that of the Kurdish bourgeoisie, which can still play a progressive and even a revolutionary role at times, comes into sharp relief as the contradictions in the region sharpen further. Under the powerful traction of inter-imperialist rivalry, various Kurdish bourgeois, petit bourgeois and feudal forces inevitably tend to find it difficult to maintain even a consistently *revolutionary* nationalist stand, either falling prey to the manipulations of rival reactionaries or outright succumbing to counter-revolutionary schemes and abandoning the revolutionary road.

Iraq

The current configuration of forces and the specific intertwining of the major international contradictions have brought about a rather favourable setting for the revolutionary movement in Iraqi Kurdistan. The outbreak of the February 1979 revolution in Iran and the emergence of liberated areas controlled by the masses — large sections of whom were led by revolutionary nationalist and genuine communist forces — in the Kurdish region in western Iran, provided a tremendous opening for the development of the revolutionary struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan as well. Having suffered crippling losses to



Making bread with open fireplace.

the Iraqi regime in a number of major engagements with the army prior to this period, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), founded in 1975 and currently based in the central parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, was able to use this opening to reorganise its forces and to expand its activity through participating in the revolutionary struggle unfolding in the Kurdish region and the rest of Iran. The Komala Ranjedaran, a major component of the PUK, was founded in the early 1970s by revolutionary Marxists such as Dr. Aram who were profoundly influenced by the accomplishments of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. They upheld Mao Tsetung Thought and firmly opposed the social-imperialists of the Soviet Union. Until the infamous treachery of the thoroughly reactionary feudal Barzani clique and the Kurdistan Democrat Party (KDP) of Iraq in 1975, the Komala Ranjedaran [Organisation of Toilers] was forced to work clandestinely in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Barzani clique, with the aid of the U.S. imperialists and their puppet the Shah of Iran, applied a policy of terror and intimidation in order to drive the communist and revolutionary forces out of Kurdistan, while simultaneously applying pressure on the Iraqi regime in order to pry it out of the social-imperialist orbit.

The Barzani clique harassed, terrorised and jailed these revolutionaries under the guise that they harm the national cause of the Kurds and they either should accept the leadership of Barzani or stay inactive and not expose the betrayals of the KDP-Iraq. Otherwise they would face arrest and imprisonment. But these revolutionaries were not terrified by these reactionary threats and secretly organised the advanced masses to prepare for an opening.

Following the exposure of the reactionary feudal-bourgeois Barzani & Co. when they concluded a deal with the U.S. imperialists and the states of Iran and Iraq, openly selling out the struggle in Kurdistan, the Komala Ranjedaran enjoyed wide support among the Kurdish masses, many of whom they trained to be militant fighters.

With such historical roots, the Komala Ranjedaran, a component part of the PUK led by Jelal Talebani, actively participated in the revolutionary war against the holy crusade of the Khomeini regime to suppress the movement in the Kurdish region of Iran. In most of the major military actions, the Komala Ranjedaran effectively cooperated with the Komala of Iran (the Organisation of the Toilers of Kurdistan-Iran).

Cooperation between revolu-

tionary groups has shown the highly conducive nature of the Kurdish terrain for transmitting revolutionary potential across the official state frontiers. After the temporary setback of the struggle in Iran and the loss of open liberated zones in the Kurdish region in Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan has assumed the role of providing access and base areas for the activity of the revolutionary forces. However, not all the areas currently inaccessible to or unsecured by the armed forces of the Iraqi regime are controlled by revolutionary nationalist or progressive Kurdish forces. In the northern parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, the so-called Provisional Leadership of the Kurdistan Democrat Party of Iraq (Guyadeh Movaghghad), and a number of groups consisting of reactionary nationalist forces and revisionist hirelings, such as the organisations Hassak and Passok, have established a presence.

KDP-Iraq was reorganised by Barzani's sons, Masood and Idris Barzani, under the guidance of the U.S. imperialists with local assistance from the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation (MIT), SAVAK of Iran, and the Mossad of Israel. In 1976 Idris Barzani opened offices in Washington, Tehran and Ankara to register volunteers for the family trade: serving as a willing tool of the imperialists and reactionaries. In his memoirs, William Colby, head of the CIA between 1973-76, openly admits that their fear of the Kurdish movement in Iraq led them to "the decision to support (!) the separatist movement. As a first step we assisted them in getting organised." (*30 Years of the CIA*). What Colby refers to is none other than the Barzani set-up, which was intended to contain the revolutionary movement in the Kurdistan of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. After 1976, the KDP-Iraq(GM) was particularly built up by the imperialist and local reactionary media as a "legitimate"(!) force representing the Kurds in Iraq and was aided in establishing an affiliate in Turkey. Plenty of references could be found in the June-July 1976 issues of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* about the criminal activities

of the KDP-Iraq(GM) which were aimed at destroying the influence and the forces of the PUK in Iraq. The June 18, 1978 issue of the reactionary Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* even went so far as publishing pictures of Turkish special counter-insurgency commandos arm-in-arm with members of the KDP-Iraq(GM), who had been conducting joint operations against PUK militants in the Hakkari region of Turkey under the leadership of Zeki Bey and Mejid Haci Ahmed of the Turkish secret service.

The list of the mercenary services of the notorious Barzani warlords does not end there. During the revolutionary upsurge in the Kurdistan of Iran, the KDP-Iraq(GM) made every effort to aid the Khomeini regime by training its Pasdaran forces, who were not very effective in suppressing the Kurdish insurgents, by actively conducting armed suppression of revolutionary peasant committees, by hunting and killing revolutionary militants, terrorising the masses, launching attacks on revolutionary workers in the cities, and so forth. As befits these despicable mercenaries, the KDP-Iraq(GM) were at the forefront of the columns of the Pasdaran whenever they entered revolutionary strongholds of the masses that had fallen to the enemy.

Certainly this long and brazen devotion to counter-revolution and to the conscious sabotage of Kurdish national and social emancipation has aroused the hatred of the broad masses. They are mercenaries. They can enlist in the service of any imperialist or reactionary state's army. No matter what cover they may use they are "sold out," as the Kurdish masses say of them, and must be exposed, isolated and defeated.

In the recent period, especially since the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war, the various states in the region along with the imperialist powers have sought to build up and utilise Kurdish forces along the principle of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." For example, the Khomeini regime has armed and backed different forces in Iraqi Kurdistan while carrying out savage repression in *Iranian* Kurdistan. Similarly, the Soviet social-imperialists are trying

to use different Kurdish groups as bargaining chips and/or pressure groups to increase the Soviets' own leverage in the region. One recent important tactic of the Soviets in Iran, Iraq and Turkey seems to be efforts to pull together a "front" of different Kurdish groups of various political persuasions, including those like the Barzani forces who had been linked up with the U.S. Even some forces who previously condemned social-imperialism are finding the Soviet carrot and stick difficult to resist.

Turkey

The Western imperialist bloc, with the U.S. as its gang leader, is striving to savagely clamp down on the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan in order to shield its puppet states from any potential mortal blows. This is an important component of its policy of fortifying these reactionary states as strongholds against the rival social-imperialist bloc.

This suppression campaign has involved bloody counter-insurgency operations, the forced migration of Kurdish villagers, the fanning of religious differences, and has brought about the calculated resettlement of refugees from Afghanistan in rebellious Kurdish areas in Turkey following the coup d'état of September 1980. With the wholesale arrest of the male population in Kurdish villages and towns, the establishment of strategic hamlets, restriction of freedom of movement by new martial law injunctions as well as efforts to establish a network of informers enticed by bounty offers, the fascist regime in Turkey hopes to reduce the danger it faces there. In accordance with the overall plans of their U.S. masters, the Turkish ruling classes have relocated an important section of their ground troops into the Kurdish region of eastern Turkey in addition to upgrading existing air strips and building new ones for the quick deployment of ground troops. All of the European imperialists, especially Britain, W. Germany, France and Italy, have been actively involved in modernising and strengthening the Turkish armed forces to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars in

order to increase their capacity to maintain internal security and to effectively confront a possible Soviet drive through the eastern borders of Turkey. This underscores the international significance of the Kurdish regions of Turkey, of the resurgence of the revolutionary movement there, and particularly the establishment of red political power bases.

Prior to the 1980 coup, the Kurdish region in eastern Turkey, due to the sharpening of the national and land questions, vigorously participated in the countrywide upsurge of revolutionary struggle. The revolutionary upsurge that broke loose in neighboring Iran with the February 1979 revolution and the emergence of liberated areas and large guerrilla forces under the leadership of revolutionary nationalist and communist organisations in Iranian Kurdistan emboldened the revolutionary movement in the Kurdish region of

eastern Turkey as well. Especially from the mid-'70s on, increasing numbers of poor peasants, semi-proletarians and students demanded that they be armed and organised for revolutionary war against the regime.

Within the Kurdish national movement certain changes had taken place with the consolidation of the central state in Turkey and years of genocidal suppression campaigns through the 1920s and 1930s. A section of the big Kurdish landlords had chosen to collude with the Turkish ruling classes, and even a





number of big Kurdish bourgeois had defected to them. Through this period the Kurdish bourgeoisie was able to strengthen itself, reducing the influence of the feudals on the Kurdish national movement. By the early 1970s the leadership of the movement was mainly in the hands of the Kurdish bourgeoisie, bourgeois Kurdish intellectuals and small Kurdish landlords. Some more passive and conservative sections among these strata fell under the direct or indirect influence of the pro-Moscow revisionists, sometimes through their connections with similar Kurdish forces in neighboring Iraq and Iran.

On the other hand, among the Kurdish proletarians, semi-proletarians, peasants, university

students and high school teachers, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was also rapidly spreading. In fact, from the founding of the TKP/ML (1972) onwards, this section of the Kurdish masses has played an important role in fighting for revolutionary communist politics.

Some revolutionary nationalist petit-bourgeois Kurdish forces were also influenced by Mao Tsetung but, infected with a narrow nationalist outlook, they could not avoid disintegrating later on in the face of Enver Hoxha's attack on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

By 1980, different cliques within the Turkish ruling classes were panicking and hysterically accusing each other of incompetence, which, they said, was dragging the whole country into civil war. Naturally the Kurdish region was a main tributary feeding the potential for the revolutionary warfare that could cause the ground under their feet to give way. The white terror unleashed by the Turkish junta throughout the country, combined with intensified na-

tional oppression, assumed atrocious forms in Kurdistan. However even after the coup, despite all the sanguinary suppression, a social base for armed struggle has continued to exist among the Kurdish masses. Oppression breeds resistance. During this period, TIKKO (Worker Peasant Liberation Army of Turkey) guerrillas under the leadership of the TKP/ML were able to carry on armed activity in this region.

Iran

The Kurdistan region of Iran played a major role in toppling the Shah's regime in February 1979, and this in turn unleashed further revolutionary outbursts. Tremendous enthusiasm for the revolutionary transformation of society was surging forward in search of ways and means to uproot and sweep away all that is responsible for the wretched conditions and the national oppression to which the masses have been condemned for decades. Revolutionary mass organisations, organs of people's power, and small and large units of armed peshmergas emerged almost instantaneously. This unrestrained revolutionary fervour, particularly on the part of the poor peasants, semi-proletarians, proletarians, and revolutionary intellectuals, readily gravitated towards the leadership of Kurdish communist revolutionaries such as Kak Salah Sham Borhan (a UIC leader) and Kak Fuad Soltani (the founder of Komala-Iran), who later fell as a martyr in battle against the Islamic Republic. This occurred even though bourgeois-feudal nationalist forces and the reactionary Tudeh Party did much to hold them in check.

May Day 1979 celebrations were held all over Kurdistan, including a ten thousand strong march in Kermashan under the red banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Communists vigorously led activities such as organising revolutionary mass organisations, peasant unions, the peasants' fight against feudal elements, the confiscation and redistribution of feudal landholdings, military training of the masses, and so forth.

The revolutionary stand of the



Peshmergas in the streets of Sanandaj — a stronghold of revolution, against the early assaults of the Islamic Republic.

UIC, together with its policy of unleashing the agrarian revolution and setting up peasant committees, led to the strengthening of the UIC in a relatively short period of time.

Revolutionary masses also enthusiastically supported the militant positions taken by Komala of Iran, then under the leadership of Fuad Soltani. Despite certain nationalist tendencies, Fuad was a Marxist-Leninist and a strong defender of Mao Tsetung. He made tremendous efforts and contributions to organizing and arming the peasant unions. When the Islamic Republic of Iran first moved to establish its law and order in Kurdistan by erecting army posts in Marivan, a major Kurdish city, Fuad initiated and led the famous mass "March of Marivan." Thousands joined in, from peasant unions, from revolutionary mass organizations in different cities, along with armed peshmergas; they beat back the reactionary armed forces of the Islamic Republic and gave a small taste of their revolutionary power. This march was a bold initiative in unleashing the revolutionary energy of the masses and drawing them into political life. It taught them to guard the revolution

and carry it forward by force of arms. This march also played an important role in spreading the influence of Komala.

In this same period, the Kurdistan Democrat Party (Iran) was enamoured with the possibility of coming to terms with the clerics and securing regional autonomy in Kurdistan without disturbing the pre-capitalist social relations and the feudal landlords. KDP (Iran) leaflets had a distinctly Tudeh revisionist flavour, introduced through the agency of the arch-revisionist Bullurian, who was the Tudeh Party connection in the KDP (Iran) leadership at that time; they did not fail to heap praise on the Khomeini regime. It is important to keep in mind that all this was to no avail: the mullahs had no intention of attenuating the national oppression of the Kurds, let alone sharing any of their newly acquired power.

Furthermore, the policy of KDP (Iran) did not win it credit with the masses. Even in Mahabad, which is considered one of their base areas, mainly due to the historical prestige they inherited from the short-lived Kurdish Autonomous Republic of Mahabad in 1946 and its revolu-

tionary nationalist leader Gazi Mohammed, thousands of people supported Komala's activities. And when the Kurdish counter-revolutionary forces chose to resort to such reactionary actions as murdering UIC leader Kak Salah in order to hold on to their base and avoid being exposed, outraged masses showed where their sympathies lay when tens of thousands attended his funeral in Mahabad in the spring of 1979.

As for the UIC in this period, its revolutionary work, despite shortcomings, demonstrated that new, small forces armed with the revolutionary communist outlook can establish and expand a mass base and a revolutionary army in a relatively short period on the political terrain of Kurdistan, which had grown even more favourable with the fall of the Shah.

The emergence of a communist-led peasant movement and the peshmergas army under the leadership of the UIC, which won the confidence of the masses during the first (summer of 1979) and second (spring 1980) wars launched by the Khomeini regime against the revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan, demonstrated the correctness of this point.

The Khomeini regime's counter-revolutionary war against Kurdistan, directed by then Prime Minister Bani Sadr, was a major and quite risky effort by the new ruling class, and was prompted by their need to consolidate power and to clamp down on the overall revolutionary upsurge that had broken loose throughout the country. The clerics were quick to detect the dangerous potential of the revolution to gather momentum in Kurdistan and to become a base area for the deepening and even the consummation of the anti-imperialist anti-feudal revolution in Iran. The struggle in Kurdistan had a long history and, being deeply rooted among the Kurdish masses, could easily generate a mighty mass revolutionary movement against national oppression, imperialism and the feudal relations of production, particularly if it were led by the proletariat and genuine communists. As it was, the movement in Kurdistan

had already been a very significant ingredient of the popular revolutionary upsurge that swept away the blood-soaked throne of the Shah; a new and qualitatively higher upsurge in Kurdistan would send tremors through the country once again, awakening the vast army of peasants in the Iranian countryside, invigorating the struggle of other national minorities and overall strengthening the revolutionary forces.

Across the country the masses were still in motion, expecting that all the socio-economic props and buttresses of imperialist domination and exploitation would be completely dismantled and that full democracy for the people would be achieved. Doing away with national oppression and uprooting the wretched semi-feudal economic relations in the countryside were crucial parts of the revolutionary transformations that were required to extricate the whole country from the international imperialist network of bondage and to fulfill the people's aspirations for New Democratic Revolution. And Kurdistan was a territory — not a small one at that — where the proletariat could lead the masses in realising these aspirations and forcing their way out of the straitjacket of the Khomeini regime, which was gearing up to resurrect the bourgeois comprador-feudal dictatorship. Due to national oppression, the urgent land question, and other historical reasons, the revolutionary communists could have mobilised the masses to carry out armed agrarian revolution and other revolutionary democratic transformations both in the economic base and the superstructure. All this would have greatly enhanced their ability to build a revolutionary people's army to both take part in and defend these revolutionary transformations against all obstacles. The clerics' fear aside, this would have been nothing short of raising the red flag in its full grandeur as an inspiration, not merely in Iran and the region, but for the oppressed around the world.

Undoubtedly in a more immediate sense the emergence of such a red base in Kurdistan that could defend its new democratic people's

power by a genuinely revolutionary army of peshmergas would have dramatically transformed the political climate in Iran. The Khomeini regime did not fail to sense that the red storm from Kurdistan could blow away the mask of Islamic obscurantism blended with phony anti-imperialist rhetoric, exposing and isolating it even more among the Iranian masses. The class struggle would have taken a dangerous turn for the aspiring clerical compradors and feudals, with the advanced sections of the masses rallying to the banner of the advancing revolution led by the proletariat in Kurdistan. The support for the revolutionary war and the revolutionary transformations in Kurdistan, closely integrated with the revolutionary struggle in the cities and other regions, would have spurred and strengthened the social base of the communist movement and popularised its programme for New Democratic Revolution countrywide. This type of situation would have enabled the revolutionary communists to politically train the masses and increase their military capacity for the decisive engagements shaping up in the future. Furthermore, even in the

event of setbacks suffered by the revolutionary forces in the rest of the country, Kurdistan could still have provided a base area for the revolution until the conditions matured again for a new all-around offensive against the regime.

However the political and ideological crisis which came to a head following the reactionary coup d'état in China shortly after the death of Mao Tsetung seriously impaired the ability of the revolutionary communists in Iran to fully grasp and act upon the revolutionary opportunities. Within this context, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war particularly exacerbated the shortcomings and errors of the revolutionary communists, giving rise to a tendency to liquidate the national question and the strategic significance of the armed struggle in Kurdistan as part of the overall struggle for political power. The UIC (Sarbedaran), in a lengthy article published in its central organ, *Haghighat* — which was later reprinted in the fourth issue of *AWTW* — discusses the causes of these errors and states that: "... ideological deviations in our policies and political line were the breeding

(Continued to page 57)

ibrahim on the Kurdish

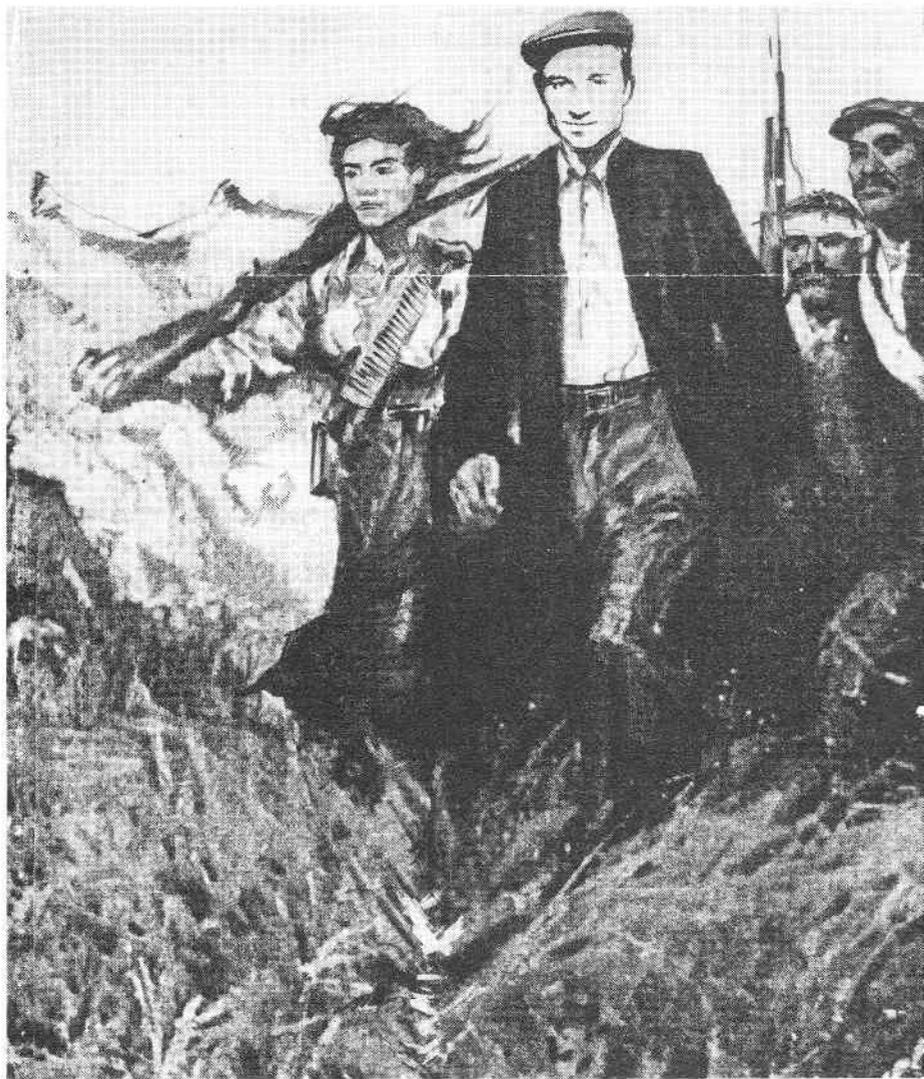
The following text is excerpted from a lengthy polemic by Ibrahim Kaypakkaya entitled *The National Question in Turkey*. This work was originally completed in December 1971, before Ibrahim Kaypakkaya led the genuine Marxist-Leninists in splitting with the Shafak revisionists, who were also billing themselves then as the Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (TIKP), and founded the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) in April 1972. *The National Question in Turkey* was re-edited by Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in June 1972, soon after the organisational split with the TIKP revisionists.

The excerpts printed here are translated from a collection entitled *Selected Writings, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya*, which was published by Ocak Yayinlari, Istanbul, 1979.—AWTW

2. Who is subjected to national oppression?

According to the Shafak revisionists, it is the *Kurdish people* who are being subjected to national oppression. This fails to grasp what national oppression means. National oppression is the oppression to which the ruling classes of the dominant nation subject the oppressed, dependent and minority nations. In Turkey, national oppression is the oppression by the ruling classes of the dominant Turkish nation not just of the Kurdish people but of the entire *Kurdish nation*, and not even of the Kurdish nation alone, but of all minority nationalities.

“People” and “nation” are not the same thing. The concept of people today generally includes the working class, poor and middle peasants, semi-proletarians and the urban petit bourgeoisie. In backward countries, the revolutionary wing of the national



bourgeoisie, which forms part of the ranks of the people's democratic revolution against imperialism, feudalism and comprador capitalism, is also included among the classes of people. However, the concept of “nation” comprises all of the classes and strata, including the ruling classes....

People, in every historical period, refers to those classes and strata which benefit from revolution and form the revolutionary ranks. People is not a social group-

ing that appears in a specific historical period only to disappear later on; it exists in every historical period. However, nations have appeared together with capitalism and “in the epoch of rising capitalism” and will disappear in an advanced stage of socialism.

The concept of people, in every stage of the revolution, changes. However, nation does not depend on the stage of the revolution.

Today Kurdish workers, Kurdish poor and middle peasants, semi-

Kaypakkaya National Question



proletarians and the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the revolutionary wing of the Kurdish bourgeoisie, which is to join the ranks of people's democratic revolution, are included in the concept of *Kurdish people*. Whereas, other than these classes and strata, all other sections of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and the Kurdish landlords are also included in the concept of Kurdish nation. Certain overly knowledgeable wisecracks claim that landlords are not considered part of a nation. What's

more, these gentlemen even hatched the marvel that the Kurds do not yet constitute a nation due to the existence of landlords in the Kurdish region. This is a frightfully demagogic statement and a sophistry. Do the landlords not speak the same language? Do they not reside on the same land? Are they not part of the unified economic existence and spiritual formation? And besides, nations emerge not with capitalist development reaching its final limit but at

the dawn of capitalism. With capitalism penetrating into a country and unifying the markets in that region to a certain degree, the communities already meeting all the other conditions are considered a nation. If it were not so, all stable communities in the backward countries and regions where capitalist development is limited could not be considered nations. In China up until the 1940's, there was a rather strong state of feudal fragmentation, and according to this logic, one would have to deny the existence of nations in China previously. Until the 1917 revolution, feudalism had a strong presence in the broad countryside of Russia; this understanding would lead to rejecting the existence of nations in Russia. In Turkey, for instance, during the years of the Liberation War,* feudalism was much stronger than it is today; according to this understanding, one would have to conclude that during those years in Turkey there were no nations. In Asia, Africa and Latin America, feudalism exists in varying degrees; with this understanding, it would be necessary to reject the existence of nations. Obviously, the thesis claiming that the Kurds do not constitute a nation is patently absurd from beginning to end, contrary to facts and also harmful in practice. Harmful, because such a thesis only serves the ruling classes of the dominant, exploiting and oppressing nations. Hence they would have found a justification to vindicate all the privileges and inequalities in their favour and to legitimise the national oppression and suffering to which they subject the oppressed,
(Continued to page 73)

*This refers to the war waged under the leadership of the Turkish comprador bourgeoisie and landlords against imperialist occupation forces after WW1.

Why Did Colombia's Bomb Its Own Palace of Justice?

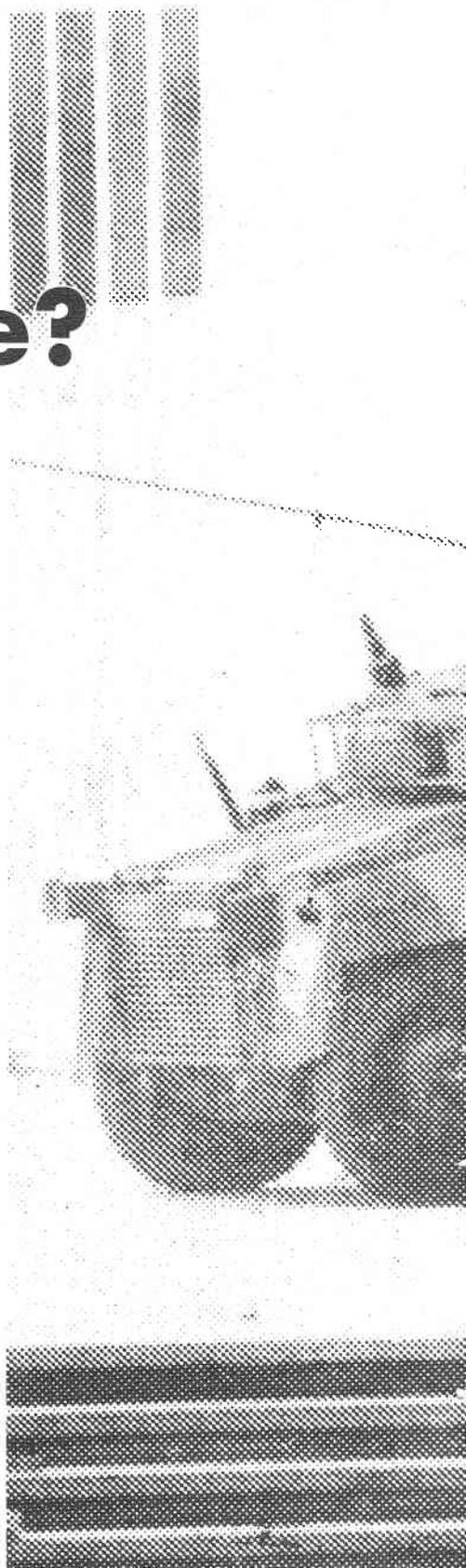
In November 1985 Colombia's "Palace of Justice" was seized by several dozen men and women of the M-19 Movement who demanded that the Supreme Court, then in session on the building's fourth floor, hear a 52-page lawsuit they had come to file against the government of President Belisario Betancur. They accused him of "betraying" a year-old truce between guerrilla organisations and his government which he himself had initiated.

Apparently these guerrillas had expected negotiations. In one of their most famous actions, in 1980, M-19 took over a cocktail party being held by the ambassador of the Dominican Republic and held 36 ambassadors hostage for over two months while conducting talks with the government. This time, the Betancur government, which had granted amnesty and even small government stipends to hundreds of imprisoned M-19 members under the terms of the truce agreement, brought in heavy artillery. Cannons punched holes through the marble walls of one of Colombia's most important buildings in the heart of the main square in its capital. The soldiers slaughtered everyone in the building, including many employees and half of the country's 24 Supreme Court Justices. Among

them was its Chief Justice, who had frantically telephoned Betancur to beg him to make the soldiers stop shooting. Betancur refused to come to the phone. A man who identified himself as an M-19 leader later told the press, "We never expected the bestiality of driving tanks through the front door."

Why did M-19 so badly underestimate what would happen? Why did the Betancur government carry out this apparently abrupt change in policy? These questions are addressed by the following slightly abridged article taken from the November 1985 issue of *Alborada Comunista* (Communist Dawn), newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia, a participating organisation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

A short summation of the guerrilla movements in Colombia may be in order for many readers. A nation of 29 million inhabitants, a great many of them peasants ruled by feudal landlords and chiefs, Colombia has been in the midst of or between civil wars throughout its history. The present guerrilla movements have their roots in the period known as "La Violencia," 10 years of civil war between the Liberal and Conservative parties beginning in 1948. It ended in a power-sharing agree-



Government



ment between the two parties. But in many of the country's rural areas, the control of the central government was never re-established. Mass upheavals among the peasants in the 1960s were accompanied by the rise of a variety of organisations calling themselves revolutionary, including the very influential Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist), which then supported Mao Tsetung's China.

Today, every major political tendency in the opposition has its own army. Many of their soldiers are second and third generation professional guerrillas. The pro-Soviet Communist Party (PCC), along with its legal and electoral apparatus, also leads the Revolutionary Colombian Armed Forces (FARC), an army of 10-15,000 men and women, mainly peasants whose pay and living conditions are said to resemble those of their brothers and sisters in the state armed forces. The FARC has long controlled an entire department without overwhelming government interference. The PCC's 1980 Congress called for this basic programme: "Isolate pro-imperialist militarism, rely on the democratic forces, including, obviously, those of the traditional parties, call for amnesty, support the truce proposed by the guerrilla movements and demand political reform."

The second largest force, said to have one or more thousands of armed men and women under its command, is the M-19. This organisation is linked to the Western European socialist parties. Its programme says that it struggles to bring about the "existence of a true representative democracy" in Colombia. Its full name, April 19th Movement, comes from the date of the 1970 national elections stolen from the populist candidate by the armed forces and the other parties. Other important guerrilla forces include the EPL (People's Liberation Army), which arose out of one of the many splits in the now defunct old PCC(M-L). The EPL and the pro-Albanian party behind it which has usurped the PCC(M-L)'s name abandoned armed struggle in the countryside based on the peasants and instead carried out what it considered urban

guerrilla actions. Politically it is usually to be found alongside (if slightly to the "left" of) the explicitly pro Soviet CP. Its most recent programme, like the others just cited, calls for "a constitutional reform arrived at by a directly elected constituent assembly" — which in fact is how more than one of Colombia's several reactionary constitutions came into being.

The FARC signed the government's proposed truce in March 1984. The government then brought its troops to bear on the other, much smaller organisations. The EPL and later M-19 signed in August of that year. However, in June 1985 M-19 announced that it considered the truce to have been ended by the Betancur government's failure to live up to the agreement. — AWTW

At 11:45 in the morning of November 6th, a commando unit of the M-19 guerrilla organisation seized the Palace of Justice in Bogota, in order to carry out discussions within the framework of the "dialogue" about "violations" of the truce and other questions related to the "peace process." Starting from this moment and for the next 28 hours, bloody combat took place between the guerrillas and the defenders of the reactionary state. At 3:30 in the afternoon the following Thursday, the official massacre ended amid rubble and the incinerated bodies of more than a hundred men and women, including, apparently, according to official sources, the entire guerrilla unit.

Commander in Chief Belisario launched "the biggest urban counter-guerrilla operation in the world," with the intention of showing the world's reactionary governments how it's done. The disposition of forces included 25 tanks specially outfitted for urban counter-guerrilla warfare, armoured cars, rockets, helicopters, airborne assault units, every conceivable kind of bomb and over 5,000 soldiers, police, "intelligence" operatives and DAS agents in Red Cross uniforms, armed to the teeth. All of them sent to "Defend Democracy, Boss!" as the pig colonel who commanded the military operation put it

on radio and TV.

The bombing of the temple of bourgeois justice, with more than 400 people in it, forced the guerrilla commando to change its plans. They hadn't counted on this official response. The events during the "seizure of the Palace" and afterwards manifested the splits within the ruling classes, the true character of M-19 and the polarisation among the masses in the face of the national political situation.

The international bourgeois support which poured in from all over Latin America, the U.S. and Europe applauded Betancur's "firmness of character" and the rapidity with which he confronted the situation. Taking his actions as a model for how "terrorism" should be dealt with, the call came from Mexico to found a "worldwide front against terrorism," against communism in this period of crisis. In short, as Belisario Betancur said, "our struggle is that of democracy against terrorism;" "you have to take sides."

The Dynamic of the Contradictions

Despite what has happened the ruling classes and the Betancur government are not going to give up the banner of "peace." The various contradictions within Colombian society are not all manifesting themselves with equal intensity. A careful study of the national political situation shows that what has been sharpening is the contradiction between the forces within the country which are representatives of the two imperialist blocs. Together with the sharpening of this contradiction, the contradictions among various forces of the pro-Western bloc are also sharpening, including those in power and those in the unarmed or armed opposition.

Betancur's proposed policy for a "peace process" or "opening" — his amnesty, armed truce, pardon for the guerrillas and proposed reforms — have not been welcomed by some sections of the ruling classes. Some radically pro-U.S. sections have brought strong pressure against it, criticising the policy as a whole, the handling of the guerrilla groups and the terms of the deals and agreements. The proponents of what they call "restricted

democracy" have not opposed the policy of "democratisation" itself, taken to mean the promotion and strengthening of democratic regimes, but they have criticised the Executive and the policy of "creating an opening." Since the beginning of the "armed truce," Betancur has praised M-19's stand and in turn M-19 has consistently defended his policies. The contradiction between M-19 and Betancur, as well as the contradiction between M-19 and some typically pro-U.S. circles, including some among the armed forces, sharpened with the seizure of the Palace; but this was a process in which M-19 gradually lost the support of sections of the bourgeoisie linked to Europe. This does not mean that Betancur is not pro-U.S., which he certainly is, but that his stand is to play cards with the pro-Soviet forces in order to shore up the pro-Yankee camp.

The disagreements within the ruling classes revolve around the pro-Sovietism of the PCC and the FARC-UP. That is why the ruling classes are clearing the way to deal with them. So "why doesn't the M-19 keep its promises, why does it just create problems instead?"

On March 20th 1984, the FARC set up a mass organisation, the Patriotic Union (UP), to struggle for a "return to normalcy," "for a reform of political customs," with the main slogan, "make way for reform." The government is giving the pro-Soviets all the guarantees they need to allow them to participate "constitutionally" in elections. In this way the "democratic opening" has been drawing lines of demarcation: on the one hand, the M-19 and the EPL; on the other, the FARC. In a year of armed truce, it has become obvious which of these the government considers more important in its "peace" agreements and which is the principal contender with the ruling classes: the pro-Soviets.

From this point of view, "defending democratic institutions" doesn't mean attacking only M-19 and the other groups of the so-called "Guerrilla Coordinating Committee." Above all it means attacking the PCC and the FARC-UP. The Palace massacre clearly shows that

the government is willing to talk and negotiate only with the "mature, serious, veteran" guerrillas of the FARC. Under current national conditions, there is no way the regime can carry out the "peace process" just using machine guns. The contradictions within the ruling classes over how to negotiate with the guerrillas and the summation of what happened at the Palace will not lead to cancelling the "peace process," but rather to focusing their twin policies of negotiation and repression and strengthening their unity, above all in defense of their reactionary state.

The opinions put forward by the heads of the different political parties have gone no further than referring to "the deterioration of the peace process;" they've claimed that the government has been "soft" on the guerrillas but nobody has called for rejecting the "peace process." Further, the strongest criticisms have come from among supporters of the government. After the army's massacre, even those who demanded Betancur take action against subversion and added their voices to the army's exaggerations, still support the government. The opinions of the "great" reactionary party leaders are clear and not at all accidental. The pro-U.S. Conservative Alvaro Gomez and the pro-U.S. Liberal Carlos Lleras Restrepo essentially agreed in their statements that "as important as the lives of persons (i.e. bourgeois leaders) may be, the most important thing was the defense of institutions," and that, "since the armed forces are the defenders of the constitutional order, they acted quite properly." Both these men raise a hue and cry about the struggle against "terrorism."

The Palace seizure demonstrates the Marxist-Leninist truth that the army is the principal aspect of the state, which is why "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." The reactionaries defended their political power with their guns because some of them believed it was in danger of being seized by M-19.

The power of the Executive has been being strengthened to the detriment of the legislative and judicial branches for some time now.

Political power is defended with guns, and not with the jurisprudence of the judges. But this affair also shows that bourgeois democracy (of the old type) is a hollow and formal reality in the face of the reactionary power of imperialism. With the order to level the palace the essence of what the regime sought to accomplish was this: on the one hand it wanted to show just who has state power, and on the other with this army action it sought to convince the masses that armed revolutionary struggle is useless.

Confusion and indignation arose in various quarters which could find no explanation for why Betancur had said in his first speech that "During my government not a drop of blood will be spilled" and, nevertheless, several hundred people have already been killed in confrontations between the guerrillas and the army, and hundreds have been tortured or "disappeared," even without counting the massacres of November 6th and 7th. The "Palace massacre" was a rude shock for some people who used to consider the government "progressive." For others, the most backward, it was a demonstration that a "strong" government is needed to fight "terrorism."

The pro-Soviet PCC and the FARC-UP also seem to have benefited from this situation. The dynamic of the contradictions, especially the contradiction between the representatives of the pro-U.S. and pro-Soviet forces, has not been extinguished; in some ways it has grown sharper. Characterising the M-19 action which all the Colombian and foreign press had labeled terrorist, the PCC called it "an attack carried out by madmen, isolated from the masses, at a time when the country is facing new and dangerous conditions," when "right-wing enemies of peace" (i.e. the pro-U.S. forces) have been strengthened. For the pro-Soviet forces, what happened will not change their tactical plans. Although a certain hardening of the regime is foreseen, the agreements between the government and the FARC are not considered in danger.

The pro-Soviet forces and their army will not take up armed actions without taking into account the

situation in Central America and the balance of forces in the whole world. Before taking such action they need to broaden their influence among the masses and build up their guerrilla front; they need to win public opinion among other guerrilla forces, and now more than ever to struggle for reforms in order to consolidate their zones of influence.

Loss of Support and Reformism

The pressure of the other Latin American governments against the Colombian government's negotiations with guerrillas may have some effect on the "democratic opening," since in some other countries it is more practical for the pro-U.S. regimes to take a hard line against the armed or unarmed opposition. In Latin America, there is for instance the example of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front in Chile, a basically pro-Soviet guerrilla group which has recently declared that the conditions have matured for a general insurrection against Pinochet. To this we would add that a basically pro-Soviet offensive, utilising mass actions for the defense of "democracy" and "the rule of law," would sharpen up conditions within their strategic vision of imperialist war.

It is an obvious fact that some sections of the bourgeoisie have been gradually withdrawing their political support for M-19, especially since the Mexico meeting between Betancur and Ivan Marino Ospina, then head of M-19, who was later assassinated. Recent editorials and articles in the newspapers *El Tiempo* and *Nueva Frontera* show that the bourgeoisie used to consider M-19 a formidable force because it enjoyed favourable public opinion. Today these same newspapers are saying that M-19 has lost that public support.

The much-discussed break-up of the "armed truce" and the later clashes in the department of Cauca, the taking of the town of Miranda there and of the town of Genova in Quindio, clashes in the department of el Valle, the attempted assassination of the head of M-19 and the assassination of Ivan Marino Ospina in Calle (el Valle), the attack on the Cisneros Battalion in Armenia

(Quindio), the attack on Army headquarters in Bogota and finally the seizure of the Palace of Justice, all during 1985, have led to a loss of prestige for M-19 among some sections of the bourgeoisie and the "left" petit bourgeois intelligentsia. Some of them believe that the "democratic opening" is the correct road to follow; they believe in the "peace process" offered by the pro-U.S. Betancur regime. All these facts have political significance for M-19, and this public opinion will not necessarily be channeled into pro-Sovietism, at least for now. Some circles tend to support the regime.

But the same can't be said of the broad masses, who in one way or another see that the road of armed struggle will ultimately be the only way out of poverty and oppression. The question is exactly who among the various political forces and guerrilla organisations in the field will be able to draw upon these sentiments.

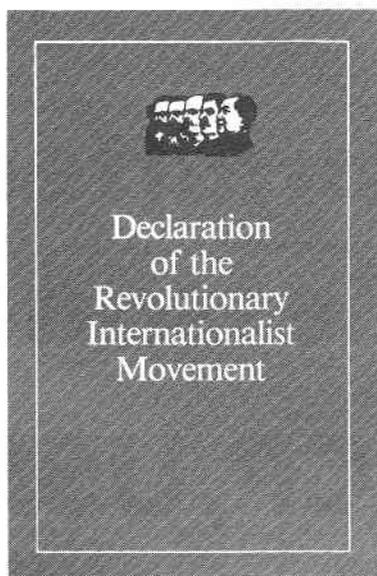
War is a continuation of politics by other means. This is valid for reactionary and revolutionary political parties alike. In its action the M-19 clearly manifested a political and military line of "armed reformism." Since M-19's line and programme are reformist, its military actions have the same content. To fight for "reforms" and "peace" within the framework of the present state is to fight in order to negotiate. In the analysis M-19 did after the seizure of the Palace, it criticised the government's *erroneous* attitude in justifying what had happened: "this attitude only confronts us with the abyss of the government's senseless hatred and makes it even more difficult to work for peace by methods other than guerrilla struggle" (*El Tiempo*, 14 November 1985).

What are these other roads besides guerrilla struggle which lead to peace? What is being said is that armed struggle is not the way to win peace, nor independence, liberty and happiness for the oppressed. M-19 simply wants reforms: "We took the Palace of Justice for the sake of truth and democracy. Not to demand alms or to benefit ourselves, not to attack the courts of justice nor their representatives. We have never

attacked and never will attack the workers of the justice system (this is how Betancur referred to the judges at their funeral — *AWTW*). On the contrary, we went to the court of honour and law because the country has sufficient grounds to put this government on political and judicial trial, and because the Supreme Court and the State Council have demonstrated their conscience and dignity" (*El Tiempo*, 14 November 1985).

With this there's nothing to do but believe that they mean what they say. M-19 respects "constitutionality," bourgeois democracy, and its worn-out three branches of government. They believe in the rule of law and all they demand is that this capitalism have a "human face." Thus their military operation was to confront the Army and not to kill hostages. But they made a mistake. They didn't take into account the whole background, the previous actions and present position of the regime and its armed forces. Thus they did not and could not take into account the possibility that the army would "level the whole place," as it did. Since their line is reformist, not one of putting an end to capitalism as a system but one of making it more livable, their military orientation is rife with the same outlook. For M19 war is a continuation of their reformist politics by armed means. It is a bourgeois political and military line, in the social democratic style, and thus does not seek a correct solution to the country's problems....

For the revolutionary communists, the fundamental political principle is to carry out the New Democratic revolution, which means destroying the old bureaucrat-landlord pro-imperialist state. In military terms this means utilising revolutionary armed forces. Based on this fundamental political principle, there must be a communist party, the only guarantee of victory for the oppressed, which in a process going from smaller to larger arouses the masses, builds guerrilla zones and revolutionary base areas, building the political power of the masses of people. This is what is called revolutionary war, people's war.... □



The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* was adopted in March 1984 by the delegates and observers at the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations which formed the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. The following are the participating parties and organisations of the RIM:

Central Reorganisation Committee
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
Ceylon Communist Party
Communist Collective of Agit/Prop [Italy]
Communist Committee of Trento [Italy]
Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD (M-L)]
Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist)
Mao Tsetung Regional Committee
Communist Party of Peru
Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist
Haitian International Revolutionary Group
Nepal Communist Party [Mashal]
New Zealand Red Flag Group
Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent [Britain]
Proletarian Communist Organisation, Marxist-Leninist [Italy]
Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) [Bangladesh]
Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA
Revolutionary Communist Union [Dominican Republic]
Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)

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For more information write the Information Bureau of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement at the following address:

BCM RIM
London, WC1N 3XX
U.K.

RIM Committee Message to RCP, USA

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement we salute the 10th anniversary of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA — the vanguard party of the proletariat in the United States and an important detachment of the international proletariat.

The foundation ten years ago of the RCP, USA on the basis of the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was a victory for the proletariat in the U.S. and worldwide. Since then the RCP, USA has continued to advance along the path of the world proletarian revolution and today, as part of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, is doing so all the more.

The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* confirms the Leninist principle that “the world revolutionary movement is composed essentially of two streams — the proletarian-socialist revolution waged by the proletariat and its allies in the imperialist citadels and the national liberation, or new democratic revolution waged by the nations and peoples subjugated to imperialism. The alliance between these two revolutionary currents remains the cornerstone of revolutionary strategy in the era of imperialism.” It is, therefore, of great importance for our movement to count in its ranks a revolutionary

Marxist-Leninist party in one of the principal imperialist citadels. Your struggle against the U.S. imperialist ruling class is of great importance for the struggles of the proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world with which it is inseparably linked.

U.S. imperialism has long been exploiting and oppressing not only millions of proletarians and oppressed in the U.S. itself but has also been maintaining its vicious empire at the expense of the misery, poverty and very lives of proletarians and oppressed masses throughout the world. For this reason, the armed seizure of political power in the U.S. by the proletariat and the establishment of proletarian rule will represent an extremely important stride in transforming the world and advancing toward communism. Making revolution in such an imperialist citadel requires a well organized, well rooted, revolutionary internationalist party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

The RCP, USA was forged out of the revolutionary upheavals of the 1960s and early '70s in the United States and around the world. In these years millions around the world and in the U.S. itself were awakened to political life and entered raging battles against imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism and its war of aggression against the Vietnamese people. In the U.S. itself Black people and

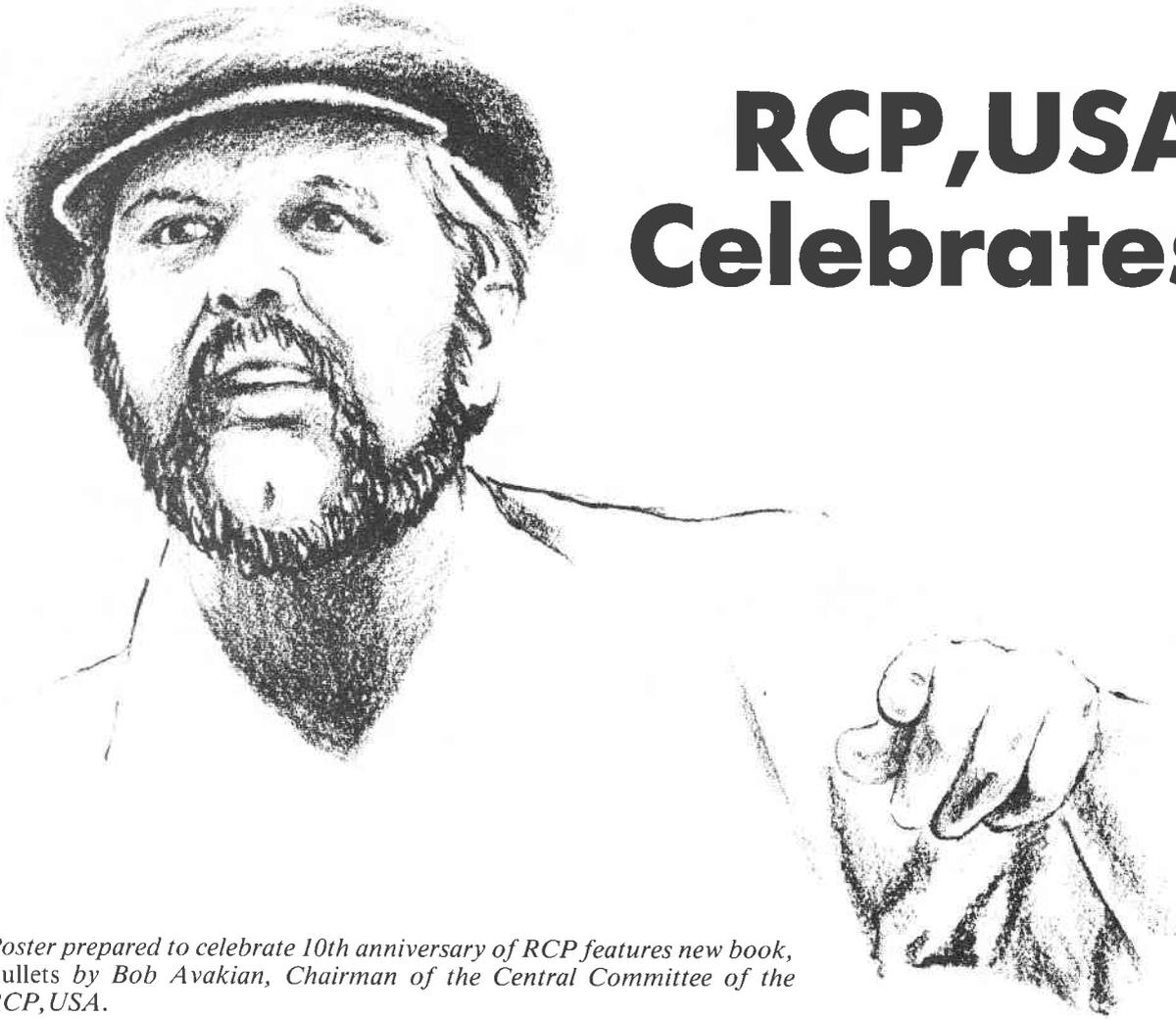
other oppressed nationalities, women, other proletarian sections as well as students and revolutionary intellectuals took up combat against U.S. imperialism.

Most of all these years were marked by a worldwide confrontation between Marxism and revisionism. This monumental struggle led by Mao Tsetung reached its highest expression in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The struggle against modern revisionism led by the reactionary ruling clique of the Soviet Union opened the way for the formation of genuine revolutionary communist organisations based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. As Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA put it : “It is no exaggeration to say that without the theory and line developed by Mao and the practice of the Chinese masses in carrying it out, especially through the Cultural Revolution, our party would not and could not have been founded when it was and on such a revolutionary basis.”

The RCP, USA was able to successfully confront the situation after the counter-revolutionary coup d'état in China following the death of Mao Tsetung. Under the leadership of Bob Avakian, the RCP, USA successfully defeated a revisionist line and faction inspired by the

(Continued to page 26)

RCP,USA Celebrates



Poster prepared to celebrate 10th anniversary of RCP features new book, *Bullets* by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, USA.

10th Anniversary

The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, a participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, celebrated its 10th Anniversary through a campaign, most especially in the pages of its weekly newspaper, the *Revolutionary Worker*, to make it known in the U.S. that there is a Party which is preparing proletarian revolution in that country as a component part of the world revolution. The RCP, USA launched the celebration on October 1, 1985, with a major editorial in the *RW*, and with the announcement of the publication of a

new book, *Bullets*, a collection of quotations from Bob Avakian, who has been the Chairman of its Central Committee since the Party's founding. The *RW* editorial issued a call to build the RCP, including by joining it and through financial contributions. Since then the *RW* has published numerous letters from people who have been moved to tell of the Party's influence on their lives or of their support or adherence to the Party and its line, including many from proletarians, oppressed nationalities, women and youth as well as better-off sections of the peo-

ple in the U.S.

Like most other participants in the RIM, the RCP, USA is a product of the revolutionary upsurge that swept the world in the 1960s and early '70s. In the U.S., Black masses exploded in urban rebellions, other national minorities and women too took the political stage while millions protested the U.S. imperialists' war in Vietnam. A thoroughly unpatriotic current grew up amongst the students and youth in the U.S. As the *RW* editorial notes, it was then that "the nucleus of today's vanguard began to assem-



May Day 1980

ble. That seed, the Revolutionary Union (RU), played the key role in the founding of the RCP in 1975. It grew up in and was part of that ‘60s tradition’ here and internationally of making radical *breaks* with tradition, including the heavy weight among the ‘American left’ of respectable and patient so-called ‘politics.’”

The editorial goes on to summarize these early years: “We learned through at first primitive experience, much in the manner, as Lenin put it, of ‘peasants going off to war’ armed only with what was at hand. But while we, of course, began with many wrong notions, a process began — and has since deepened and continued — of making radical ruptures with the legacy of reformism which has infected much of the American left and even the international communist movement.”

In the course of the years that followed the formation of the RCP,USA, and particularly through the fight to defeat a revisionist line

and faction which sought to follow Deng Xiaoping’s treachery and to bury the RCP in the red-white-and-blue shroud of U.S. imperialism, the Party learned valuable lessons, forged a line on crucial questions of leading proletarian revolution in the U.S., and began to accumulate strength to actually carry this out. In pointing out what a difference the existence of such a vanguard party has made in the U.S., the editorial turns first of all to “the realm of theory,” giving as an example “the Party’s analysis of the political economy of this epoch, its deepened grasp on the objective laws underlying the international process of war and revolution” and its “analysis of the specific situation today.” Furthermore, it sums up that the RCP,USA “has made great, if still initial progress in charting an uncharted course.” By this, the RCP means the necessity to deepen the understanding of the path of proletarian revolution in an advanced imperialist country which, while sharing certain basic features with

the Russia of 1917, also differs in important ways.

The RCP,USA also points proudly to its internationalist stand: “Particularly in an imperialist country like this, where large sections of the population get at least temporary ‘perks’ from the imperialist plunder of the world and are isolated from and blinded to the reality of the daily horror suffered by hundreds of millions at the hands of this system, proletarian internationalism is a decisive dividing line for revolution.” This stand, they consider, “provides a welcome and most important vehicle of expression for the real internationalist sentiments that do exist among whole sections of people in the U.S. who are sickened by this country’s deeds.”

The editorial points to the decisive leadership of Bob Avakian in achieving this line, and to the continuing attacks on him by the imperialists (which forced him into exile in 1980), and then sums up:

“And through all this, over the past ten years and more, the RCP

has acquired the bottom line — the capacity to lead. A vanguard Party has not only been fought for in the realm of theory; one has been built and strengthened through struggle and precious experience. A revolutionary *New Programme* has been forged. A central task of ‘create public opinion, seize power’ has been identified and embarked on. And underlying this *Programme* and central task, the Party has based itself on and developed revolutionary theory, has a grasp and summation of key historical questions, domestically and on an international level, and has acquired knowledge and experience in the practical movement. It has sharpened its sense, and helped other advanced forces do so, of the key questions of the day. It has developed organisationally and has established a regular press. Armed with this press, and other vehicles of agitation and propaganda, the Party has developed — and aims at further developing — a vehicle to take the ‘pulse’ of the masses, to sense shifts in their mood which are significant for the development of the revolutionary movement — especially for seizing the possible opening toward an attempt at revolutionary power.”

This revolutionary internationalist stand has struck a chord in



1979. International incident created when 500 demonstrate in support of Mao on the occasion of Deng Xiaoping's visit to the U.S. 78 arrested, including Bob Avakian, received 25 felony charges each.



1978. Moody Park, Houston, Texas. Angered by court fine of \$1 as ‘punishment’ in the police murder of a Mexican-American youth, the barrio explodes.

the U.S. and many have responded to the RCP,USA's call to build the Party, as is shown by the letters published in its press. A Black military veteran from Texas writes that, "I am giving to the RCP because I want to see revolution spread from the USA to the USA (Azania)...General Motors, Ford and ITT are some of the main supporters of the oppression in Azania and throughout the Third World. Imagine what difference it would make to the people to see a revolution in the United States. It would lift the yoke of U.S. imperialism from around their necks and help their struggle for liberation." A proletarian woman from San Francisco writes that "Several weeks ago I went to see the movie made by Yılmaz Güney called *The Wall* in San Francisco. This movie really moved me. It made me very angry how those prisoners in Turkey were treated and I thought about how much more difficult it is for those people to get rid of their oppressors. So — how could I, living in America *not* do all I can to end this shit and...stand back from contributing to the only hope we have — a truly proletarian vanguard who is ready and willing to lead the people to real liberation."

A number of youth wrote in too. One declared that, "The RCP and the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement have given me something to live for in this mad, mad world — revolution!" A Latino youth declared that, "Believe me — there are a lot of youth who really care about what's going on but don't have leadership...Despite all this 'Rambo-ness,' there are a lot of youth who are genuinely concerned. It makes a big difference to be helped to see that this system is all an illusion. Illusion in the sense of what we thought it might have been. The U.S. definitely lived up to their beliefs as was the case with the Indians, slaves, and countless other crimes. Rape, women's oppression, plunder, no future, this, yes, this is Amerikkka..."

As the ruler of a worldwide empire with its tentacles spread around the globe, U.S. imperialism has literally millions and millions of immigrant workers within its borders.

The RCP,USA has fought the chauvinist attacks on these proletarians and indeed has welcomed their contribution to the revolutionary struggle in the U.S. A significant number of the letters published in the *RW* come from immigrants, especially from Latin America. One woman from the Dominican Republic wrote:

"I am a proletarian woman who works in the garment district of New York and I have many questions about what my role should be in the struggle to overthrow the present imperialist system. I am anxious for definitive changes to improve the conditions of the workers in the garment district as well as in the rest of the world. I see the need for a proletarian vanguard that can organize and mobilise this mass of brothers and sisters from different oppressed countries who come to the U.S. pushed mainly by hunger and repression only to find that the dream of abundance and opportunities to study and work, etc., is false. Instead they find crumbs which are only one form or another of making us accomplices to the plunder, hunger and exploitation of countries from which we are forced to emigrate. Likewise they try to make us accept life as you live it in a city like New York."

As the editorial points out, the RCP,USA is not about "to rest on our laurels":

"For us, this 10th anniversary means two things. It is an occasion to rededicate ourselves to the cause of proletarian revolution — and more than that, to accept the responsibility to meet still greater challenges, to make the further leaps required in the period ahead. And it is also an occasion to put out a challenge to others to step forward: to help build, financially support, and defend the RCP,USA — and especially to *join* it and take on, as Party members, the revolutionary tasks that must be taken on.

"And we make these challenges of ourselves and others not just to mark ten years on the calendar. It has everything to do with what time it is — the dangers and opportunities immediately before us. So for us, this anniversary is an occasion to cherish — and a time to seize." □

RIM Message

(Continued from page 22)

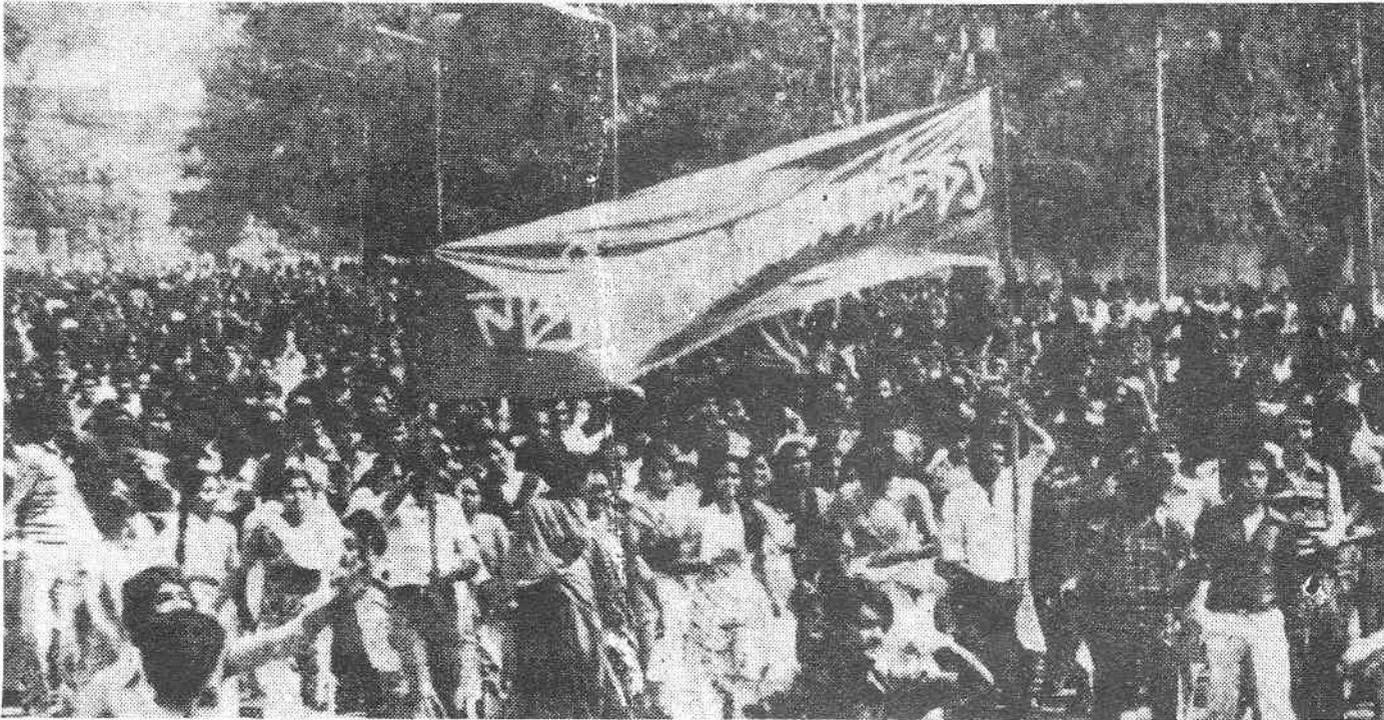
Chinese revisionists who sought to turn the party from its revolutionary path.

Since that time the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA has played an important role in the struggle to defend Mao Tsetung Thought and to regroup the genuine Marxist-Leninist forces internationally — efforts which contributed to the convening of the First and Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations and the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. The RCP,USA has also played an active part in the struggle to sum up the history of the international communist movement, to analyse contemporary reality and the current world situation and draw appropriate conclusions. This process has served to raise the level of debate in the international communist movement and lay the basis for a higher degree of unity among the Marxist-Leninist forces internationally.

Today all the major contradictions in the world are intensifying and the danger of inter-imperialist world war and the possibilities for major revolutionary advances are increasing. In this light, the consistent stand of the RCP,USA in defending all genuine revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed, especially those directed against its "own" ruling class, of training the proletariat and the masses in the spirit of "revolutionary defeatism" and consistent internationalism, of preparing the proletariat for armed uprising and the seizing of power is all the more vital. Carrying out these tasks will require even further advances by the RCP,USA in relation to all the spheres of the class struggle. In these efforts, the RCP,USA can count on the support of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

**HAIL THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RCP,USA!
LONG LIVE MARXISM-LENINISM-MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT!** □

The Tinderbox of Purba Bangla



Great numbers take to the streets of Dhaka 14th February, 1983.

by Amir Ali and
Taheruddin Ahmed*

Every general in Purba Bangla** who captures state power through a military coup d'état projects himself as a great advocate and saviour of "democracy" right from the beginning. These enemies of democracy shed oceans of tears for the

democracy that they themselves kill. How should this phenomenon be explained? Should it be attributed to a freak of history — or to the high political consciousness of the people of Purba Bangla? Whenever the ruling classes of Purba Bangla and their foreign masters find their interests threatened they resort to open fascism — civil or military — as was

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** The historical name of the land is Purba Bangla. In 1971 the Indian puppet government of Sheikh Mujib named it "Bangladesh," a name that carries an unacceptable political content.

seen during the rule of Sheikh Mujib or General Ziaur Rahman, or as is seen today under General Ershad, the current ruler of Purba Bangla. No sooner had Ershad overthrown the previous U.S. puppet than he began to chant full-throated slogans about "restoring democracy" — more so even than any democrat.

This is a phenomenon typical of Purba Bangla and most third-world countries: the ruling classes try to create and maintain a democratic image of themselves, but the necessity of their class interests invariably compels them to shatter that fake democratic cloak and resort to barefaced tyranny — and then these chameleons, faced with the peoples' movements, turn right around and once again try to put a halo of democracy over their heads. But whatever form their rule takes, it is always as autocratic as it is dictatorial.

The people of Purba Bangla are historically dead against all sorts of autocratic rule, and especially military dictatorship. The history of the people of our country proves this, from the period when Purba Bangla was a province of Pakistan, and the people rose against the dictatorships of Generals Ayub Khan and Yaha Khan, up to the present. This is why the shrewd fox General Ershad portrayed himself as a democrat. But as the saying goes, you can't fool all the people all the time, and from the very day Ershad seized power in 1982 he has faced staunch mass resistance from workers, students, intellectuals and other political forces. The three subsequent years have been filled with such struggles.

OVERVIEW OF THE ANTI-MARTIAL LAW STRUGGLES

History is a continuous process where the past has its own past. Even before the current military junta took power, there were definite signs that martial law was at the doorstep.

Before this, the last military dictator, General Ziaur Rahman, who had turned in his khaki "khurta" (army dress) for civilian clothes, was assassinated in a military coup d'état. His vice-president, Abdus

Sattar, then arranged his own election to the presidency. But even during Sattar's rule, General Ershad — in violation of their Constitution — busily lectured the army on the "role of the army in nation-building." The Sattar government, heavily dependent on the army, did not or could not take any action against this.

It was thus evident that military rule was in the offing — and the Purba Banglar Sharbohara Party (the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla — PBSP) alerted the people to the danger. Soon afterwards, Ershad toppled Sattar, and the new junta immediately suspended the Constitution and banned all political activities, making the slightest criticism of their rule a punishable offense.

Thus another burden of military fascism came down on the backs of the people of Purba Bangla.

It should be mentioned here that U.S. hegemony over Purba Bangla was re-established through an earlier military coup in 1975, and has been maintained since then. The Ershad government is a puppet of U.S. imperialism; Purba Bangla is a neocolony of the U.S. imperialists, and they are, together with their puppet Ershad, the principal enemy of the people of Purba Bangla at this time.

Ershad immediately declared his devotion to democracy in his first radio speech — and just as quickly he was met with protests. Though these were confined to the university campuses at Dhaka, the capital, and at Rajshahi University, they carry immense political importance, for they were the first courageous incidents of openly trampling on martial law, and they served as the spark for later resistance. These incidents created the atmosphere for the formation of the Student Action Committee (SAC).

Even while the students bravely protested, the big political organisations sat idle. The pro-American and pro-Indo-Soviet political forces — though they have hundreds of contradictions with each other — form part of the same ruling class as Ershad. Thus the capture of power by Ershad, while it threatened their group interests, did not menace their

class interests. And so they sat with folded hands. It was as if Ershad and these forces were performing the same function from different sides: Ershad banned political activity, while these oppositionists implemented his ban. It is aptly noted that birds of a feather flock together.

Within a few days after Ershad's seizure of power, the PBSP put anti-martial law posters up at Dhaka University and circulated a leaflet exposing him and putting forward three points as a minimum basis for a unified anti-martial law movement: 1) immediate withdrawal of martial law, 2) immediate and unconditional release of all political activists behind bars, and 3) abrogation of all black (repressive) laws. Beforehand, when the initial signs of an imminent coup had just surfaced, PBSP had suggested what should be done in the probable new situation. This laid the basis for the protests immediately after the military takeover.

The student movement continued to develop. A coalition of 14 student groups prepared to observe the 20th anniversary of the day in September 1962 when a number of valiant sons of the soil sacrificed their lives in the fight against the Pakistani government. The day before the anniversary, three radical student leaders, including Shiblee Kayum, were arrested for pasting up anti-martial law posters. After a twenty-minute hearing they were sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment. The government followed this shortly afterwards with the announcement of a new, highly reactionary educational policy, which was rejected by the conscious students and intellectuals. So-called opposition leaders maintained almost complete silence. Only PBSP countered with an outline of a national democratic educational programme.

The students at Dhaka University launched another procession; the government countered with a police attack, including on professors. When the students called a strike, the government closed the campus for three days. All this activated the students even more. Working people and industrial labourers began to join them. On January 11th, 1983,

the students called for a procession and sitting strike in front of the Ministry of Education. It was the first time the students left the campus and took to the city streets.

Worried by this, Ershad proposed a dialogue with the students. The students responded with three demands: annulment of the proposed educational policy, a democratic atmosphere in the educational institutions, and release of the three imprisoned student leaders.

The PBSP wholeheartedly supported the students' programme of openly violating martial law. Meanwhile the reactionary political groupings peeped out of their dark lairs and preached to the students to not violate martial law, under the pretext of awaiting the completion of preparations for country-wide actions. The opportunist section of the student leadership bowed in imbecile obedience to their respective "mother" organisations. They modified their programmes so as not to violate martial law — but no one could say they had abandoned the movement! In fury, militant students chased out these leaders and dismantled their office.

One thing to be noted here is that so long as the student movement followed their own course the anti-martial law movement was gaining strength. But as soon as the reactionary mother organisations gained control, they lost their militancy. This was also confirmed by later developments.

But January 11th, the date of the sitting strike at the Ministry of Education, was another day — a day of rightful revolt against the opportunist leaders. It was particularly marked by the growing participation of non-student outsiders in the activity, proving that the common people were moving to fight against military fascism. The student leadership, worried by its own isolation from the masses during these activities, tried to regain the initiative by calling for another action in mid-February if the government didn't heed their demands. Which the government did not — what it did instead was call out riot cars and tear gas on the February procession, and finally police opened fire on the processionists, killing a great

number of people on the spot and wounding many more. Curfew was clamped down, the University closed, and the students ordered to clear out.

Like the January demonstration, thousands of common people participated in this procession too, including in fighting the police. Worried about the militancy of students and common people, 15 pro-Indo-Soviet political parties which up until that point had played no active part in the anti-martial law movement came forward to contain the rising movement. The next day the government again beat up hundreds of students, and arrested thousands and thousands. Many people were killed.

Up to this point the student movement had played a positive role, with the events in February being the high point. But the students alone could carry the movement no further. Henceforth the reins of the movement were increasingly in the hands of the 15-party alliance which had been formed, led especially by the pro-Indo-Soviet Awami League and by the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the direct agent of the Soviet Union. This was reflected in the programme the Student Action Committee (SAC) adopted. While containing some legitimate democratic demands, it also called for restoring the 1972 reactionary constitution.

The 1972 constitution, while serving all Five Enemies of the people of Purba Bangla — U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, Indian expansionism, bureaucratic comprador capitalism and feudalism — principally screened the Soviets and Indian expansionists. Its programme differed from military fascism only in form, not in content. The 10-Point Charter which the SAC adopted also targeted only U.S. imperialism while seeking to protect Soviet social-imperialism and Indian expansionism. Under these conditions, revolutionary democratic and patriotic students could not remain in SAC. They initiated their own organisations, such as the "Revolutionary Students Movement" and "Militant Student Unity."

The student movement faced real

limitations: it lacked proletarian leadership; it was not integrated with the armed struggle and the other struggles of the people, especially the workers and peasants; and it was not directed towards truly national democratic ends. Despite this, the student movement forced Ershad to propose a "dialogue" with the opposition political parties. But what this dialogue amounted to was a process of seeking a way to share power by the various contending groups in the ruling class, while naturally keeping the key to power in the hands of the current ruling group. This kind of parlour politics may be suitable for the palace plotters, but the politics of the workers and peasants is something different.

With this dialogue, the government also sought to supplement its use of force in preventing the rise of the anti-martial law movement. And by channeling all political activity towards this parlour politics and merely setting down a few preconditions for dialogue, the 15-party alliance lent the government a hand. The SAC lost initiative and became inactive. Thus a very militant flow of stormy anti-martial law struggle gradually subsided.

1983 Events

Now that the students and masses had paved the way with their blood, the various political forces began to come out of the woodwork.

On the one hand, this process saw a series of splits and factional divisions, which reflected the clash of various groups and their foreign masters now that there were prospects of taking a bite of the cake of power. Alongside this, different alliances and combines of political parties formed. Besides the aforementioned 15-party alliance, there arose the 10-party combine, an anti-Indo-Soviet, diehard pro-American grouping led by the Democratic League (DL) of Mostaque Ahmed, a former president. This was followed shortly by a 7-party combine, led by the pro-U.S. BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party).

But though PBSP tried its best, no alliance of the true revolutionary and patriotic forces could be formed. It is a matter of great disappoint-

ment that in the interest of their jockeying with the military junta the pro-Indo-Soviet and the pro-American political forces had the judiciousness to minimize their differences and come to terms, while the revolutionary and patriotic forces for a long time failed to feel the urgency of uniting with other progressive forces.

Several of the alliances came together to call for a series of actions, including a general strike in November, 1983. On that day, workers, students and other sections of the petit bourgeoisie responded with great enthusiasm, coming out in far greater numbers than expected. All the streets of Dhaka were full of slogan-chanting processions. The people demonstrated their determination to fight the military government to the last. Neither bullets nor death could scare them. To suppress their fury, the blood-thirsty junta used rifles and bayonets, killing and injuring very many and arresting innumerable people. The government imposed a new ban on all political activities, while also declaring a schedule of elections for the parliament, the presidency and at the local level.

The masses of people were trying to carry forward and intensify the movement, whereas the leadership was trying to hold them back. In their group interests those sections of the ruling classes of Purba Bangla that are now in the opposition had to resort to movements against the military rulers — and they had no choice but to allow these movements to develop somewhat in their logical direction. But from the standpoint of their class position, they could not allow these movements to develop to the point where they overthrow not only the present government but the whole system, including them.

The 15-party alliance and the 7-party combine agreed upon a common charter which calls for an end to martial law and the restrictions on political activity, the restoration of political rights and elections. They are not in favour of the *forcible overthrow* of martial law. They want a share of power through elections, even if held under martial law conditions. As one Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) stalwart put

it, referring to this common charter, “The five point movement never rejects elections, rather elections is the ultimate end of this five point programme.” (*Forum*, Bulletin No. 29, January 1985). These alliances could not allow the anti-martial law movement to march forward towards true democracy for the masses of people. They were seeking to regain and re-establish *their* so-called democracy, the “democracy” of the ruling classes the Awami League and the BNP had enjoyed during their tenure, which is nothing more than the dictatorial rule of the agents of imperialism and different foreign exploiters over the masses of people. They used the movements of the people as pressure levers in their bargaining with the junta. Movement, compromise, again movements, compromise and retreat — such is their logic. Whereas the logic of the people’s movement is development from lower to higher, and then to even higher stages.

At this point, in November, General Ershad formed his own party, Janadal, from a crew of fortune-hunters and mercenary politicians. He had been Chief Martial Law Administrator and now took over the office of President of Bangladesh, thus openly taking into his own hands all the powers which he already possessed.

The Year 1984

The year was filled with movements, killings, compromise, dialogue, repeated strikes, the shifting of elections, and so forth.

Early in the year, Ershad reissued a call for dialogue. Fifty-nine parties responded — which only shows that in Purba Bangla too the old expression that scoundrels choose politics as their last refuge holds true. (There are about a hundred political parties in Purba Bangla.) After much vacillation, the more important groups, the 15-party alliance, the 7-party combine, and the Islamic fundamentalist group Jamat — 23 parties in all — declined, pointing to continued restrictions on political activity. Their real reason was that they had little to gain.

At that time Ershad still retained the offensive position, and it was from this position of relative advan-

tage that he proposed dialogue, for his own ends. These included getting tacit recognition of his legitimacy from the opposition and generally securing his own position by passing out a few crumbs and undermining any possibility of a growth of the opposition. Also, in the heat of the previous movement the opposition groups had promised publicly that they would not participate in a dialogue under this “illegal” military government — and the masses were very much in a mood for the complete overthrow of military rule and not at all for capitulation.

So for the opposition, taking part in dialogue under these conditions ran the risk of isolation from the masses, with little prospects of real gain. And without the bigger groups like the Awami League and the BNP, Ershad gained little from his initial dialogue proposal. Thus the reactionaries in and out of power failed to reach any agreement.

Subsequently, with the offer of sub-district elections Ershad hoped to entice the opposition into a position of tacitly recognising his government. For this very reason, the opposition parties refused to participate in these local elections. This set the stage for the bloody course taken by the strike on March 1st. Two days beforehand, the police forces drove a heavy truck into a procession and killed two students from Dhaka University. Then they let loose a reign of terror by their hired gundas (hooligans), arresting, injuring and killing many people.

Despite the repression, this latest round of strikes and movements pushed the government back to a strategically defensive position, and it was forced to give in to some minor demands of the opposition, while protecting the essential pillars of its power. Thus it postponed the local elections and, to facilitate the opposition participating in the dialogue this time, it also released imprisoned members of the opposition parties (and only members of these parties) and declared an easing of restrictions on trade union and political activity.

The 23 parties did in fact participate in this new round of dialogue. But now the unity between

the opposition forces began to crevice, centring on the question of which of two major constitutional arrangements of electoral power would best benefit their own interests. The 15-party alliance sought a return to the parliamentary system of government of the 1972 Constitution, while the 7-party combine sought to bring back the presidential system provided for in the subsequently suspended constitution. Both are opposed to the people's democracy which must be the goal of the mass struggle. When the 7-party combine announced that it would no longer go along with the new programme of elections, the compromise again fell apart. That the government and the opposition could not come to a truce was rather good for the people.

The government rescheduled elections for December. Ershad appointed members of the Janadal party which he had initiated to his cabinet. The opposition complained that such a government could not hold neutral elections and that Ershad was drawing the Army into politics. It announced that it would not take part in the new elections either. The gap between the government and the opposition was as large as ever.

Each of the two opposition groups prepared its own separate mass mobilisation for mid-October, with the aim of showing their respective organisational strength. Ershad countered by calling his own gathering first, at which he declared that his government was non-political since his source of power was martial law. He then showed his venomous teeth, as he sought to instigate communal (religious) conflict.

Each of the mass meetings held by the opposition was immense, showing the anti-martial law spirit of the people. The government responded with offers of compromise. These were not the fruit of the good wishes of Ershad, nor of the fight of the opposition. They were the result of the immense sacrifice of the people of Purba Bangla. They resolutely fought the military junta, even when the big parties were inactive; and when the latter finally began to move, this was only a green light for

Report on a Guerrilla Attack

The following correspondence was received from the PBSP. —AWTW

On 7th December 1985 guerrillas of the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP), through a commando attack, captured a police camp specially assigned to crush the Party organisation in the district of Norosingdi. They took possession of all the arms and ammunition at the camp. They distributed leaflets among the people and then retreated safely, while chanting party slogans. One of the constables later succumbed to his injuries.

This attack took place in the district of Noroshingdi, 80 kilometres from Dhaka where the reactionary leaders of seven Asian countries were at that moment gathered for the opening-day ceremonies of the South Asian Association for Regional CoOperation. The heads of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were hatching out conspiratorial agreements, in the name of what they call united resistance to "terrorism," against the revolutionary movements of the 1,000 million people of South Asia. The guerrillas served a first-rate slap to this conspiracy.

Norosingdi is one of the struggling mass-base areas of the Party. To suppress the mass uprising in extensive areas of the district, since April 1984 the government Armed Forces has conducted incessant and barbarous repressive expeditions

against the masses. The government and local tyrants killed 11 people in 1984, including several Party cadres. Three Party activists were killed in one incident in April 1985 and another cadre was killed shortly thereafter. The government and local tyrants were filled with joy at the setbacks suffered by the Party. They began a propaganda campaign in support of their goal of "uprooting" the Party. The government posted a large number of Reserve Police forces and an armed battalion and set up many camps. They began carrying out indiscriminate arrests, torture and other repressive measures to "ferret out" Party activists and guerrillas. A young activist was tortured to death in December 1985. The Inspector General of the police forces personally took part in these activities.

From among the pro-U.S. and pro-Soviet political parties, some who are paid agents of one or the other of these two powers also lent a helping hand in all these massacres.

As a result, the Party lost control of the mass-base and other areas. But the repression failed to stop the active role of the Party in these areas.

The fall of the police camp was a blow against the enemies of the people and a victory for the revolutionary struggles. The masses of people celebrated this victory in a jubilant mood. □

the masses to plunge into the movement with boundless spirit and the force of a storm. It was this that forced the Awami League and the BNP to join the movement, and it was this that forced Ershad to issue his compromises.

None of these forces intended to let the anti-martial law struggle develop too far — and the weakness

of the proletariat's leadership impeded this too.

Workers and Peasants

The industrial workers started movements over economic issues, but gradually took up the anti-martial law political struggle. Their role was vital, and even when the opposition parties sat idle at the end of



An example of Ershad's democracy.

'84, they continued to struggle, for instance, calling a 48-hour strike, with which the opposition failed to cooperate.

Even so, the working class movement is still predominantly confined to the narrow bounds of economic demands. The 23 parties continually sought to limit their participation and, together with the government, to silence them with the mere promise of material benefit. It should be noted that most of the big labour organisations are fronts for the opposition parties. In sum, the conscious proletarian movement in Purba Bangla is just starting, and that is why it is still very weak.

As for the peasants, neither of the big opposition groupings has any strength and influence among them. Thus the peasants played little role in this movement. Only PBSP tried to mobilise the peasants in the anti-martial law movement.

In the urban areas generally PBSP actively integrated and coordinated the anti-martial law movement with the armed struggle in the countryside

and other movements of the peasants. It mobilised peasants and other rural people in the anti-election movement. Owing to these activities of the PBSP, rural people in some areas rejected the election politics and did not go to the polling centres. In some places, they dismantled the polling booths and burnt them to ashes. By late '83 and early '84 in some of the mass base areas of the party armed struggles and other peasant movements had gained real momentum, and large numbers of people gathered under the party's banner. A process of disintegration of the reactionary local power and the establishment of people's power began. The further development of these activities by PBSP frightened the reactionaries, and to nip PBSP in the bud they sent heavily armed repressive expeditions against the rural masses. The 23 parties never protested this mass repression. Rather, they supported the government, at least indirectly. For all these reasons, PBSP fell into a disadvantageous position after

mid-1984.

By now, however, the party has once more begun to overcome the difficulties. PBSP has played a vital role in the anti-martial law movement, exerting influence on it; reactionaries cannot but count PBSP as a growing political factor.

Other than the PBSP a few other organisations like Bangladesher Sharbohara Party (BSP) and Purba Banglar Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist (PBCP/ML) are more or less conducting armed struggle in rural areas. Though they have wrong attitudes towards the anti-martial law mass movement, their struggles no doubt are hitting the present social and state system. (More on these groups later.)

At this point, in late '84, the 23 parties fell idle, except for preparation for the spring parliamentary elections. After all, they had little else they could do. The anti-martial law mass movement had gone about as far as they could safely take it; they could hope for nothing more from it. Their only other two alternatives

were people's war or a military coup d'état. They cannot but oppose people's war, from the point of view of their class interests, and they do not have enough influence in the army for a coup. Thus they sat idle and readied themselves for the elections. This is how a year full of movements and agitation came to a close.

1985

In this tranquil atmosphere without movement the year 1985 stepped in.

Since the opposition parties had indicated willingness to participate in elections under martial law, the government began to meet some of their election preconditions. In return, the opposition did nothing to mobilise any movement against martial law, nothing at all. This situation held until February 1985.

Meanwhile, a process of unity among the revolutionary and genuinely patriotic forces began. Though the festival was almost over, in light of future developments such unity has much importance. This process led to the formation of united fronts like the "Revolutionary Committee for the Observance of Ekushey" (a day of martyrs), the "Revolutionary Democratic Front," and finally, "Militant Students Unity" which, despite the later retightening of martial law, continues its activity today.

Though the 23 parties were in favour of elections under martial law, they did not dare make this decision openly. This was because of the deep hatred of the military rulers among the masses and even among the members of these parties. Thus a deadlock existed, blocking motion between the government and the opposition.

This deadlock was opened up somewhat by a cold-blooded manoeuvre of the government. On February 13th, 1985, pro-government ruffians opened fire on a peaceful student procession and killed a young student leader from Dhaka University. Such killings at the height of huge movements which certainly threatened the government is one thing — but what could explain such a killing in the tranquil atmosphere existing then? In fact, the murder fueled the fire among the students and others: they burst in-

to protest with fury unrestricted by the admonitions of the leaders. The atmosphere was militant. The heads of the 23 parties were once again compelled to promise they would not take part in the elections.

Ershad seized the chance. He reimposed the martial law regulations he had previously eased somewhat. Once again all political activity was declared illegal. However, this was not so upsetting to the chiefs of the opposition. As for the heads of the AL and the BNP, on the day Ershad reimposed martial law one of them spent the day at a cultural show and the other at a marriage — while no programme came out of either group. Ershad went on to make himself President again through a referendum, appointed more of his men from Janadal to the government, held the long-delayed local elections and then in mid-August 1985 floated a pro-government political front. Thus Ershad consolidated his positions as best he could, while the big opposition leaders yawned lazily from their divans.

POLITICAL FORCES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT

The 15-Party and 7-Party Alliances
The 15-party alliance is a group of pro-Indo-Soviet and pro-Chinese revisionist political forces, with the former in the majority. It is led by the Awami League (AL) and the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB). The AL of Sheikh Hasina is a puppet of Indian expansionism backed by Soviet social-imperialism; the CPB is a paid agent of the Soviets. Other prominent pro-Soviet organisations include Jatio Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Bangladesh Krishak Shramik Awami League (BAKSAL), while the rest are generally petit bourgeois social democrats of the pro-Soviet bloc or else pro-Chinese revisionists.

The AL is an organisation of the pro-Indo-Soviet comprador bourgeoisie and feudals. From the time of its origin, the AL undertook some sort of nationalist movement against Pakistani exploitation of the people of Purba Bangla. In the absence of any strong proletarian

leadership, AL captured the leadership of the anti-Pakistani mass struggle. Originally, AL was a pro-American political organisation, but in the specific circumstances of 1971, when U.S. imperialism backed Pakistani reaction, and on the other hand Indian expansionism and during the last leg of that year Soviet social-imperialism backed AL in its fight against Pakistan, this party changed its foreign master. They sold out Purba Bangla to India.

The 7-party combine under the leadership of BNP consists of pro-American and pro-Chinese political forces. BNP itself is a motley gathering of political fortune hunters and splinter groups piled up under government sponsorship by the late G. Ziaur Rahman. BNP, which, like AL, is an organisation of comprador bureaucrats and feudals, is itself a puppet in the hands of U.S. imperialism.

Based upon their attitudes to the anti-martial law movement, these political parties can be grouped in three categories:

a) While not including any group in its entirety, elements and factions of a number of these parties were at all times opposed to anti-martial law struggles. The Shah Aziz group of the BNP can be cited as an example.

b) Groups, principally AL, BNP and CPB, who fought the military junta under the compulsion of their own interest but all the time took a conciliatory stand, with their eyes fastened continually on simply a share of power — even if under martial law. Their influence was a major factor in impeding the antimartial law struggles from being carried forward. They were compelled to fight in no small part because of the consciousness and militancy of the masses, including in their own lower ranks. This militancy was a product of earlier struggles, chiefly the periods of 1969-71 and 1973-74. The first saw the people of Purba Bangla launch mass movements and armed struggle against Pakistan, a heroic struggle which was betrayed by AL and CPB. During 1973-74, PBSP and other patriotic and democratic forces developed country-wide armed struggle against the puppet regime of Sheikh Mujib.

c) Those petit bourgeois groups

and social democrats who, despite their somewhat militant character, were unable to sustain and lead the anti-martial law movement because of their class character and tailism.

Scattered among all these categories were those who dreamed of a military coup at some opportune moment.

Despite their various differences, the groups in all three categories shared one feature : they did not go into action against martial law till long after its promulgation, and in fact opposed such action in practice.

10 Party Bloc

The 10-party bloc was led by the Democratic League (DL) of K. Mostaque Ahmed, the die-hard agent of U.S. imperialism. DL is a reactionary communal organisation. This bloc had little influence over the movement and disintegrated due to palace plots of the DL and divergences among the groups.

Jamayat-e-Islami

This communal Islamic fundamentalist organisation serves the interests of U.S. imperialism and the Saudi petro-dollar. They are hated by the people of Purba Bangla. During the liberation struggle of 1971, Jamat stood with the Pakistani occupation forces and killed thousands of people. They have taken part in the anti-martial law movement in coordination with the 15-party and 7-party alliances.

Despite the differences which arise based on their international connections, the AL, BNP, DL and Jamat all have the same class base: they are organisations of the comprador bureaucrats and feudals. And they all support the same Five Point programme. It is worth going into a bit more depth on the respective attitudes of these parties towards social revolution.

1) From among the forces active in the anti-martial law movement, AL, BNP, DL and Jamat are the most reactionary. They are dead against any change in the existing state and social system. AL, BNP and DL have all been in state power at one time or another since 1971, and have proved their unpatriotic, autocratic and utterly reactionary

character. They killed thousands of revolutionaries and patriots, including hundreds of unarmed prisoners. They suppressed the economic movements of even professional groups, and have terminated low salary employees en masse. In the anti-martial law movement, they have always proved combat ready to divert all movement into the channels of parliamentary politics. Their pledge that they "are against the military rule, but never against the army," is not so much sycophancy designed to win generals over to their own ends as a solemn promise to keep the present system intact.

The class basis of this outlook, and particularly its effort to suppress the revolutionary programme, which is today directed at the Five Enemies, is that they are the organisation of, by and for the comprador bureaucrats and feudals.

2) This second category of parties supporting the Five Point Programme includes a) paid agents of Moscow (CPB) and die-hard Soviet agents like NAP(M), NAP(H), Ekota Party, BAKSAL; b) pro-Soviet social-democrats like JSD, BSD, Workers Party; and c) pro-Chinese revisionists, RCL, UPP, Democratic Party, BSD(T), BSD(AD), etc.

Those forces of sub-categories (b) and (c) are all petit bourgeois reformists, who stand with the system; the social democrats among them tailed AL, BNP and CPB in the anti-martial law struggles. From their reformist position, they are in favour of economic movements of various professional groups. They use this to argue that they are not tailing the bourgeoisie but uniting with them on a tactical basis, even citing Lenin to justify this. This cannot obscure that they have accepted in full the programme of the comprador bourgeoisie and have aided them in their efforts to keep the present system intact. Even so, they are still able to mislead large numbers of honest, sincere patriots and revolutionaries. Without exposing and unmasking them, it will not be possible to carry forward the communist movement or even the movement for genuine people's democracy to

the desired goals.

REVOLUTIONARY AND PATRIOTIC FORCES OPPOSED TO THE FIVE ENEMIES

Though the number of genuine revolutionary and patriotic forces opposed to the Five Enemies is great, they are scattered about in small groups and organisations. Thus separately they do not have great influence over the masses, but their combined strength is not insignificant. From among these groups the only participants in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement are PBSP and BSD (M-L) (Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal [Marxist-Leninist], one of several parties whose Bengali name translates into English as Communist Party of Bangladesh [Marxist-Leninist]).

Based on their ideological and political lines and their attitude towards martial law, these groups can be grouped as follows:

a) Bangladesher Sharbohara Party (BSP) and Purba Banglar Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) (PBCP-ML). Though they have differences on many issues, their line on the anti-martial law movement unites them. Both groups conduct armed struggle, but BSP has rejected Mao Tsetung Thought, has become Hoxhaite and revisionist and opposes the RIM, whereas PBCP(ML) professes to uphold Mao's Thought and at the same time blindly follows the lines and methods of Comrade Charu Mazumdar (Comrade Mazumdar was the founder-leader of the Communist Party of India [Marxist-Leninist] and was killed by the reactionary Indian government in 1972). The attitude of the PBCP(ML) towards the RIM is negative. Neither group forms mass organisations nor do they conduct mass movements; furthermore, they have no concrete line and method regarding this problem.

Their stand on the question of military rule is also the same: They do not understand that military rule has given rise to a particular situation and hence has set new duties

and obligations before the revolutionaries. They confine themselves to the anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism strategic slogan and in practice oppose the anti-martial law democratic movement. In practice, then, they are unable to grasp the fact that the anti-martial law movement is the specific application of this strategy to the specific situation of military rule, so that carrying out this strategic line obliges the performance of specific duties. For this reason they do not understand and more than that do not even try to understand the problem of the anti-martial law movement and the different types and degrees of unity required with other anti-martial law forces. In fact, they have no role in the anti-martial law mass movement. Objectively, then, their inactivity favours the perpetuation of military rule. Finally, they even oppose the unity of different forces fighting the Five Enemies on the basis that some of them are "revisionist" or "counter-revolutionary." Thus they practically oppose people's unity on the basis of the programme of the New Democratic Revolution.

b) The other section of the left forces conduct or at least want to conduct anti-martial law movements. However, they fail to understand that unity is possible not only with other left forces but even, tactically, with forces who do not oppose the Five Enemies, and that if revolutionary strategy is strictly adhered to, the revolutionary forces will benefit from such unity. Their fear is that the revolutionaries will instead be "utilised" by supporters of the Five Enemies. Thus they oppose PBSP's line of tactical unity with any force that wants to conduct anti-martial law movements. The groups in this category include: the Revolutionary Communist Party of Bangladesh Marxist-Leninist (BRCP-ML) and the Communist Party of Bangladesh ML (CPB-ML).

In connection with these groups, the question of the so-called "lefts" united with the 15- and 7-party alliances arises. These "lefts" claim to have made "tactical" unity with these supporters of the Five Point

Programme — but in fact this amounts to unity UNDER the Five Point Programme. Theirs is a reformist stand and they are in fact being "utilised" by supporters of the Five Point Programme. Thus their conception of unity is rightist, while that of BRCP-ML and CPB-ML is left deviationist. The former tail the reactionaries under the cover of tactical unity while the latter, who fear being used, oppose the unity which is necessary and possible to achieve.

On the question of Mao Tsetung Thought, the stand of these two parties is centrist. BRCP(ML) has not yet labelled Mao Tsetung Thought as revisionist, but on the other hand they do not uphold it as a contemporary development of Marxism-Leninism. In the past they practiced the armed struggle, but in the last few years this has been abandoned. Presently they have taken up a "mass organisation-ist" stand (this is a line in Purba Bangla which rejects armed struggle on the grounds that mass organisations and mass movements are the only means to revolution). On the one hand, they rejected the call for the unity of the revolutionary and patriotic forces; on the other, when a separate process of unity of those forces opposing the Five Enemies began in early 1985, the mass organisations of BRCP(ML) came forward to take part. This reveals the lack of specific lines and a clear stand on the question of unity on the part of BRCP(ML).

As for CPB(ML), they have maintained silence on the question of Mao Tsetung Thought. In place of rural-based protracted people's war, they advocate city-centred mass uprisings. Their practice is basically limited to theoretical discussions and cultural activities. Under pressure from its activists and as a reflection of its own half-hearted line, this group has come forward a bit for unity of the forces against the Five Enemies in the recent past. Nevertheless, like the BRCP(ML), their position is still essentially centrist on this question.

c) The third grouping sees the present anti-martial law movement as merely a quarrel between two groups of dogs, as merely a tug of war

amongst the agents of U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism and Indian expansionism. Consequently, they see no necessity to play an active role here.

It is true that tussle among enemies is one aspect of this situation, but it is not the whole picture. An objective contradiction between the people of Purba Bangla and the military regime does exist, and forms the basis for this movement.

This outlook sees only the contradictions among the enemy and not the contradiction between the enemy and the people. Thus it turns these groups into helpless spectators. These groups maintained the same attitude towards the communal contradiction in the period of British colonialism (before 1947) and also towards the liberation war of 1971, which they saw as only a conspiracy of the USSR and India. They do not understand that a contradiction between Pakistani rule and the people of Purba Bangla existed, that people started armed struggle to do away with Pakistani exploitation and that it was due to this that the Awami League (the party in the lead of the anti-Pakistan struggle), the U.S., USSR and India could hatch their conspiracy. The "dogs" cannot mobilise the vast masses of people in their "quarrels" without any objective basis. These groups lack in this materialist outlook, and so they are not able to play a role, or at least any conscious role, in these movements.

d) Throughout this period of the anti-martial law struggles, the PBSP has played a significant role. It was the first force to identify the contradiction between the people of Purba Bangla and the military regime, for all its crimes, and it was the first force to call for a unified movement aimed at overthrowing the junta. It issued a call for tactical unity among anti-martial law forces based on the three minimum points, and, alongside this, it also called for unity on the programme of the New Democratic Revolution of those forces opposed to the Five Enemies. Despite its previous left errors and the consequent lack of experience in mass movements, the PBSP has worked to develop, influence and lead the anti-martial law movement

Life and Death in Bangladesh

The country now known as Bangladesh was for many years part of the British empire. Under British rule, what is now Bangladesh constituted East Bengal, whose population is majority Moslem. West Bengal, whose capital is Calcutta and whose people — like the majority in Bangladesh — speak Bengali, is part of India. Bangladesh later formed part of Pakistan (as East Pakistan) until 1971 when, following a series of events culminating in a war of secession and involving complicated manoeuvres by both imperialist blocs as well as India, East Pakistan broke away from Pakistan and formed Bangladesh.

The capital city is Dhaka, with over 3 million people. Except for city-countries like Hong Kong or Monaco, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world: over 90 million people live in an area about the size of Czechoslovakia. It is also one of the youngest countries in the world (half the population is under the age of 17), and one of the poorest.

A sense of what imperialist and semi-feudal domination means for the people of Bangladesh can be glimpsed from the following few statistics. The corresponding figures for W. Germany are given as a basis for comparison.

	Bangladesh	W. Germany
Life expectancy at birth	47 yrs.	73 yrs.
Per capita income	\$140	\$10,171
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	133	10.2
Physicians (per 100,000 people)	8	230
Daily caloric consumption	1,877	3,652
Literacy	29%	99%

Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica Yearbook 1985; World Almanac 1982.

in the cities. The Party has developed lines and methods for this work, and has gained much experience, and some success.

PBSP is still a small organisation. Moreover, its enemies have continually exerted tremendous pressure against it, and that is why, in the absence of a larger unity of the revolutionary and patriotic forces, the Party, despite its sincere endeavours, could not achieve the desired success in channeling the mass movement in the proper direction.

Alongside the mass movement, PBSP conducted armed struggle in the rural areas as its main task. It

firmly held high the line that without armed struggle it is impossible to overthrow the military dictatorship.

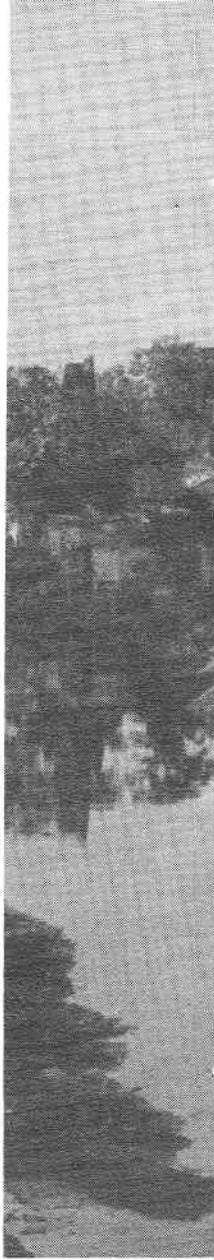
When the Ershad regime tried to impose its reactionary communal educational policy, and when the conscious section of the students and intellectuals, while rejecting it, did not propose any alternative policy, it was PBSP who formulated and widely circulated such a policy.

Through all this PBSP has succeeded in re-establishing its image and its influence over various left forces and a section of the masses, and has mobilised some of them under its banner. It has also worked to begin the process of unity

among revolutionary and patriotic forces, and this has been an important gain from the anti-martial law movement.

THE PEASANTRY AND THE MOVEMENT

It has been mentioned above that in general the anti-martial law movement, which to a great extent has involved the students as well as increasingly other sections of the petit bourgeoisie and workers too, has been city-centred, and that this was in no small part due to the strength and line of many of the groups involved in the anti-martial law move-





An area of Dhaka.

ment. Even when these groups have carried out work in the rural areas, this generally means the rural petit bourgeoisie who live in the sub-district headquarters and the small towns. The bulk of the rural population are peasants, especially poor, landless and middle peasants and other strata of rural labourers. So rural organisation should mean organisation among these people — but due to their class line, the bourgeois and petit bourgeois organisations are incapable of this, as were the students.

Though neither country-wide nor very strong, only the PBSP truly had organisational bases in the rural

areas. And it was only PBSP that really undertook coordinating and integrating the urban mass movement with the armed struggles and other movements of the peasant masses. Those other forces who centred their work in rural areas (BSP, PBCP-ML) and even carry out armed struggle, failed to mobilise the peasant masses in the movement because of erroneous views on both the anti-martial law movement and the peasants. PBSP did manage to foil the election farce of Ershad in its organisational strongholds, but as it was a small party alone in this work it was impossible to widely spread the anti-martial law movement

among the rural population. PBSP even proposed joint actions to foil the election drama to some supporters of the Five Point programme, but while some lower ranking activists came forward the leaders chose to ignore this.

In sum, the anti-martial law movement could neither mobilise nor broadly influence the peasants. This is one of the spectacular reasons why this movement, though aimed at overthrowing martial law, achieved nothing. For without armed struggle and the peasant masses, overthrowing the military junta of Ershad is not possible.

There is another problem involv-

ed in the question of analysing why and to what extent work among the peasant masses was undertaken: armed struggle. In Purba Bangla today, it is not possible to establish a sound base among the rural masses without carrying out armed struggle under the leadership of the proletariat. It is through armed struggle that the PBSP is carrying on organisational work and establishing its base among the peasants, creating mass-based areas in a few districts. Once armed struggle is abandoned, all achievements are lost. The present situation of the pro-Chinese RCL and the half-Hoxhaite BRCP-ML prove this. Despite their differing lines, both conducted armed struggle and at a certain point had some organisational strength in rural areas. But since they have rejected armed struggle, their organisational strength among the peasants is being liquidated and they are growing isolated from the rural masses.

Though PBSP is carrying out armed struggle, it was unable to mobilise the peasants in the way it wanted. This was due in part to the constant pressure brought to bear by the state armed forces against the PBSP's base areas, which was added to by the aid to the government of the reactionary political parties. Following four years of their attacks, the PBSP was forced to retreat from some of these areas and so could not mobilise the peasants to take part in this movement as it might have otherwise. There is also the problem of establishing the Party's leadership all over the country.

LESSONS AND RESULTS OF THE MOVEMENT

Through the course of the last few years, the anti-people, reactionary and fascist character of the military regime of the U.S. imperialist lackey Ershad has become as clear as daylight. To protect their power these murderers do not hesitate at crushing students and rickshaw pullers under the wheels of trucks, at creating a reign of terror by their hired ruffians in the educational institutions, or at firing on processions, and other forms of savagery. Before Ershad, the Zia government

managed to gain a bit of popular support, but because of the mass movement Ershad has failed in this. This fact will be of great help to future developments.

Along with this, the reactionary political parties have been unmasked and their treacherous, compromising character exposed. Today the anti-martial law movement is proceeding through two different ways: one is led by the supporters of the Five Enemies with the aim of sharing power through elections, without even overthrowing martial law; and the other is led by revolutionary and genuinely patriotic forces with the aim of overthrowing the Five Enemies and the military rule and gaining true independence and democracy for the people.

There is no alternative but armed struggle for overthrowing the military dictators. The peaceful transfer of power from one class to another is unimaginable: the junta is even reluctant to share power with members of their own class. And at every point where the movement has developed to a new stage, Ershad has resorted to bloody repression, while the reactionary opposition parties would simply withdraw the movement.

The urgency of launching armed struggle and developing rural strongholds is once again being felt by left forces. In the past, a great majority of the left forces practiced armed struggle, but ran into problems. The problem of sustaining the armed struggle is the problem of developing it both quantitatively and qualitatively. The left forces failed to solve the problem of developing a certain stage of the armed struggle to its next higher stage — and they summed up a line directly opposed to continuing the armed struggle, and subsequently fell into mass organisationism.

But in the process of the current movement it has become clearer that mere mass movements cannot do away with the reactionaries or change the social and state systems, and sometimes they cannot even achieve reformist ends. But their importance can in no way be negated. The movements during these years facilitated the development of armed struggle and other revolutionary

activities. The relation between armed struggle and mass movements is dialectical — the development of one helps the other. It is, ultimately, impossible to qualitatively change a reactionary state and social system without armed struggle and without mass movements developed in the process of and integrated with the armed struggle — this is one of the most important lessons of the past few years.

The movement has also shown that, contrary to the belief current in some quarters, the role of the students as a force opposed to military and other autocratic rule is not exhausted. Following the establishment of "Bangladesh," the student community for various reasons almost completely lost the militant image that they had developed in the course of the fight against Pakistani oppression. Their role in the past few years has restored that image to some extent. At the same time, unless the student movement is integrated with the workers and peasants movement, at a certain stage they will again lose momentum. This is one of their class limitations.

There is also the already mentioned unity that is developing, really for the first time, among the forces opposed to the Five Enemies, which, though still very weak, indicates a bright future. Also developing are different mass organisations which follow Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought — and in fact the level of unity among the left forces has generally developed in proportion to the strength of these mass organisations. Also, other revolutionary and patriotic forces have become active as the armed struggle and mass movements under the leadership of the PBSP have gained strength. The unity of the revolutionaries and patriots of Purba Bangla depends on the development of the armed struggle and the mass movements under the leadership of the proletariat — this is a universal truth proved by the last few years.

The image of PBSP which was won from its leading of armed struggle in '71 and in '72-'74 was mainly ruined due to subsequent setbacks. Due to correct lines on and active role in the mass movement, that lost

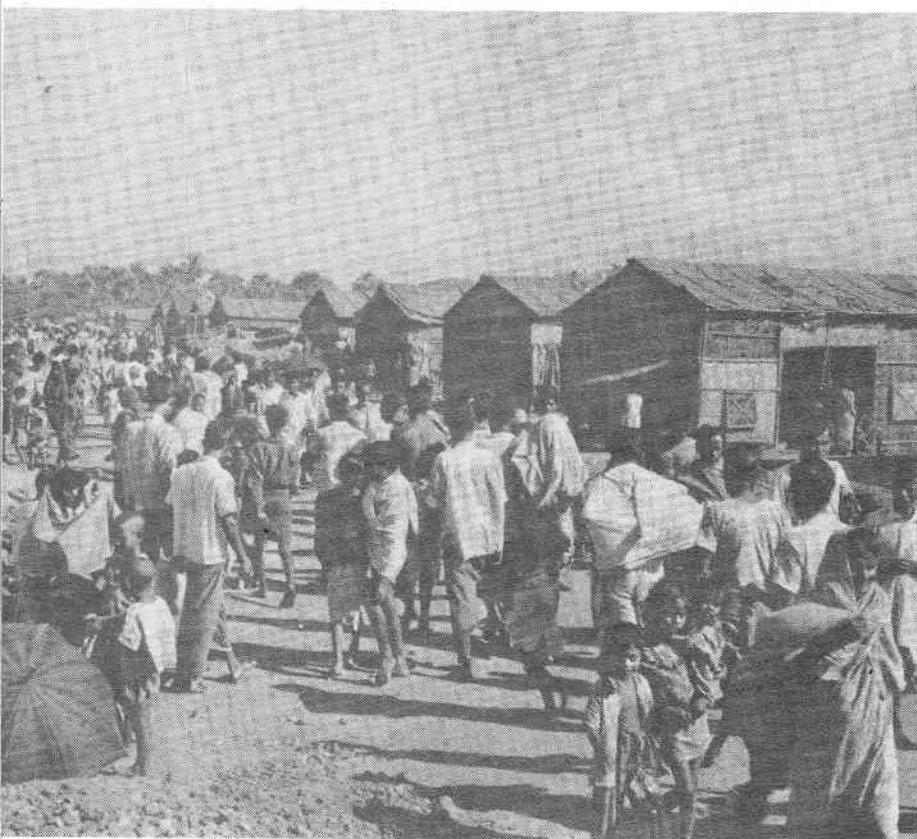


image could be restored to some extent. Also, it was mentioned that PBSP had virtually no prior experience in mass movements in urban areas. In the last few years, lines and methods for this work have been developed, enabling PBSP and other Marxist-Leninist forces, who are also developing these lines and methods, to intensify their work.

CONCLUSION

Thus through repeated cycles of attack and retreat, the military junta of General Ershad has at this point pushed the opposition onto the defensive and seized the offensive. He is beaming, triumphant and self-satisfied.

The defensive position into which they have been forced has aggravated the crises of the bourgeois opposition, especially the 15-party and 7-party alliances. Extremely frustrated, sections of these forces who yesterday brandished swords

have today gulped down the bait of ministerial positions and joined the government's political front (including such as the pro-Chinese Gonoratrik Party, the UPP of Kazi Zafar Ahmed and BNP stalwarts like Moudud Ahmed). Other organisations, in the leisure moments of their complete lack of activity, are carrying on self-appraisal. The CPB, the private agent of Soviet social-imperialism, has concluded that they committed a grave error by not taking part in elections, even under martial law. Others have not yet dared to reach such conclusions openly. Overall, then, the 23 parties are not carrying on anti-martial law movements, under the cover of the ban on political activities, etc. All this has given rise to an on-going process of splits, reorganisation and reorientation, the outcome of which will greatly influence the future development of the anti-martial law movement.

Nor is the junta free from crises.

Despite the government's ability to create its political front, the current balance within these forces, including with Janadal, could quickly give rise to imbalance. Ershad, despite his arrogance, is not able to measure all the live frogs in a single scale-pan.

Most fundamentally, the hatred of the masses for martial law is deep and unabated. However many political prostitutes Ershad gathers, he cannot do away with this. Thus he will continue to face grave crisis. It is not Ershad's fortune to rule the kingdom peacefully.

In this situation, the apparent stasis between the government and the opposition cannot last long. Momentum will gather, and things will head in one direction or the other.

Crucial to future events is Ershad's need to shed his khaki kurta and don a civilian cloak, in no small part in order to meet the exigencies of foreign diplomacy. Elections is his only way out. But the problem is this: the bourgeois opposition will not yield to Ershad's conditions, and if he yields to theirs his power base will be shaky, perhaps ruined. So reaching a compromise might not be so easy. Behind this difficulty is the situation the opposition faces with the masses: the masses are the lever to which they must resort, while at the same time the opposition fears and must restrain them.

There are numerous possible variations: perhaps again Ershad will re-initiate his parlour politics, perhaps again the opposition will take to the streets. And so it seems that history repeats itself. But it does not: this apparent repetition is no mechanical replay of historical events. We have seen how during the last three years PBSP and others upholding the red banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought have grown stronger and closed their ranks. True revolutionaries gather strength in periods of crisis for the reactionaries. So deep down, history was not and is not standing still at the cross-roads. Rather, beneath the apparent repetition history is preparing a leap into the future — newer, and brighter.

(Written in the last week of August 1985.) □

Seizing the Imperialist Citadels

Contributions to the Discussion of Revolutionary Strategy

The strategy for revolution in the advanced imperialist countries requires further work and struggle in the revolutionary ranks. The establishment of parties in these countries where today there are few based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and where our movement has faced particular obstacles is a task that concerns the international communist movement as a whole. The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* serves as the basis for further discussion but certainly does not exhaust this extremely important question.

Following are two contributions to this discussion. They are relatively short excerpts from what are fairly comprehensive documents. We have chosen these excerpts to focus on the two related themes of party building and the programme for revolution in these particular countries. Both documents strive to present a basic analysis of the particular country, a synthesis of revolutionary experience there, and the outlines of a revolutionary programme. Both documents represent an attempt to unite the communists in these countries on a higher level. They share the view that the ideological, political and organisational strength of the proletariat on an international scale and the current conditions in the world make it necessary and possible for relatively small and somewhat locally-based groups to rise to the occa-

sion and rapidly develop the ideological, political and organisational basis for the establishment of the vanguard party without which proletarian revolution is impossible.

The first of these excerpts is from *Break the Chains! Manifesto of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain*. This recently formed organisation includes members of the now-dissolved Nottingham and Stockport Communist Groups which signed the *RIM Declaration*. The second, from the Communist Collective of Agit-Prop in Italy, is taken from "Per l'Organizzazione Comunista Operaia Rivoluzionaria." The full documents in question are available, respectively, from Leeds Alternative Publications, Box No. 7, 59 Cookridge St., Leeds LS2 3AW (U.K.); and Centro Documentazione, via D'Aquino 158, 74100 Taranto, Italy.

We welcome further comments and contributions on these themes.—AWTW □

Britain: Manifesto of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent (Excerpts)

Building the Revolutionary Party

"In countries where no Marxist-Leninist party exists the immediate task facing the revolutionary communists there is to form such a party with the aid of the international communist movement. The key to the establishment of the party is the development of a correct political line and programme, both as regards the particularities of a given country and the overall world situation. The Marxist-Leninist party must be built

in close relationship with carrying out revolutionary work among the masses, implementing a revolutionary mass line, and in particular, addressing and resolving the pressing political questions which must be resolved in order for the revolutionary movement to advance." —
Declaration of the RIM

In Britain the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement has never been strong. This is partly to be ex-

plained in terms of Britain's position in the world as a major imperialist power and the consequent attraction of reformist politics that such material conditions make available to the working class. It is also partly to be explained in terms of the strong revisionist influences that communist organisations in Britain have been exposed to within the international communist movement at various times. But the main reason
(Continued to page 49)

Italy: For the Revolutionary Communist Workers Organisation (Excerpts)

On the Party

The central task of Marxist-Leninist communists is to work for the development of the world revolution. This means the overthrow of the imperialist system by the proletariat and exploited masses and the establishment of the proletariat's political power through the necessary stages and alliances required by conditions in different countries.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the political form of proletarian power to build socialism, which requires the continuation of the revolution in all spheres to defend proletarian power against attempts at capitalist restoration, to eliminate the material and ideological vestiges of exploitative society, and, through a process which is only possible on a world scale, achieve classless society, communism.

Only those whose fight is consistent in theory and practice with this objective and this process can call themselves communists and thus be useful to the proletariat's revolutionary cause; if not, no matter what their subjective intentions may be, sooner or later they will become
(Continued on next page)

(Continued from page 41)

obstacles to the proletarian revolution.

The present task of the communists is to define the proletarian revolution (in terms of strategy, tactics and motive force), and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist transition to communism, in terms of political programme and the relation between the battle in every country and the international framework. The historical experience of the proletarian movement teaches and shows that the revolution can take place and win victory only if there is a proletarian political party based on the revolutionary theory of the proletariat: the science of Marxism-Leninism, which today includes Mao Tsetung's contributions.

Today, because of errors and defeats suffered by the revolutionaries, there are no authentic revolutionary communist parties in the majority of the world's countries. There are organisations and small groups which are working in that direction, but generally they are not strong enough ideologically, politically and organisationally to respond to the demands posed by the present proletarian movement, nor above all to the opportunities emerging though the development of the world situation — the prospect of and preparations for imperialist war.

For these reasons, the battle to build the party is the most urgent and central task for all those today who call themselves revolutionary communists.

The key element in building the party is the development of a line and programme that take up both the particularities of the country where work is being carried out as well as the world situation. This line and programme are the dialectical fruit of two key elements: 1) struggle against the anti-Marxist-Leninist trends which broadly influence the most advanced workers and the revolutionary youth; 2) revolutionary work among the proletarian masses, based on ideological, political and organisational leadership of the advanced elements, a leadership able to answer the political questions urgently posed

for the advance of the revolutionary movement. To accomplish these objectives theoretical and analytical work is required. Without proceeding in this manner it is impossible to build the party, and the work of the communists becomes sterile, easily falling prey to academic deviations, and, in periods of discouragement among the masses, into economist and terrorist theories.

The building of the party requires the unity of the authentic communists and the winning over of the advanced among the proletariat. Historical experience and a practical grasp of the problems show that it is wrong to consider these things as prerequisites to forming the party, especially its initial nucleus. In the majority of cases this initial nucleus will be composed of a small number of members who specifically assume responsibility for building the party, who have a clear vision of the problems they face and demonstrate that they have the answers that can solve them. This initial nucleus should have in an embryonic form all the aspects of the party they seek to build, choose its members according to revolutionary criteria, and make grasping and using dialectical materialism a constant task in all fields.

Developing the unity of the communists and winning over advanced elements clearly remains a concrete and permanent task of the party. In a basic sense, while taking into account the concrete situation, it should have a strong component of professional revolutionaries.

From a qualitative viewpoint, it should pay great attention to the training of worker comrades as all-around leaders and create the ideological and organisational conditions for the full development of women as revolutionary activists.

While carrying out the ideological, political and organisational building of the party it must always be kept in mind that the goal is the revolutionary seizure of political power. This means that the task of the party in every period is to develop the preparation of the masses towards this end. The revolutionary seizure of political power according to the diverse conditions in the various countries requires the

development of the proletariat's armed struggles. It is necessary to constantly educate the proletariat in this perspective, even in periods when civil war or revolutionary war is not on the order of the day.

In particular, it is of great and decisive importance to build an organisation capable of working under any conditions and of resisting the repression the bourgeois state unleashes against it in a variety of forms.

Wherever possible and particularly under the conditions of a bourgeois-democratic regime, the party should develop legal and open work, while constantly seeking, through political exposures and its leadership of the proletarian masses in concrete experience, to show the class nature of bourgeois democracy, and taking measures to safeguard the party organisation so that even when the regime changes the class struggle of the masses can continue to develop.

Building the party as the vanguard detachment of the proletariat requires that its members be consistently educated in the development of the revolutionary mass line based upon several essential elements:

a) strategic firmness and tactical flexibility, which makes it possible to use different methods to intervene in different movements, taking into account specific contradictions in the light of a single line and plan;

b) starting from the real demands of the proletariat, which expresses its class interests constantly forming united fronts of all the forces and social strata than can be mobilised in the struggle against imperialism, its state, its government, whether in overall strategic terms or partial tactical terms. The important question is to understand the united front and the consequent politics of united action it requires as something dynamic, seeking to shift the balance of forces in favour of the party and the proletariat. Otherwise, the party sinks down into the organisations of the reformist movement, freezes, and cannot respond to the demands of the masses, and is reduced to the politics of compromises which instead of intelligently transforming the actual existing movement cor-

rupts and devalues the party's revolutionary action.

The revolutionary communist party should be conceived and built as a contingent of the international communist movement. On the one hand this means the battle to build a new international, and on the other the consistent education of its own members and the proletariat in the principles and practice of proletarian internationalism.

considered an end and an accomplishment in itself, but rather part of a long-term struggle, full of advances and setbacks, to wipe the system based on the exploitation of man by man from the surface of the earth and build communism.

A clear internationalist line means seeking and consolidating ideological, political and organisational links with parties and organisations of other countries.

I

The conquest of political power by the working class is the fruit of the development of its political movement, a movement that when the conditions are right can gather together all of society's revolutionary forces into an insurrection taking advantage of a governmental crisis and subsequent institutional collapse in order to overthrow the



Milan

Proletarian internationalism is a reflection of the fact that the proletariat is one class worldwide, with one interest and one basic aim : the overthrow of the imperialist system. Though the revolution in the diverse countries can only take place in different periods and simultaneous world revolution is a superficial and disarming utopia, an internationalist line is a basic requirement, because no revolution and consequent battle for socialist construction can be con-

This is of basic assistance in the present-day battle to lay the basis for new revolutionary communist parties of the proletariat.

For a Revolutionary Strategy in the Imperialist Countries

The basis for developing a revolutionary strategy in the imperialist countries lies in fully and completely taking up once again fundamental lines put forward by Lenin and the October Revolution.

bourgeois government, smash the bourgeois machinery of state and institute the rule of the organs of proletarian political power born during the course of the revolutionary political movement.

The possibility of carrying out a revolution in an advanced capitalist country is linked to the development of revolutionary situations which appear rarely in such countries and which concentrate all the main contradictions of the imperialist system

— the most obvious case is that of imperialist war.

The revolutionary political movement of the proletariat does not result from spontaneity nor much less from the development of the workers' day-to-day economic struggle.

The decisive factor for the development of such a movement is the existence of a party made up of the most advanced elements of the proletariat and able to carry out all-around revolutionary work among the ranks of that class. This work must be based upon the ability to develop the proletariat's consciousness and organisation through political exposures and leading concrete political movements, and to carry out work in non-revolutionary periods so as to prepare itself and the proletarian masses to take advantage of those moments when the revolutionary seizure of political power is on the order of the day.

II

An outstanding feature of imperialism is the existence of the labour aristocracy.

The key to the activity of the revolutionary communists is work to bring about a split between the majority of the working class and the upper stratum which benefits, to varying degrees during various periods, from the superprofits the imperialist bourgeoisie obtains from the exploitation and plunder of the peoples oppressed by imperialism.

The labour aristocracy represents the political-social prop of the bourgeoisie's rule over the proletariat. This stratum constitutes the source and the main core of reformism and revisionism of all stripes.

III

In the imperialist countries any identification of the interests of the proletariat with those of the nation is reactionary. In peacetime it reinforces the bourgeoisie's political rule and promotes social peace and class collaboration. In wartime it leads to a vile alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat of other countries and against the oppressed peoples,

and turns the proletariat into cannon-fodder for the preservation of the imperialist system.

In peacetime the revolutionary communists must fight against the logic of participating in the fruits of imperialist development, showing how this development is the result of the exploitation of the working class and of the blood and suffering of the peoples oppressed by imperialism. In wartime, they must support a policy of revolutionary defeatism towards their own bourgeoisie.

The abandonment of these three points Lenin developed in the struggle against the degeneration of the parties of the Second International has always been a factor leading to degeneration, deviations and failure, especially in the Western capitalist countries. This is what happened in some periods of the experience of the Third International, as we have previously written.

The Marxist-Leninist movement of the 1960s and '70s was characterised by the failure to thoroughly return to and take up these points in ideological, theoretical, political, organisational and practical terms. This made it impossible to lay the basis for building real revolutionary communist parties in the imperialist countries.

Against Economism and Some Secondary Deviations

Clearly the communists must not confuse economism with the necessary intervention in the economic struggle, both to guide the economic struggle to serve the interests of the most exploited sectors of the working class, and above all as one of the fields in which to develop political agitation.

But economism, which has been prevalent in the revolutionary movement in recent years and is still rather strong, leads to concentrating one's forces in the economic struggle of the masses as the most fundamental sphere for organisation and revolutionary work, making trade union activity the principal work of revolutionary communists, whether it be work inside or outside the unions, with short-term or long-term goals. Increasingly this turns the revolutionary organisation into a structure to carry out that kind of

work, bureaucratising it and depriving it of revolutionary tension and militancy.

Economism debases the content of the ties with the masses by lowering the activity of the revolutionaries to that of trade unionism.

Economism naturally goes hand in hand with a gradualist conception of revolutionary activity, expressed quite commonly by the position "first economic struggle and organisation, after that political struggle and organisation, and after that finally the revolutionary struggle." In essence this means that organisation remains in the sphere of economic struggle or trade union politics, since the political struggle does not and can not evolve from the economic struggle, except in some particular circumstances.

Such conceptions not only prevent effective and systematic exposures and political mobilisations around all aspects of imperialist politics and the role and activity of the different classes and the parties which are their political expression, but also fail to take advantage of the political conjunctures that occur to develop the revolutionary political movement of the proletariat.

Because it conceives of the revolutionary struggle as evolving out of economic struggles, economism expresses itself in a deeply legalistic conception of the class struggle. This means that the movements which have been placed or place themselves on the terrain of armed struggle are not critically examined in terms of their aspirations, their class basis and their strategy, but rather identified only according to the form of struggle they have undertaken, the armed struggle; they are reduced to that and rejected for that, which means, in fact, going over bag and baggage to the camp of bourgeois democracy.

The prevalence of economism in the revolutionary movement continues to provoke a reaction among sections of the youth and other rebels with revolutionary communist inclinations. This trend, seemingly the opposite of economism, is just as incapable of building a real revolutionary organisation and developing the proletarian movement in a revolutionary direction:

a) It has contempt for the proletariat's daily struggle and for the systematic work of organising the masses; its activity is reduced to sporadic agitation and propaganda, which is often sectarian and sloganistic. They don't take into account the fact that the masses learn through their own experiences, that the revolutionaries must guide them and raise their consciousness, and train themselves in the heat of the class struggle.

b) In opposition to gradualism a subjective conception of the revolutionary process develops. It does not take objective conditions into account nor analyse the balance of forces, which leads to a superficial evaluation of the various political periods, tending to consider every crisis of the bourgeoisie and every advanced phase of the mass movement as the threshold of revolution. This translates into an inability to carry out revolutionary politics, to an under estimation of the need for tactics and to an inability to train truly revolutionary cadre. It is an obstacle to snatching advanced sections of the working class away from the hegemony of reformism. These concepts arose in the form of political adventurism (armed and unarmed), and, when that failed, in the form of overemphasising the strength of reaction, an outlook which leads to liquidationism.

c) In reaction to legalism, at times a whole mythology of armed struggle has arisen which considers it the only form of revolutionary politics and revolutionary organisation. This trend found it easy to seek theoretical support from other currents alien to Marxism-Leninism. We'll come back to this later.

These positions, even if they intend to oppose economism, have the same practical effect: they leave the proletarian movement without a revolutionary political agent, stuck in the sphere of economic struggle.

Against Subordination to the Labour Aristocracy

In imperialist society the most exploited sections of the industrial working class constitute the reference point for revolutionary activity. In many imperialist countries

immigrant proletarians make up a large part of this.

The revolutionary communists must root themselves among this section to make it the motive and leading force of the whole proletarian movement, of all the strata oppressed by imperialism in the revolutionary struggle. This can only take place by an open break with the labour aristocracy and with the reformist parties which are its political expression.

In the communist movement, and in particular the Marxist-Leninist trend, there has been a widespread monolithic view of "the unity of the working class" which in political and organisational essence does not aim at a split between the majority of the proletariat and the labour aristocracy but rather at preserving the bonds between these two sections in the name of the unity of the working class.

Such a position leads to a political line which cannot train the potentially revolutionary strata of the proletariat to develop as the leader of the whole front of political and social struggle.

Even on the level of trade unionism, this position leads to an opportunist practice, because in the imperialist countries work in the trade unions dominated by the labour aristocracy, though indispensable, should be considered secondary to the creation of mass organisations which can unite in struggle the workers inside the factory as well as those outside, the unemployed.

In short, whoever works in the name of the unity of the working class to unite the most exploited strata of the proletariat with the labour aristocracy, whoever separates the exploited majority of factory workers from their natural partners, the proletarian strata outside the factory, the unemployed, is standing in the way of building the force necessary to definitively defeat the influence of the labour aristocracy and isolate reformism and revisionism.

Today it is more necessary than ever to break with this position, since the clear polarisation provoked by the crisis is creating objectively more favourable conditions to

carry out a split between the majority of the proletariat and the labour aristocracy.

Against Social Chauvinism

In the imperialist countries and especially Europe, there has always been a strong social-chauvinist tendency. This tendency denies the imperialist character of its own social system, fails to recognise the actual importance and revolutionary value of the liberation struggles of the peoples oppressed by imperialism, and is not in a position to carry out a profound class criticism of its social system (putrefaction, parasitism, etc.).

Support for the struggles of oppressed peoples has been a strong point of the new Marxist-Leninist movement born in 1968 in the imperialist countries. This general support has only gone halfway; it has seen U.S. imperialism and to a smaller degree Soviet social-imperialism, without being able to see or analyze the growth and development of the role of its own imperialism, particularly in the European countries.

This had led in practice to the abandonment of proletarian internationalism, especially after Vietnam and the defeat of the People's Republic of China, and to the re-emergence of openly social-chauvinist and pro-imperialist lines in the revolutionary communist movement. In the name of the "purity of the working class" support is denied to the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples; in the name of the struggle against the two superpowers the European bourgeoisie are cloaked in pacifism.

In order to form a revolutionary communist vanguard in the imperialist countries it is necessary to make a clean sweep of these conceptions which are closely linked with one another. It was due to these conceptions that the rebirth of the radical movements which took place in 1968-69 and the following years (focused on different things in different countries) could not give rise to the formation of a revolutionary proletarian vanguard. This, in turn,

has been the subjective factor which has facilitated the disastrous revival of those movements in the river-bed of reformism and the general "modernisation and adjustment" of imperialist society.

These concepts have been a factor in the ideological, political and organisational miseducation of a generation of activists and, because of their bankruptcy in practice, in the ideological crisis and disorientation which has dispersed the greater part of the energy these activists once displayed.

Additional Notes

In the years in which the Marxist-Leninist oriented forces of the communist movement were undergoing their deepest crisis and organisational dispersion, particularly in the imperialist countries, among some sections of the workers and especially among petit bourgeois youth updated variants of reformism and revisionism (such as Proletarian Democracy in Italy) have caught on, with a rediscovery of parliamentarism and trade unionism as well as openly liberal-democratic trends (such as the Radical Party, the ecology movement and the Greens). These trends sow illusions about the possibility of reforming the system from within, exactly when the system is showing its most reactionary, warmongering features; their only result is to disarm the working class and hinder the expression of the revolutionary potential of the social movements.

Among the most combative and radical sectors some essentially neo-anarchist tendencies have become popular (neoanarchist even when they define themselves as communist, such as *Autonomia*). Some old anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist trends have reappeared (such as Trotskyism, left-wing communism and workerism). The incapacity of the former to play a fully revolutionary role is demonstrated on a daily basis. They are not armed with a scientific theory, Marxism-Leninism, which when correctly used makes it possible to accurately analyse imperialist society and its laws of motion and to identify the real revolutionary subject of this

society, and serves as a guide to overturn the existing state of things. These tendencies disperse the social struggles they have been promoting, expose them in a spontaneous way to state repression isolate them from the industrial proletariat and lead them in a vicious circle that repeatedly gives rise to a subjective ebb in the movement.

It is necessary to develop an up-to-date and systematic criticism of these tendencies, combined with a positive programme and actions, so that the radical energy and strengths of these social strata can be brought under the theoretical and political leadership of the revolutionary proletariat.

The second of these trends presents a schematic and metaphysical variant of Marxism and proletarian internationalism, whether preached to the proletariat as a soporific doctrine, or decked out in revolutionary phraseology and advocating sectarian and extremist political lines, so that the living energy gushing out of the furnace of class struggle can be frozen in impotent witness to revolutionary purity. Consequently, in practice this line serves to reinforce the leadership of reformism and neoanarchism in the struggle.

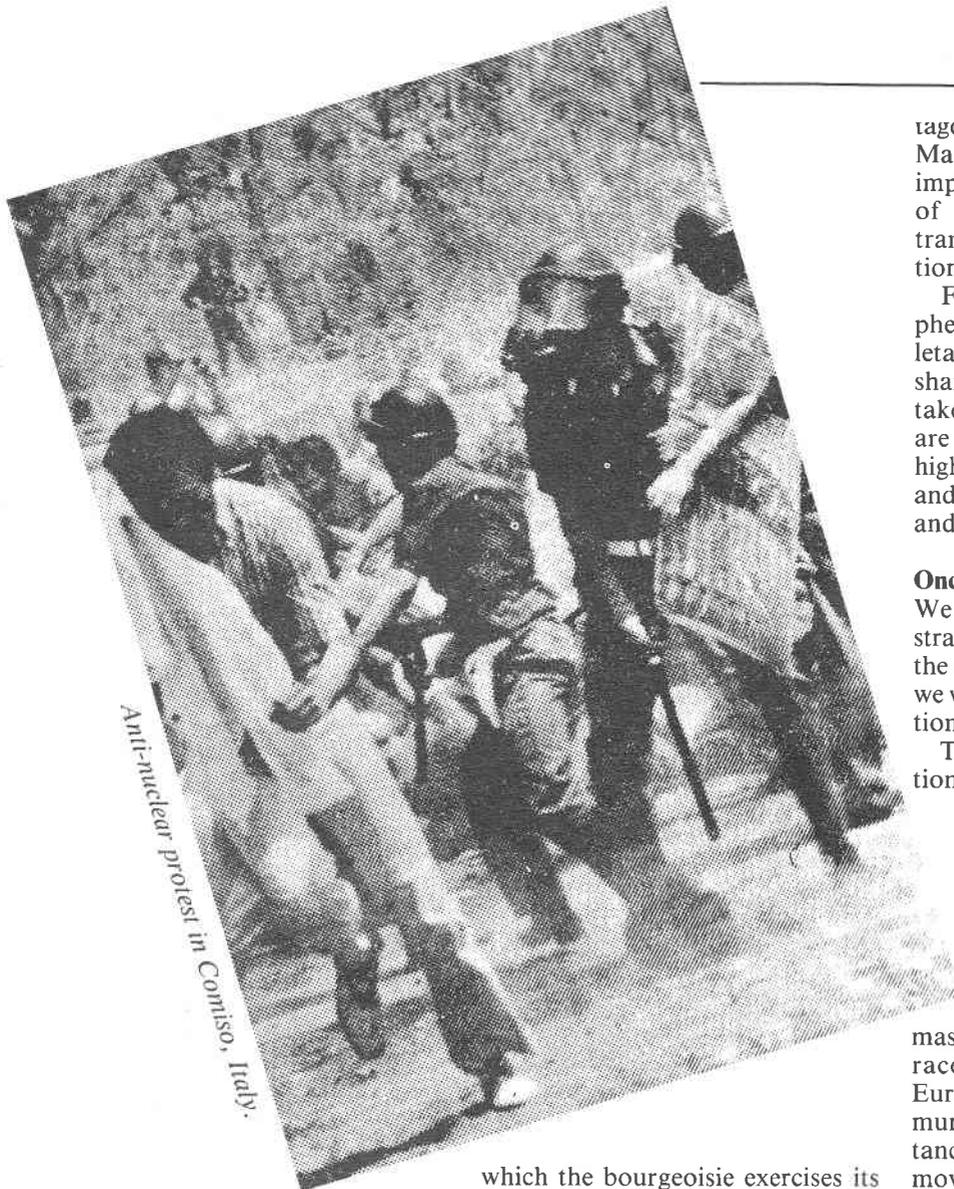
The false Marxism of this trend must be unmasked theoretically and politically. This can be done insofar as a political line and organisation is adopted that can carry out real transformations in the movement.

Surely it has been the fighting groups that have most concentrated these two trends and which have gathered the greatest revolutionary impetus. These forces have given a concrete answer to the problem of armed struggle in the imperialist countries and the building of illegal organisation. Their experience merits profound study so as to avoid repeating their grave errors in this field and to draw useful lessons.

This can only be done by understanding that the basis of their strategy, theory, political line and practice is wrong and can only bring defeat. Programmatically these groups have filled themselves up with South American guerrilla theories and Lin Piaoism, which are completely unsuitable for the

revolutionary struggle in the imperialist countries, and always fall into terrorism pure and simple, without any programmatic links with the mass movements, despising the problem of providing concrete leadership for these movements and instead preaching that every economic struggle is a struggle for power. On the one hand they have been a factor behind the deviations among advanced elements who have failed to carry out the task of giving revolutionary leadership to the masses, and who in the face of serious difficulties for the revolutionary movement have aggravated the problems and decapitated the struggle; and on the other, they have been a coagulation of ideologically unstable elements which are alien to these struggles and which exalt the worst instincts of petit bourgeois rebel-ism. Then, when inevitably they fall into crisis and defeat, they help bring harmful political positions into the revolutionary movement, as has happened especially in Germany as well as secondarily in Italy, positions such as the struggle for national liberation in the imperialist countries, under the banner of the struggle against U.S. imperialism, and a positive evaluation of the social-imperialist bloc, either explicitly or in a disguised manner.

It is necessary to unfold a political battle aimed at the emergence in this arena of a scientific self-criticism, free from preconceptions and not at all a form of disassociation (a legal term meaning to denounce the armed struggle movement in exchange for a lighter sentence—trans.), so as to win over the best forces to the process of building the proletariat's revolutionary communist party. This is not possible unless the Marxist-Leninist communists are intensely active in the struggle against repression, in the defense of political prisoner status for those arrested and of their conditions while in prison, and against the logic of annihilation in the imperialist prisons. Above all it is important to develop authentic revolutionary political activity and build the organisation as an effective centre to promote and lead the revolutionary struggle in all its forms, allocating forces in accordance with the political conjuncture



Anti-nuclear protest in Comiso, Italy.

and the links with the mass movement.

There have been important changes in the economic, social and cultural structure of the imperialist countries :

— the unprecedented level of the internationalisation of capital, which has not made the big multinationals any less nationally based, nor attenuated the contradictions between states;

— the development of automation and the computer revolution, which, instead of liberating labour and life, exacerbates the reduction of the proletariat to mere appendices of the machinery, heightens the atomisation of society and strengthens the means through

which the bourgeoisie exercises its ideological domination;

— the changes in the stratification of society : the shrinking importance of the peasantry, the development of new intermediate social strata, the emergence of pockets of permanent marginalisation.

It is important to analyse these phenomena in order to chalk out a revolutionary programme for our time, but the proletariat cannot investigate these problems without the weapon of dialectical materialism and the science of Marxism-Leninism. Indeed it is in the analysis of these phenomena that one can appreciate the prophetic and programmatic profundity of Marx's theses regarding the tendencies within capitalist society and the need for communism, of Lenin's further developments regarding the importance of the proletariat's subjective consciousness and its role as the

tagonist in the political struggle, and Mao's contributions regarding the importance of the superstructure — of art, culture and ideological transformation — in the revolutionary process.

From the analysis of these phenomena the necessity for proletarian revolution emerges more sharply than ever, above all if we take into account that these changes are carrying imperialism to the highest concentration of destruction and the barbarisation of humanity and society, war.

Once Again On War and Revolution

We have already synthesised the strategic principle on this question in the first part of this document. Here we want to put some particular questions into focus.

The beginning of war preparations has brought about militant

mass movements against the arms race and war, particularly in Europe. The revolutionary communists should give great importance to their intervention in these movements. Basically they must:

1) Utilise the period of clashes between the imperialist governments and the movements in order to combat pro-imperialist political and ideological tendencies within these movements; to direct the struggle, through concrete experiences, against one's own imperialism, not in defense of peace but for revolution; to win over the most advanced of these movements to the revolutionary communist organisation. This is a question of showing in light of facts and their concrete manifestations that the cause of war resides in the nature of the imperialist system and that war is the continuation of the politics and economics carried out by the imperialist governments in peacetime. It must be shown that slogans calling for disarmament, getting out of one or the other war bloc, nuclear-free zones, maintaining peace

through negotiations, are all impotent illusions in the face of the arms race, the deployment of nuclear weapons to every corner of the globe, the frenetic and articulated process of the formation of blocs for the new war, the spread of local wars and imperialist intervention in an ever-increasing number of hotspots.

2) Turn the proletariat into the spearhead of the struggle against imperialist war and, through its party, into the leader of the whole movement. This means that the revolutionary communists must unceasingly carry out agitation and propaganda among the ranks of the proletariat, that they must know how to respond to every concrete move by their own imperialism in the political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural fields by calling political strikes and political demonstrations. Particular attention must be paid to attacks on living conditions and the struggles such attacks give rise to, in order to point out the connections between the sacrifices demanded of the workers and the expense of the arms race, and the connections between the defense of the national economy and the imperialist war such competition ends up in.

The activity of the revolutionary communists in the antiwar movements and among the proletariat must be most intensely concentrated during those times when their country intervenes in local wars and against revolutionary wars of national liberation of peoples oppressed by imperialism.

Revolutionary communists must support movements struggling against intervention even before intervention occurs. They must unmask the rotten poison of the motherland and nationalism in all its forms, including in culture, sport, etc., point out the real reasons behind this intervention, develop mass movements of refusal and disobedience within the bourgeois army, and show how the costs of the intervention fall on the living conditions of the working class and masses of people.

If such an intervention does occur, the revolutionary communists must support every blow waged against their own imperialist army,

support the just cause of the national liberation movement — even if not led by the proletariat in its anti-imperialist demands — and seek political and material links with the authentically revolutionary forces present in those countries. In accordance with the development of the mass movements in the imperialist countries, they must develop the most appropriate forms of struggle to weaken the fighting capacity of their own imperialist state from within. They must work tenaciously for the proletariat to understand that every military and political success of their own imperialist state reinforces the bourgeoisie, spurs on new imperialist undertakings and strengthens the role of the military

The Role of the Political Newspaper
As Lenin brilliantly pointed out, in every phase of the revolutionary battle, and especially during the first steps towards building the party, the revolutionary communist political newspaper plays a central and decisive role.

The communist newspaper must provide solid and systematic political guidance and give real answers so as to provide political leadership to the movements of the workers and the masses. It must bring the proletarians a broad vision of the political struggle by responding with exposures and analysis to every aspect of bourgeois oppression in every field, according to the priorities required by the political situation. It must be a tool to



Demonstration of unemployed in Torino

in political life and in the reactionary process, while every defeat can favour the development of the revolution if the proletariat gets prepared for it.

The transformation of the antiwar movement into a revolutionary movement requires going over to the disintegration of the imperialist army and the arming of the proletariat itself.

The revolutionary communists must consider this a crucial task in their work of preparation. They must be able to utilise every manifestation of the imperialist state's violent and dictatorial nature to educate the proletariat and all the oppressed about the proper forms of struggle and organisation.

organise and to give practical education in organisation, through all the aspects of its functioning: its editing, printing, financing and circulation. It must have its own mechanisms for printing and circulation, so that it can exist and develop its work under any conditions.

Without such a newspaper it is impossible to carry out the practical process of party building.

Some Particularities of the National Question in Imperialist Countries

In some of these countries there are national minorities which make up a part of the proletariat and which are often in the poorest areas of these countries. This gives rise to the

struggle for national self-determination in the heart of some imperialist states.

The revolutionary communists should denounce every aspect of the economic, political and cultural oppression carried out by the imperialist state.

They support self-determination where it is applicable; they support the struggles and utilise the resulting contradictions to weaken the overall and united rule of the bourgeoisie and its state.

It is necessary to chalk out a strategy aimed at achieving the unity of the proletariat of the different nationalities that exists in these countries, under the leadership of a single party, against the common enemy — the bourgeoisie and its state — and fight for the socialist character of the revolution throughout the whole country.

The Countries of the East

The countries of the East, of the Warsaw Pact, must be considered overall as unevenly developed capitalist countries which have been politically and militarily integrated into the social-imperialism bloc dominated by the USSR.

Here, obviously, there are specific features to be investigated in order to formulate a plan for revolution.

There are certainly, however, some points that can be affirmed: the proletariat is the leading class in the revolution that must be made, a revolution whose character is socialist. The main enemy is the state bourgeoisie of one's own country. Nationalism, as the case of Poland shows, is used as a weapon of class collaboration by the bourgeoisie itself.

At the same time it is necessary to take Soviet social-imperialism's oppression into serious consideration and constantly prepare the proletariat for the USSR's direct intervention when the proletariat's struggle endangers social-imperialism's overall domination. □

Britain

(Continued from page 42).

why the Marxist-Leninists in Britain have failed to build an enduring, truly revolutionary communist party and movement can be put down to their own shortcomings of an ideological and political kind. These can generally be characterised as a failure to take Marxism-Leninism really seriously, really to struggle to achieve a true unity of proletarian revolutionary theory and practice specific to British conditions.

The new anti-revisionist movement which arose in Britain during the 1960s consisted of a number of small organisations and groups, some of them claiming to be parties. However, none of them ever developed into proper communist parties of the Leninist type. By a "proper communist party" we mean a highly organised, tightly disciplined body of committed Marxist-Leninists who are firmly based within the working class and are intimately involved in the struggles of that class, who are clearly and openly committed to the goal of violent proletarian revolution, establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and struggling for socialist transformation and who have a clear political programme, a definite revolutionary strategy to achieve these goals in the specific conditions of Britain in the world during the present period. While some of the Marxist-Leninist organisations declared themselves to be struggling to build such a party, there were, by the mid-1970s, no signs of such an authentic communist party emerging in Britain. Instead, the new Marxist-Leninist movement, despite the onset of a new world-wide economic crisis, was floundering and falling into all manner of revisionist errors.

Some of the comrades in the movement engaged in ideological and political struggle to try to illuminate our fundamental failings so that struggles could be inaugurated to rectify these errors. We eventually concluded that the fundamental error of the Marxist-Leninist movement during the 1960s and 1970s was the failure to achieve any sort of true unity of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and

practice. Instead there was a massive gap between the professed theory and the actual practice of the movement. There was dogmatist theorising and empiricist practical action. While the movement expressed adherence to the theoretical conclusions drawn from the experiences of the international class struggle, as expressed in the works of the great leaders, they were not actually used to guide day-to-day political work around various aspects of the class struggle. Instead, such practical political activities were usually conducted in a somewhat impulsive, unreflective way, no different from that of the reformist practice of various revisionists and Trotskyists. An obvious example is the economist attitude to trade union work that was taken by most of the Marxist-Leninists. Similarly no real attempt was made to apply materialist dialectics to analysing the experience of practical struggle so as to draw theoretical conclusions and in turn use these as a guide for improving and making practical struggles more effective. Theory was theory and practice was practice and never did they meet. "Theorising" consisted of dredging up a few quotations from the Marxist-Leninist classics to justify all manner of revisionist practice. The dialectical unity of revolutionary theory and practice demanded by the world outlook of Marxism-Leninism was not achieved and instead the Marxist-Leninists in Britain were groping in the dark, easy prey for all manner of revisionist monstrosities such as the "Three Worlds Theory."

Nonetheless, many comrades had committed themselves to the working class revolutionary cause and had devoted much time and energy to the struggle. What was necessary was to draw some theoretical conclusions from this experience so as to begin to develop an integrated revolutionary strategy, to develop an all-round programme for making revolution in Britain in relation to the rest of the world. Only in this way could the movement develop some long-term perspectives and plans, begin to win a base in the working class and establish a party. Basing themselves on this assess-

ment of the Marxist-Leninist movement the Nottingham Communist Group and the Stockport Communist Group issued an appeal, "Build the Party!" in 1981. This called upon the existing Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain to set up a Programme Commission whose sole task would be "to develop a revolutionary programme embodying a thorough scientific analysis of the character of contemporary British capitalism and on the basis of this scientific knowledge to elaborate a strategy for the conduct of revolutionary struggle in Britain." The revolutionary programme was to form the political basis for a national organisation of a pre-party kind which would use the programme as a guide for participation in the class struggle with the aim of establishing a base within the working class and, through experience, deepening and developing the revolutionary programme. Only then would the conditions have been created for the formation of an authentic Marxist-Leninist Party.

For nearly a year the two Marxist-Leninist groups struggled with various other Marxist-Leninists, both organisations and individuals, to gain their participation in setting up the proposed programme commission. However, the confusion and chaos attendant upon the revisionist seizure of power in China meant that some of those who showed interest in the project were not prepared to wholeheartedly uphold the achievements of the international communist movement under the leadership of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and to reject the new revisionist regime in China and their reactionary "Three Worlds Theory." The initiators of the "Build the Party!" appeal had underestimated the degree to which the fledgling Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain had undergone political and organisational decay and degeneration. Even so, the Nottingham Communist Group and Stockport Communist Group were determined not to give up the struggle to develop a revolutionary programme and in the summer of 1982 they established the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission with this objective in view.

The members of the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission were not completely isolated because they had the support of various Marxist-Leninist organisations in other countries, the ones who adhered to the Joint Communiqué of the 1980 International Conference. Furthermore, as the programmatic work proceeded and was publicised it was hoped to win further support for the Commission and participation in its work, something which did happen on a small scale. The Nottingham Communist Group and the Stockport Communist Group intended, in addition to their Programme Commission work, to continue with their participation in various aspects of the class struggle, such as the anti-war movement and Irish solidarity movement. However, two related problems arose in the work of the Commission. One was that given the limited experience, knowledge, resources and time available from the limited membership of the Commission it was difficult to make more than a limited amount of progress in developing clear and correct positions on the programmatic questions which were addressed. The other problem was that the burden of Commission work on the two small local Marxist-Leninist groups meant that continuous participation in the day-to-day class struggle was increasingly neglected and the precious, vital unity of theory and practice was being lost. It was becoming clear that the weakness of the conscious Marxist-Leninist forces in Britain, together with the limitations imposed by the objective political situation meant that it would not be possible immediately to develop a revolutionary political programme at the high level originally envisaged. These difficulties in carrying through the programmatic task gave rise to a number of intense ideological and political struggles within the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission which eventually resulted in a minority repudiating the struggle to develop the revolutionary programme and deserting to the ranks of the pro-Peking revisionists. This brought the work of the Commission to a crisis point and the remain-

ing majority of members had to consider in a very searching manner the position of the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission in relation to the general political situation.

It was concluded that while the commission had made a certain amount of progress with its programmatic work it was not likely in the circumstances to be able to proceed much further. Indeed attempting to do so would probably result in serious errors in the political position put forward.

At the same time, a number of very positive developments were taking place in the overall political situation. A new wave of intensification in the national liberation struggles in many parts of the world was occurring, as for example in Peru and the Philippines. The inter-imperialist contradictions between the USA and the Soviet Union have been intensifying with the consequence of a growing awareness in the imperialist countries of the possibility of a major inter-imperialist war in the foreseeable future. In the imperialist countries, including Britain, the contradiction between the working class and the monopoly capitalist class has been sharpening as a result of the deepening world economic crisis of capitalism. Within Britain, as in many other countries, these developments have had two significant political consequences for proletarian revolutionaries. On the one hand there has been a growing awareness among some workers and other people that only the most radical of solutions will resolve the problems with which they are faced. On the other hand it has been precisely within these conditions of growing political crisis that most of those elements who previously made some claim to being "revolutionary," i.e., various revisionist and Trotskyists, have dropped all pretence of taking a stance of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism and have run for cover with one or another "big brother" — the Labour Party, Soviet social-imperialism, Chinese revisionism, etc. Just at the moment when there is a crying need for a truly revolutionary organisation in Britain, no such body exists.



Scene during British miners' year-long strike.

A most important and timely response to the tightening knot of contradictions on a world scale was the convening of the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninists in 1984, its drafting of a political line for the international communist movement and, on this political basis, its formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, the first step towards the reconstitution of a proper communist international. This meant that the Marxist-Leninists in Britain were no longer largely isolated but through their participation in RIM could draw upon the ideological,

political and organisational support of comrades around the world. A qualitative step forward had been taken in the international communist movement and the *Declaration of the RIM* constituted a powerful new political weapon for Marxist-Leninists everywhere, including Britain.

Given these increasingly favourable international circumstances, the members of the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission considered that it was urgently necessary to establish a nationally based Marxist-Leninist organisation in Britain which would

adhere to the political line of the *Declaration of the RIM*. While neither the basis of support within the working class nor a fully developed revolutionary programme yet existed which would justify the formation of a proper Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party it was appropriate to establish a pre-party organisation on the basis of the programmatic work which had been done by the Marxist-Leninist Programme Commission and also on the basis of the *Declaration of the RIM*. To hesitate to establish such an organisation would be to ignore the developing objective



Unemployed in Liverpool.

situation and to neglect those elements in Britain who were striving towards revolutionary action. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain is based upon a political line, expressed in the manifesto, and upon a basis of proletarian internationalism in the form of RIM, far in advance of those previous Marxist-Leninist organisations established within Britain during the last quarter of a century. The whole international nexus of the contradictions of capitalism and imperialism is intensifying. If the working class in Britain are to have the opportunity of making revolutionary breakthroughs in the upheavals which will occur in the coming period then they need to build a communist party and movement with great speed. It is the duty of all genuine Marxist-Leninist communists to engage in this task by rallying round and working as part of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain.

Political Programme of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain

The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain is a revolutionary proletarian organisation of a pre-party kind committed to the overthrow of imperialism and

the development of a worldwide communist, classless society. The theoretical basis for its work is Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. It is a proletarian internationalist organisation and the leading centre to which it adheres is the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

The long term strategic aim of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries in Britain during the coming period is to prepare so as to be ready to provide decisive leadership when the intensifying international contradictions reach a crisis point. Our aim must be to create a vanguard of conscious, committed Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries within the ranks of the working class. Only if this has

been achieved will it be possible for the working class in Britain, in conjunction with workers and oppressed peoples elsewhere, to either prevent the next major imperialist war or to turn that war into a revolutionary civil war.

For this strategic aim to be achieved it is necessary not just to develop a body of proletarian revolu-



tionaries but also they must be organised into a disciplined revolutionary party of the democratic centralist type. Only if the conscious revolutionary elements are highly organised will they be in a position to provide clear decisive leadership for the working class at a time of major crisis for the British monopoly capitalist class. Thus the short term strategic aim of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent is to build a genuine revolutionary communist party in Britain.

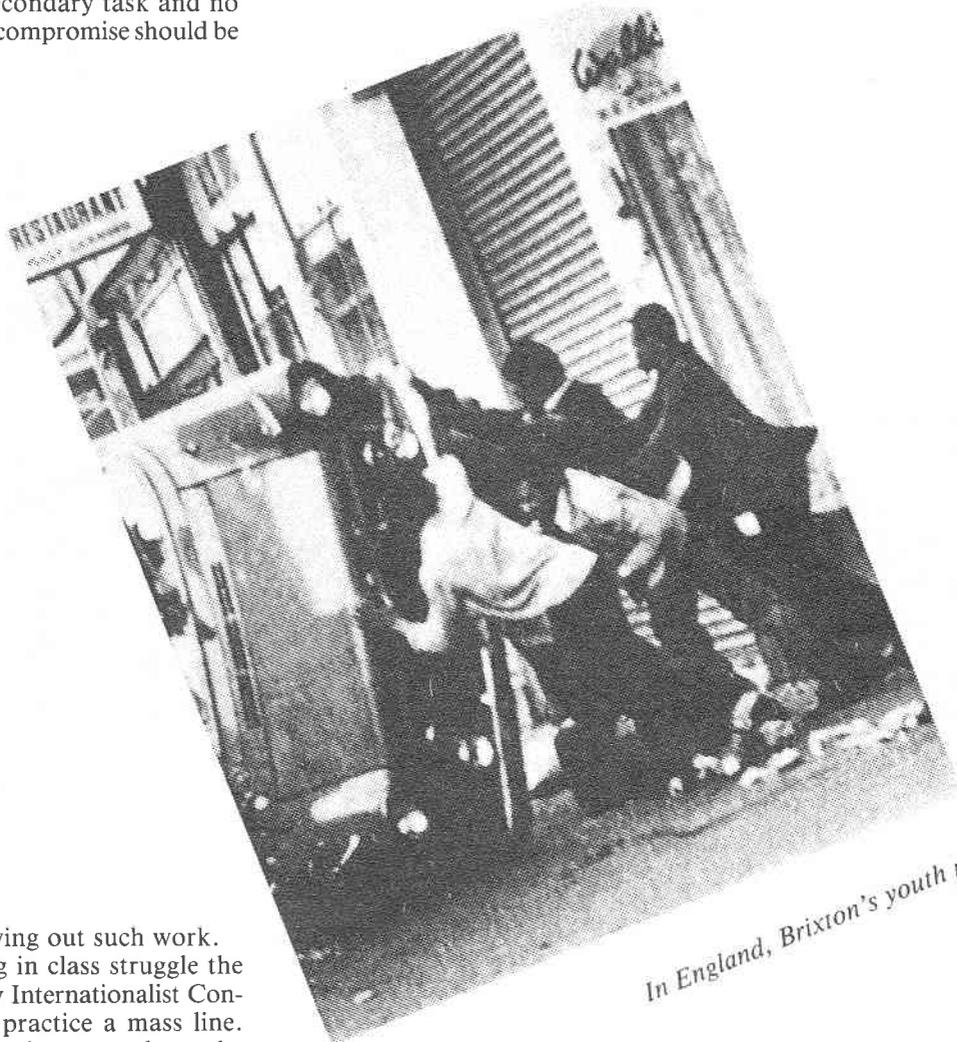
If there is to be a communist party then there must be a significant contingent of communists within the working class. Those people who are most likely to develop a revolutionary outlook and become com-

mitted communists are to be found among the middle and lower sections of the industrial proletariat and among the lower sections of the semi-proletariat. The practical activities of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will be focused around and directed at these sections of the working class with the aim of generating revolutionary consciousness among them. Particular attention will be paid to the struggle of women, black people and youth in these sections of the working class because these elements tend to suffer the greatest oppression and exploitation and thus, at least in the long run, have the greatest potentiality for revolutionary development. While some attention should be paid to winning over to the revolutionary ranks some elements from the intermediate strata this is definitely a secondary task and no opportunistic compromise should be

ploitation suffered by the working class and their struggles to resist capitalist domination. Then the Marxist-Leninists must strive to see the possibilities of such struggles being developed in ways which will lead to the generation of revolutionary consciousness. We then have to engage in political struggle to persuade the working class to adopt the right policies. Our general approach to class struggle should not be that of arrogant know-alls who think they have all the answers. Rather, communists should become intimately involved in various working class struggles, so as to achieve real knowledge about them and only then work patiently so as to stimulate sections of the working

class to themselves take the initiative and move forward to a higher level of class struggle. Our task is not so much to get the working class to follow us as to encourage the working class to take the lead for itself in class struggle.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will participate in the day-to-day struggles to help workers develop revolutionary consciousness. In participating in those struggles such as to defend living standards and jobs, against racism and sexism, etc., there are two opportunist errors we must be careful to avoid. The right opportunist error is to tail behind the popular movements and refraining from struggling to provide political leadership of a revolutionary kind. This approach results in sustaining and even strengthening reformist il-



In England, Brixton's youth rebel.

made in carrying out such work.

In engaging in class struggle the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent must practice a mass line. Our starting point must always be the various oppressions and ex-

lusions among the working class. The left opportunist error would be if we held ourselves aloof from the piecemeal, day-to-day struggles of the working class to defend itself from oppression and exploitation, on the grounds that such struggles are not revolutionary. While not in themselves revolutionary, essentially defensive organisations such as trade unions and black people's groups are nonetheless necessary for the survival of the working class until such time as capitalism is overthrown.

The Marxist-Leninists must support struggles while at the same time struggling to help those involved to see that only a revolutionary solution will fundamentally resolve the problems the working class faces under capitalism. Our task in such struggles is to provide political leadership which will attract more rebellious elements and lead them to develop revolutionary consciousness. Exercising political leadership is not necessarily the same thing as occupying the leading position in various organisations such as trade unions and women's groups. Rather it is a question of projecting

and winning support for a clear revolutionary political line on the issue at hand. While it is essential that the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent becomes intimately involved in various continuing working class struggles it is also vital that we always keep in view our revolutionary objective of the overthrow of the British monopoly capitalist state and direct the attention of the working class in this direction.

During the present major depression the sections of the working class which are identified here as having the greatest revolutionary potentialities find themselves increasingly and directly confronted by the British state. As the depression has deepened the state has played an increasingly active role in forcing the less privileged sections of the working class to bear the brunt of the sacrifices necessary if capitalism is to survive. The social security benefits on which the unemployed and low-paid depend are being steadily whittled away as is the labour

legislation which offered some minimal protection against the extremes of exploitation. The pressure is on to erode some of the reforms in terms of civil rights and employment which women have won in the post-war period. Young people, who are particularly badly hit by unemployment, are perceived by the ruling class as potentially disruptive and thus attempts are made to control them by initiatives such as the Youth Training Scheme. Black people have also shown their capacity for insurrection and so the state has carried further its attempts to sustain racist divisions within the working class by means such as immigration laws.

What the struggles of these sections of the working class have in common is that those involved are confronted not so much by this or that individual capitalist employer but rather that they are faced directly by the capitalist state apparatus.



Irish-Catholic youth heave Coca-Cola petrol bombs at authorities.

This can be a very important factor in gradually unifying the struggles of these different sections of the working class into one united counter-offensive. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will concentrate its day-to-day political work on supporting, encouraging and where possible leading struggles against various forms of state oppression. This must be done in a revolutionary way as opposed to a reformist way. The main aim in stimulating struggle against the capitalist state is not to win temporary concessions and palliatives but is to raise the political consciousness of the workers involved to a revolutionary level. These struggles must be conducted such that those involved come to grasp the true nature of the state as the instrument of ruling class power and come to recognise that only its

revolutionary overthrow will free the working class from capitalist oppression and exploitation. Only if in the course of these struggles clear lines of demarcation from various types of reformism are drawn will the cadre of conscious, committed Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries be created who will form the basis of the communist party.

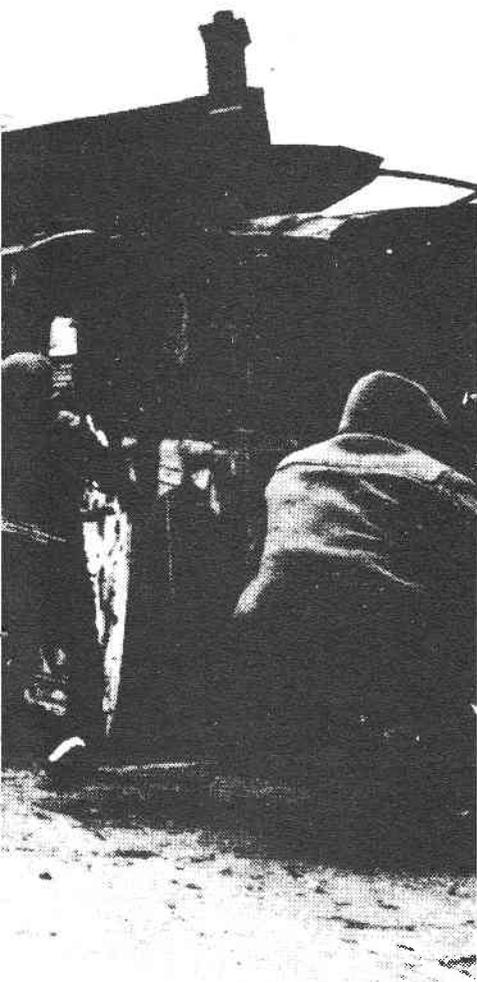
The reactionary influences of various reformist ideologies — social democracy, Labourism, Trotskyism, revisionism — have got socialism a bad name among large sections of the working class in Britain. The experience of Labour governments in Britain and bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia and China together with all manner of anti-socialist bourgeois propaganda has resulted in large numbers of workers believing that socialism and communism are utopian fantasies that do not work in actual practice. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent must wage a fierce ideological counter-attack against all this bourgeois filth. We must thoroughly expose the reformist Labour Party for what it is and always will be; a bulwark of monopoly capitalism and a deadly enemy of the working class. In particular, we must thoroughly criticise and attack those organisations in and around the Labour Party who claim to be “revolutionary” and “Marxist.” We must unmask their rotten reformism masquerading as revolution. We must also pay attention to criticising the Soviet social-imperialists and Chinese revisionists and make it clear to the working class that these people are really a kind of fascist. At the same time we must hold up for admiration and emulation the splendid victories and achievements of the communist movement of the past. The revolutionary conquest of power in Russia and China, the struggle for socialist construction in the USSR and the Cultural Revolution in China are extraordinary revolutionary achievements of which the working class can be justly proud. In drawing the attention of our class to their wonderful revolutionary heritage it is essential that we defend and uphold for admiration and emulation the great leaders of the interna-

tional communist movement, especially Comrades Joseph Stalin and Mao Tsetung who have been subject to so much vilification from the mouths of the bourgeoisie and their stooges. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent proudly proclaims the great revolutionary heritage of the international working class and its great leaders — Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

In the coming period political struggles should be focused around the intensifying inter-imperialist war preparations and the struggle to prevent the next imperialist war. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent should stress to the working class that the increasing tension between the two major imperialist blocs is no accident but the inevitable outcome of inter-imperialist rivalry. We must point out that the petit bourgeois pacifism of large sections of the anti-war movement will not prevent another major world war. Only revolutionary insurrection in at least some of the imperialist countries can prevent this terrible conflagration. We must struggle to convince workers that they do have the power, if they choose to exercise it, to prevent another world war by means of revolutionary insurrection.

This is our first line of strategy. However, we must also struggle against the petit bourgeois defeatism which claims that if there is another major world war then this is the end of human life as we know it. While such a conflagration would be massively destructive there would still be millions of people left alive in Britain and our task then would be to lead the working class into turning the inter-imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war to overthrow the monopoly capitalist class. This is our second line of strategy. Proletarian revolutionaries are optimists and we are determined to turn even the most adverse conditions to the advantage of the working class.

The struggles of the oppressed peoples in Asia, Africa, and Latin America serve to weaken and undermine the imperialist powers. Thus these anti-imperialist struggles are striking at the same enemy faced by the working class in Britain, the monopoly capitalist class. The op-



pressed peoples of these regions are our natural allies and the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will campaign for the working class to support such struggles, especially those directed against British imperialism such as the Irish and Azanian national liberation struggles, because those are the ones we can most effectively support. We must clearly expose those who claim that Britain is a neo-colony of America, rather than a junior partner in imperialism, and we must also expose those elements who try to disguise the oppressive and exploitative nature of Soviet social imperialism. The position of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent is one of uncompromising opposition to all forms of imperialism. In carrying out this task it is our duty to give particular support to and help for the Marxist-Leninist forces involved in the various national liberation struggles. The struggle for proletarian socialist revolution in the imperialist countries and the struggle for national democratic revolution in the oppressed nations are integrally linked.

If communists are not proletarian internationalists then they are nothing. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain is a participant organisation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and adheres to the political line of its *Declaration*. We must struggle to make workers in Britain aware of the RIM and the political activities of its constituent organisations. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent must emphasise to the working class in Britain that they are but one section of an international working class who have a common struggle against capitalism and imperialism. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will do everything in its power to further the development of

the RIM and the establishment of a new communist international. This is absolutely vital to the advancement of revolutionary struggle here in Britain for we shall not be able to secure revolutionary victory here on a lasting basis if the communist movement does not make advances in other countries as well.

The methods of struggle adopted by the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will be whatever ones are necessary, without reservation, for the advancement of the revolutionary cause. From its inception the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent should take all necessary steps to ensure that it is as secure as possible from penetration and disruption by the British state and other enemies. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will be organised in such a way that it can carry on the revolutionary struggle however extreme the repression it faces. As well as agitation, propaganda, and various organisational activities the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent will begin to prepare itself for all forms of revolutionary activity including the highest methods of struggle. We must be bold and not confine ourselves to traditional methods of political work but develop new ones as well. Our organisational method is that of Bolshevism but one that is truly dialectical in that it takes into account changes of circumstances and adapts to them. The Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent must strive to become a fist of iron striking out from amidst the masses at the monopoly capitalist class.

If the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent is to succeed in creating the conditions for the formation of a proper communist party in Britain then it must not only raise revolutionary consciousness among sections of the working class and win a following but it must also

deepen and expand the revolutionary programme set out here. This will only happen if a definite and conscious effort is made to draw theoretical conclusions from political practice. For this to occur systematically and speedily definite organisational arrangements must be made within the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent to develop the programme for proletarian revolution. This is no desultory matter as we are engaged in a race against time with the imperialist war preparations to build the revolutionary party and movement. The task of the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent is to create the conditions for its own dissolution and replacement by a proper revolutionary party as soon as possible. This can only be done by practising the highest possible level of organisational efficiency and revolutionary discipline.

We call upon all committed adherents of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to immediately apply for membership in the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain.

We call upon all workers and other people of revolutionary inclinations to make contact with the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent, comment on this manifesto, acquaint and involve yourselves with our political work and struggle to unite with us in the revolutionary cause.

We call upon all workers to strive to raise the level of your struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation and to work with the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent so as to hasten the day when our class finally takes its destiny in its own hands and strikes down our oppressors.

“The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.” □

(Continued from page 13)

ground for economist and bourgeois democratic tendencies in our ranks. A more general practical result of this was losing our strategic perspective and tailing behind the spontaneous events. Even more important, we neglected the possibility of our preparing the proletariat for seizing political power in that period."

The fact that the regime chose to commit itself to a bitter military campaign against the struggle in Kurdistan, despite the great risks involved, underscores what a formidable potential this terrain held and continues to hold for advancing the revolution. Within a month after the Shah's demise, the struggle in Kurdistan was already challenging the new regime with arms, distinguishing Kurdistan as an advanced territory which, under proletarian leadership, could indeed set the standards for the other regions. The regime's first military campaign of suppression proved that the Kurdish landscape could be quite treacherous for the reactionaries. With no quick victory in sight, and wary of the political cost of the war, which was pushing the more revolutionary section of the nationalists as well as the communists to the head of the struggle, the clerics tried to manoeuvre to exploit the contradictions on the Kurdish front through negotiations for a ceasefire, hoping to sow confusion and reformist illusions and thereby gain time.

As later events proved, there was nothing to be gained from negotiations; the regime had no intention of recognising the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination or even autonomy. It was trying to gain time to reorganise its own forces by enticing the nationalist forces to slacken their struggle. Indeed, in the spring of 1980, the regime's army was pounding at the gates of Sanandaj, with the commander in chief, Bani Sadr, hollering, "We must not take off our shoes till we take power in Kurdistan." During this period the Mujahadin maintained a conspicuous — and treacherous — silence on the regime's attack on Kurdistan, reflecting the Fars (great nation) chauvinism typical of this group.

II. Kurdistan: Some Historical Background

Britain and the Kurds

The Lausanne Treaty of July 1923, in a flagrant but typical imperialist violation of the rights of nations to self-determination, carved up the Kurdish territory into four parts and annexed them to the reactionary states of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. There is evidence however that for a brief period after the war the British were entertaining the idea of forming not one but two vassal states in the regions of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul. Naturally these would have remained under a strict mandate and "protection" of His Majesty's Government for no less than 25 years, in order to allow these uncivilised peoples a necessary period of maturation acceptable to the taste and interests of the British crown. According to this imperialist concoction, King Faisal of the Hashemee Monarchy was to be the superintendent over the Basra and Baghdad regions while Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji from the feudal clans of the Barzan area in the north was to be responsible for the Kurdish region. At the time, the British political supervisor Sir Arnold Wilson was of the opinion that with Sheikh Mahmud in charge of Iraqi Kurdistan not only would the prominent feudal Kurdish leaders of Hamawend and Sulaymaniyah be appeased, and thus willing to be used against the Turkish military campaigns which were then being conducted to seize back the oil-rich Kirkuk area, but also all this could lend itself handsomely to establishing a puppet Arab regime in the south. The Kirkuk area had been under British Army occupation since early May 1918, but it was not fully secured for British interests due to the raids by Turkey. Under these circumstances, with the injunction from the British, Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji was declared sovereign in what was to become Iraqi Kurdistan. In a letter of November 1918 bearing the signatures of forty feudal clan chiefs, Sheikh Mahmud offered his services to the British political commissioner of

Mesopotamia: "Since His Majesty's government had declared its intention to free the peoples of the East from Turkish oppression and to help them gain their independence, the chiefs who are the representatives of the Kurdish people request that they be taken under the British government's protection and be incorporated into Iraq in order not to be deprived of the benefits of the union. They request from the Mesopotamia civilian commissioner that a representative with the necessary authorisation be sent in order to provide the Kurdish people with the aid of the British and the opportunity of peacefully advancing on the path of civilisation. If the government assists the Kurds and protects them, then in turn they will guarantee to accept its orders and views."

As a side point, the outlook and aspirations expressed in this letter reflect the rather strong feudal trend that existed in most of these nascent Kurdish national movements at the time, rendering them vulnerable to manipulation and armed suppression by the imperialists and their regional puppets. Speaking of the early Kurdish movement in Turkey, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya points out that, "Alongside the 'national' character of these movements, there also existed a *feudal* character." (see article in this issue)

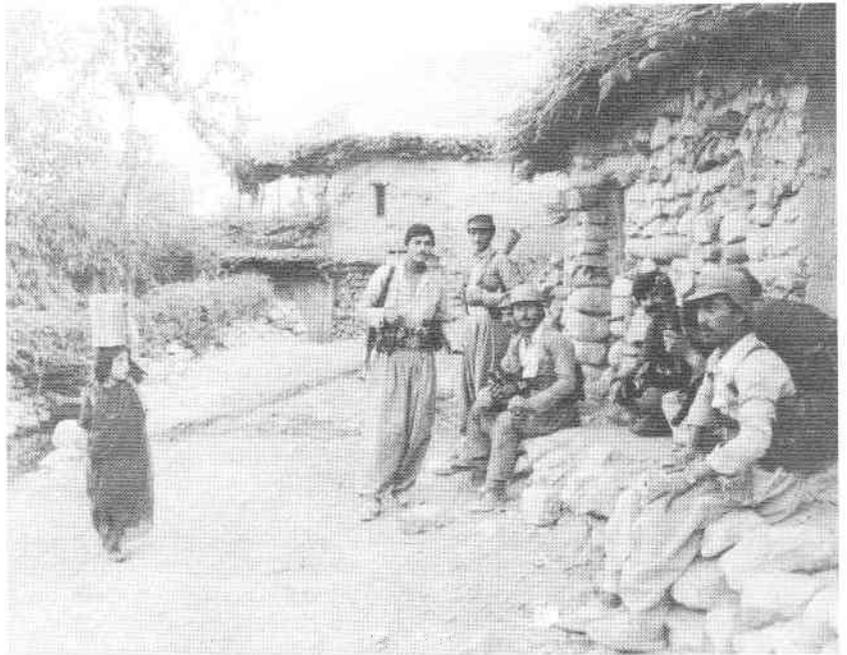
However, the expectations of Sheikh Mahmud and other feudal leaders were not always in harmony with what the British demanded in Iraq. Sheikh Mahmud was seeking an autonomous Kurdish state under British protection, and in May 1919 he had already taken a new initiative by declaring himself the King of Kurdistan after a successful seizure of Sulaymaniyah from British forces. The British were not willing to tolerate such unruly behaviour. In fact, by May 1924, their better imperial judgement no longer favoured an autonomous Kurdish state in the north; King Faisal from Shirnaq, who had established friendly relations with certain feudal leaders and had already been crowned in August 1921, was to be backed as the King of Iraq.

The British imperialists, who were anxious to consolidate their gains in

the Arab world and to secure their monopoly over its rich petroleum reserves and the rest of the wealth in the region, chose to prop up the Hashemee Monarchy and to rely on the infamous Royal Air Force (RAF) to force the Kurds into accepting the Arab government. Besides, the Lausanne Treaty with the puppet Kemalist regime in Turkey had provided sufficient security for their interests, greatly reducing the need to use the Kurdish rebellion as a battering ram against the new Turkish comprador-feudal state, which itself was adamant about refusing any concession to or encouragement of the Kurds.

The concern of the British as well as their European partners generally about overdoing the charade of "liberating the peoples of the East" was hardly mitigated by the establishment of a truly revolutionary state run by the proletariat in what had been Tsarist Russia, which was both assisting and inspiring the oppressed around the world to throw off the yoke imposed on them. The new Soviet state replaced the Tsar's "prisonhouse of nations" with genuine national equality which sent shock waves through Central Asia and the Middle East. As soon as they seized power the Bolsheviks had exposed and denounced all the secret negotiations of Tsarist Russia — the Sazonov memorandum of February 1916 and the April 1916 Agreement bargaining over the terms of the Treaty of Sykes-Picot proposed by the allied imperialists — about annexing the Kurdish region all the way to the south of Van and Bitlis in Turkey. Had the Kurds gained any real autonomy or a separate state in any one region then this could have fanned the flames of genuine national liberation and possibly become a rallying point for the emerging national movement in the neighboring states. In such an eventuality, the imperialists dreaded the possibility of the Kurdish national movement gravitating towards the victorious Bolshevik revolution in Russia and further extending its popularity and influence in the area.

The feudal nature of the leadership of the movement and the ongoing problems among the different



Peshmergas of typical Kurdish village.

feudal clans were exploited by the British and the Hashemee Monarchy in order to contain and suppress the Kurdish movement. Britain's strategic interests in the Middle East also required the establishment of a pro-British Arab government in Iraq; in order to achieve that, the British imperialists were more than willing to back the Hashemee Monarchy in appropriating the wealth of the Kurdish region. In December 1927 the League of Nations passed a resolution on the annexation of Mossoul by Iraq. Elbowing the Kurds out, the Hashemee Monarchy was going to be able to monopolise the high revenues from the Mosoul petroleum reserves and the export-oriented tobacco crop of Sulaymaniyah. According to one estimate, during this period 30% of the total income of the Arab regime was coming from Iraqi Kurdistan. Naturally much of this was funneled to the raising and training of an army in order to reduce the burden on the British forces being used against the Kurdish rebels.

Indeed, without the massive aerial bombardment by His Majesty's RAF, the British and Iraqi troops were no match for the Kurdish insurgents in the mountains. Successive punitive expeditions never

really succeeded in putting out the flame of armed rebellion among the Kurdish masses, despite the obvious limitations of their leaders. As Britain was preparing the basis to bestow "independence" on Iraq (1931) with a British-Iraqi agreement (June 1930), leaving the responsibility of maintaining "internal" security to the Baghdad regime, a new round of struggle broke out in Kurdistan. The Iraqi army and the RAF conducted a large-scale terror campaign against the Kurds under the leadership of Sheikh Mahmoud and later Sheikh Ahmed Barzani, which lasted until 1934. In the first eight months alone of this "internal security operation" more than half of the Kurdish villages were razed. The gravity of the situation prompted the British imperialists to intervene under the cloak of non-partisan mediators and arrange a cease-fire; they were so generous as to propose an increase in the number of civil servants of Kurdish nationality in Kurdistan and of the Kurdish youth in the Iraqi Army.

Mistakes of the Communist Movement

"The coup d'état of Khrushchev and the revisionists in the Soviet Union was also, it is clear now, the coup de grace to the communist

movement as it had previously existed. The widespread cancer of revisionism had already consumed many (including some of the most influential parties that made up the Comintern." (*Declaration of the RIM*)

The damage inflicted on the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan by the revisionist parties, particularly after the rise of the modern revisionists to power in the Soviet Union, is no secret. However the "cancer of revisionism" that had already consumed many of the communist parties prior to the reactionary coup of the revisionists in the Soviet Union reared its ugly head with respect to the Kurdish national liberation movement much earlier than even the degeneration of these parties. Starting in the middle 1920s, the Communist Party of Turkey abandoned the Marxist-Leninist orientation, negating the positions adopted at its founding congress in Baku (1920) under the leadership of Mustafa Suphi. With its 1926 Programme under the leadership of Shefik Hüsnu, the TKP's line became openly revisionist, capitulationist and class-collaborationist. It not only hailed the regime of the new Turkish comprador bourgeoisie and landlords but openly supported its counter-revolutionary policies under the pretext of encouraging and strengthening the so-called "anti-imperialist and anti-feudal capacity" of the Kemalist regime.

These unmitigated revisionists felt no shame in giving open and full support to the genocidal campaigns the Kemalist regime launched to suppress the Kurdish rebellions in eastern Turkey; in fact, they were even inclined to spur the ruling classes on to be more consistent, resolute and thorough-going in these campaigns. Just before the famous Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925, the TKP delegation to the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern made the following remarkable assessment of the national question in his speech to the 20th Session of the Congress: "The most significant national minority are the Kurds; during the last fifty years, the Kurdish question has come on the agenda three or four times as a partial question and in a feudal context. The Kurdish na-

tional question has never appeared on the scene in its full dimensions. The current laws grant the same constitutional rights to the whole Muslim population. Therefore, the intellectual and bourgeois elements among the Kurds have put forward no national and separatist demands whatsoever." Nine months after this speech the Turkish Army was receiving help from the French imperialists to use the railroad through Syria in order to encircle the insurgents of the Sheikh Said Rebellion. What the TKP delegation described as "no national or separatist demands whatsoever" turned out to be a full-scale armed rebellion — and that was not to be the last of it.

However, it appears that the revisionist TKP was successful in persuading some in the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI). An ECCI report from the period 1925-26 says that: "... The Kemalist bourgeois republican party, which came to power through revolution and continues to hold power, succeeded in putting down the rebellion led by Sheikh Said in the east. The suppression of the Kurdish rebellion has increased the respectability of the Turkish government at home and abroad. The expectations of the British imperialists about the weakening of the national state power of Turkey have come to naught."

Even in 1928 at the Sixth World Congress, an ECCI report on the Middle East and Turkey had the following evaluation: "Like everywhere else, capitalist development in Turkey is also being realised on the backs of the labouring masses. Although the Kemalist revolution owes its victory to the support of the peasant masses, the latter's situation has not improved at all. Economic and political power in the Eastern provinces is still in the hands of feudal lords and Sheiks as in the past. The Kemalist government could not even utilise the famous counter-revolution in Kurdistan (1925) to eliminate the feudal fiefdoms in this region. The Kemalist government was content with just punishing a few feudal landlords."

It is reasonable to suspect that the TKP revisionists were influential in formulating such evaluations. Fur-

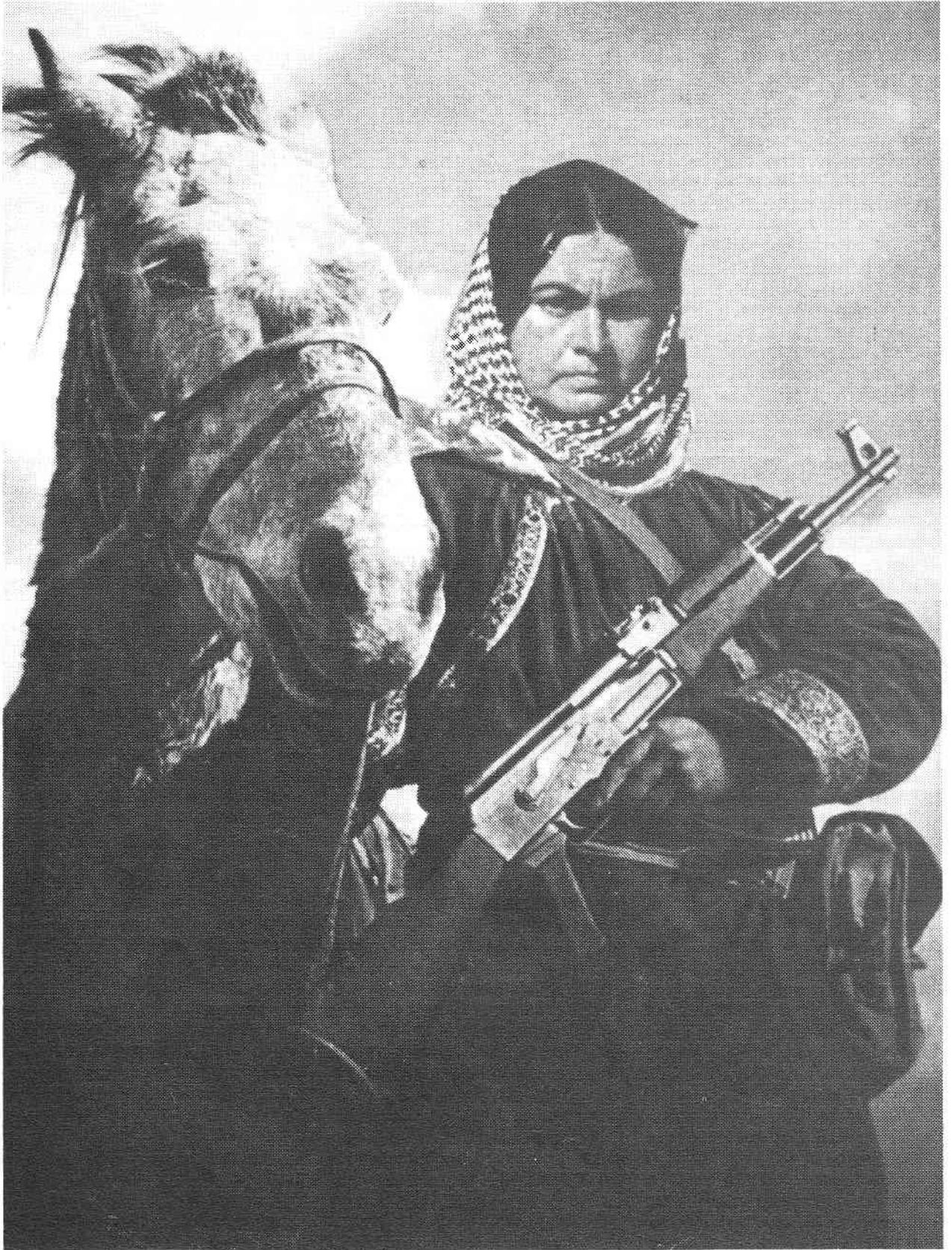
thermore, they used them to justify their brazen support for the completely counter-revolutionary Kemalist regime even in its brutal aggression against the Kurdish people. The TKP revisionists thus chose to abandon the Kurdish proletarians, peasants and broad masses in the face of bloody genocide. Naturally it could not have occurred to the revisionists to lead the Kurdish proletariat in organising a mighty revolutionary movement to channel the Kurdish masses' righteous anger against this.

The revisionist policy led to the strengthening of the leadership of the nationalist bourgeois and feudal forces to the detriment of the proletariat and working masses of Kurdistan. It provided support to the Turkish chauvinist propaganda of the ruling classes to befuddle the minds of the Turkish workers and peasants.

In Iran during and after the Second World War, the line of the Tudeh Party did serious damage to the Kurdish national movement, which held great potential for the development of a revolutionary struggle throughout the country. Instead the Tudeh Party's reformist outlook served only to strengthen illusions about achieving autonomy for both the Kurdish and Azerbaijani national movements. With promises of cabinet posts, the Iranian regime was able to have the Tudeh Party pull the reins on the tremendous revolutionary potential that existed among the working class at the time. Though the Tudeh Party fulfilled its promises of holding the revolutionary masses in check, the regime clamped down on it shortly before the elections in 1947. Further, in 1946 the Autonomous Kurdish Republic of Mahabad faced assault by the regime and received no substantial support from the revolutionary masses in the rest of the country due to the class-collaborationist policy of the Tudeh Party.

Mahabad Kurdish Autonomous Republic

The resounding collapse of the Shah's monarchy under the blows of the February 1979 revolution in Iran, together with the U.S.-



sponsored September 1980 coup d'état in neighboring Turkey — which was an integral part of the calculated imperialist response to the revolutionary ferment of the Iranian masses — and the Iran-Iraq war, now entering its sixth year, have all laid bare the depth of the crisis of the imperialist world order and profoundly influenced the situation throughout the Kurdish regions of these countries.

The period after the mid-1960s was a prelude to the February revolution and provided tremendous impetus for the revolutionary process in the Kurdistan region of Iran. There emerged new lines of demarcation and a new alignment of forces within the more revolutionary sections of the national movement, which had earlier suffered a serious setback. In the late 1940s the Iranian regime had unleashed an annihilation campaign against the Kurdish nationalist movement, culminating in the genocidal murder of thousands of Kurds. The head of the Kurdish Democratic Party (Iran), Gazi Mohammed himself, was caught and hung by the regime to demoralise the Kurdish rebels who had been fighting with inspiring heroism. Under the leadership of Gazi Mohammed, the Kurdish rebels had developed political and military strength and had gained some autonomy. This came about through the opening created by the Second World War, particularly following the entry of the Soviet Red Army from the north and the British troops from the south. On January 11th, 1946, in Mahabad, Gazi Mohammed publicly announced the founding of the Mahabad Kurdish Autonomous Republic.

His speech at the founding ceremony of the republic reveals the political thinking that had been guiding the movement up to that point: "A salute to you, Flag, you who symbolise justice and law, we give our word that we shall live in unity and do away with strife forever. Flag, now you fly over only one part of Kurdistan. Tomorrow when you fly over all parts, you will sweep away oppression and injustice. Long Live Great Kurdistan!" Gazi Mohammed and the KDP (Iran) in that period had a

revolutionary nationalist outlook and were opposed to the national oppression perpetrated on the Kurdish people. Their struggle was limited to securing national equality for the Kurds. Their programme did not call for an anti-feudal struggle, and it reflected the illusion that there could be equality between oppressed and oppressor nations in Iran, or at least that the regime would respect Kurdish autonomy, without any kind of proletarian-led revolutionary overthrow of the central state power.

The same illusion held sway in Azerbaijan as well, where the nationalist movement led by the Azerbaijani Democratic Party also obtained the recognition of regional autonomy for the Azerbaijani people on 19 June 1946 from the representatives of the government of Gavam-o-Saltaneh in Tehran. The presence of the Red Army in the north played a decisive role, along with the militancy and wide scope of the nationalist movement, in forcing the central government in Tehran to yield to the demands for autonomy of the oppressed nations in Iran. The standing army of the regime had practically disintegrated after the entry of the Soviet and British armies in 1941; the regime had no means to crush the nationalist movements, other than diplomatic demagoguery designed to bring the U.S. and its European allies to bear on the Soviet Union, which it charged with instigating "civil war" through the presence of its armies in Iran. The Red Army pulled out of Iran on 6 May 1946, but the U.S. imperialists were the ones who bellowed the most about the alleged danger of the Soviet move to seize the oil reserves and to extend its influence in the region. True enough, the victory of the USSR, then a socialist country, over German imperialism did in fact gain genuine sympathy from the oppressed, including in Iran. But the socialist Soviet Union then, unlike the social-imperialist USSR today, was not motivated by the need to establish world hegemony. Coming out of the Second World War on top among the imperialists, it was the U.S. which was aggressively pursuing a policy of consolidating its hegemony and containing the

revolutionary upsurges that had erupted during and after the war.

The Mahabad Kurdish Autonomous Republic emerged under these conditions and, given that the situation in Iran and internationally had more or less stabilised and that the U.S. imperialists were backing Iran, it now had to face a murderous backlash by the regime. The limitations of the nationalist ideology guiding it meant that the Republic could not withstand this attack, despite heroic resistance by the masses.

Confusion and demoralization characterised the ensuing years. In the mid-'50s, the seizure of power by the revisionists in the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism there caused great damage to the worldwide revolutionary front, dragging many communist parties into the swamp of class collaboration and degeneration. In Iran, the Tudeh Party, which had never been a genuine Marxist-Leninist party, was in no position to resist this international malady or the attacks of the regime. The 1953 CIA-engineered coup d'état was a heavy price paid for all reformist illusions and marked the consolidation of U.S. domination in Iran.

However, as Lenin remarked on one occasion, history does not stand still even in times of counter-revolution. The liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations in the colonies and semi (neo) colonies were experiencing a powerful new upsurge. Under the leadership of Mao Tsetung, the Communist Party of China gave invaluable political and material support to these struggles and launched a stinging critique of the Soviet revisionists' betrayal of revolution at home and abroad.

III. Crucial Questions of Political Line

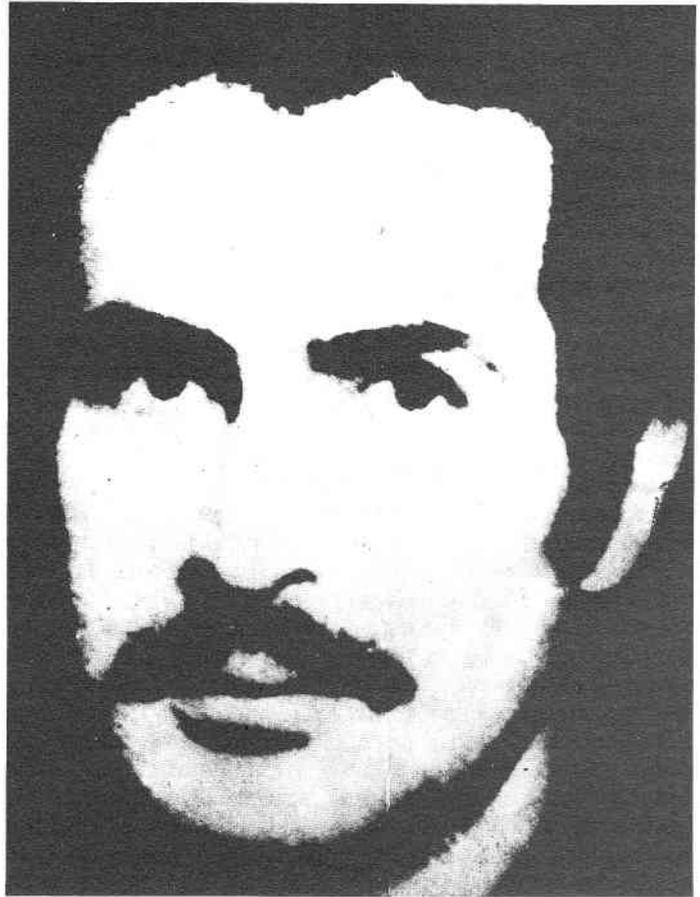
The experience accumulated over decades of bitter struggle, the historical limitations of the various feudal-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships, the further development of the proletariat as a social class and especially the painful lessons of

the repeated betrayals and backstabbing by the revisionists — all this bore down on the more revolutionary sections of the Kurdish movement, compelling them to search for a truly revolutionary orientation.

The Soviet Union, after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956, was anxious to collude with the Western imperialist powers, particularly the U.S. The new bourgeoisie that had usurped power after the death of Stalin was aggressively pursuing a policy of restoring capitalism at home and opposing the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples internationally. The new Soviet bourgeoisie was heaping praise on the Iranian constitution and on the White “Revolution” instituted by the Shah’s regime, which had been a mortal enemy of the Kurds. Attuned to Moscow’s directives, the counter-revolutionary Tudeh Party was a willing abettor of the regime’s bloody measures to suppress the Kurdish revolutionaries.

Similarly, the pro-Moscow revisionists of the Communist Party of Iraq chose to condone all the savagery against the Kurdish people in a despicable complicity of silence as the regime of Abdul Kerim Ghassem launched a full-scale military campaign against Iraqi Kurdistan in 1961 in order to consolidate the central state authority. As Iraq was pulled increasingly into the social-imperialist orbit, it was the Soviets who armed, trained, and advised the Iraqi military apparatus — particularly after 1968 — to rain death and destruction on the Kurdish landscape, while the CP of Iraq naturally stood by and gave full consent to avoid jeopardizing its chances of getting a few token seats in the government.

In Turkey, the revisionists had long since succumbed to the unbridled Turkish chauvinism of the Kemalist ideology, which did not even recognise the existence of Kurdish as a language. They were more than willing to assist the ruling classes in brutally clamping down on the Kurdish national movement in exchange for being granted the legal status they had long cherished.



Kak Salah

Mao Tsetung Thought

Against this background, the momentous international battles waged under the leadership of Mao Tsetung against Khrushchevite modern revisionism and the new capitalist class in the Soviet Union as well as the capitalist roaders in China could not but have a profound effect on the revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan. As observed in the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*:

“If the theoretical struggle against modern revisionism played a vital role in the rebuilding of a Marxist-Leninist movement it was especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, an unprecedented new form of struggle, itself in large part a fruit of this combat against modern revisionism, that gave rise to a whole new generation of Marxist-Leninists. The tens of millions of workers, peasants and revolutionary youth who went into battle to overthrow the capitalist roaders entren-

ched in the party and state apparatus and to further revolutionise society struck a vibrant chord among millions of people across the world who were rising up as part of the revolutionary upsurge that swept the world in the 1960s and early 1970s.

“...The Cultural Revolution was waged as part of the international struggle of the proletariat and was a training ground in proletarian internationalism, manifested not only by the support given to revolutionary struggles throughout the world but also by the real sacrifices made by the Chinese people to render this support....

“The Cultural Revolution was the living proof of the vitality of Marxism-Leninism. It showed that the proletarian revolution was unlike all previous revolutions which could only result in one exploiting system replacing another. It was a source of great inspiration to the revolutionaries in all countries.”

The revolutionary movement in

Kurdistan was no exception. A significant number of revolutionary Kurdish intellectuals and students around the University of Tehran were influenced by the red storm that had broken loose in China sweeping away the revisionist debris that cluttered the path of revolutionary struggle. The historic significance of the revolutionary line represented by Mao Tsetung and of the battle between Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and modern revisionism was certainly grasped unevenly by such forces. Revolutionaries such as Fuad Soltani considered themselves upholders of Mao Tsetung Thought, and others, such as Suleyman Moieni and Ismail Sherifz Edeh took a militant stand against the revisionist and reformist debasement of the revolutionary struggle, mainly regarding the class-collaborationist thesis of the "peaceful road to socialism," endorsed by the Tudeh Party renegades. They began to organise armed struggle in Kurdistan.

The revisionist forces, with the Tudeh Party at their head, were bitterly set against this nascent revolutionary trend in Iran. During the mop-up operations of 1967 that were launched in Tehran and Kurdistan to nip this trend in the bud, the Tudeh revisionists did not hesitate to collaborate with the Shah. The U.S.-engineered "land reform" — which, not surprisingly, enjoyed the editorial praise of *Izvestia* and *Pravda* — had conspicuously refrained from changing the landholding arrangements in Kurdistan, a move designed to enlist the support of the Kurdish feudal landlords and khans (local feudal authorities) against the progressive and revolutionary forces in Kurdistan. All this could only reaffirm Mao Tsetung's scientific teachings on the nature of modern revisionism and on the necessity of integrating armed struggle and the agrarian revolution, so as to "start a prairie fire" across the Kurdish landscape.

However, the shortcomings of this beginning revolutionary current, along with early and savage repression by the regime, did much to impede the development of a revolutionary movement guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung



Fuad Soltani

Thought capable of unleashing the full revolutionary potential in Kurdistan. Even among the forces who claimed adherence to Mao Tsetung Thought, such as Fuad Soltani, the ideological fetters of nationalism hindered their ability to develop a thorough-going scientific understanding of Mao Tsetung Thought as a qualitative advance in the science of Marxism-Leninism. Mao Tsetung continually insisted on the role of revolutionary consciousness, on the decisiveness of the correct political and ideological line and developed his path-breaking theory and practice of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to transform and further revolutionise society and the party, which, he warned, must constantly renew itself to guide the revolutionary struggle until the achievement of communism. All this was a brilliant application and a qualitative development of Lenin's teachings, particularly on revolutionary theory and the role and necessity of the vanguard party, yet even some of those influenced by the revolutionary vigour and earth-shaking victories of Mao Tsetung's line tended to interpret it in a somewhat economist, tailist fashion, in fact separating Mao from Lenin.

As it was also viewed through the prism of Kurdish nationalism, however revolutionary, the depth and scope of the integrated whole of the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was inevitably distorted to varying degrees with nationalist and pragmatic deviations.

The fact that the Soviet Union was at that time colluding with the U.S. (and the Western imperialists) in actively suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples and nations (now it has adopted a more "militant" posture, providing arms, etc., to these movements to try to turn them into instruments of inter-imperialist rivalry) reinforced the tendency to reduce Mao Tsetung's devastating all-round critique of modern revisionism to merely siding with the armed struggle of the oppressed in opposition to the Soviets. This has been, and still is, accompanied by the tendency to narrowly view both the armed struggle and the revolutionary struggle in a particular region of the world as well as to conceive of this as a separate phenomenon in itself and not as an integral component of the single process of world proletarian revolution, however tortuous and complex. And clearly, the prism of Kurdish nationalism ultimately blurs the significance of the all-around development of the revolutionary struggle in Kurdistan, since it underestimates the international factors and forces in its favour and, reciprocally, the tremendous impetus this struggle can give to the world proletarian revolution, particularly if led by a genuine vanguard party firmly based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and taking proletarian internationalism as its point of departure.

Such shortcomings (by no means unique to them) which marred the Kurdish revolutionaries' evaluation of Mao Tsetung and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution led them to belittle the need both to form a vanguard party of the proletariat of all nationalities and to take responsibility for leading the revolutionary struggle as a whole. Tailist interpretations of Mao

Tsetung's teachings compounded the distortions resulting from the nationalist outlook. Hence much of the revolutionary mass work carried out was characterized by a slow, patient and at times even pedagogic approach. The reaction to the emergence of the foco-ist Castro-ist distortion of armed struggle strengthened these tailist tendencies. It was not until immediately prior to the February 1979 revolution that the prospects of struggle for political power ever were truly seen or acted upon.

These shortcomings and ideological deviations later rendered political forces such as the Komala particularly vulnerable to more open opportunist and revisionist trends. The Communist Party of Iran (CPI), the product of a peculiar amalgamation of the Union of Militant Communists (UMC) and the Komala (The Organization of the Toilers of the Kurdistan of Iran, founded by Fuad Soltani in 1978), is a good example of this today. The line and practice of the CPI merits criticism not only because it claims to be the vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat but, more seriously, because it strikingly embodies a number of dangerous deviations which have plagued the revolutionary movement. These have culminated in a series of ramshackle attacks on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, concentrated against the immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung. Flowing from this, the CPI's line also suffers from pronounced deviations from the cardinal principles set forth by Lenin on the party, the role of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary mass work, the national question, etc. Moreover, its inability and refusal to understand the decisiveness of Mao Tsetung Thought as a scientific weapon in the struggle against modern revisionism has completely disarmed the CPI in explaining the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. This could well lead to capitulation to social-imperialism in one form or another and, as is indicated in their party positions, the CPI is already beating a hasty retreat from identifying the Soviet Union as social-imperialist. This is indeed an alarm-

ing retreat not only from a thorough-going Marxist-Leninist stand but also from that of the founding leaders of Komala in 1978.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, the formation of the Komala Ranjedaran was the most significant expression of the influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During the period following its founding until after the seizure of power by the revisionists in China, Komala Ranjedaran played an important role for the revolutionary movement, not

ping of Mao Tsetung Thought in their propaganda and their training of cadres. This retreat from the positions adopted at the time of the group's formation not only kept them from fully playing the kind of revolutionary role they might have played in Iraq, but led in 1982 to reversing the correct verdict on the social-imperialists. Ideological shortcomings, blended with revolutionary nationalist tendencies, were responsible for their inability to advance from their original stand and



just in Kurdistan but in Iraq as a whole, due to its open defense of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Nevertheless, Komala Ranjedaran shared some of the same weakness of nationalism and the failure to grasp the crucial role of the proletarian party. Later on, with both crisis in the Marxist-Leninist movement following the coup d'état in China and changes in the world situation, these weaknesses manifested themselves in the drop-

to resist the spontaneous and pragmatic pull which tended to liquidate the political and ideological independence of the proletariat. The organisational expression of this was a tendency to replace the role of the party with that of the front.

The class struggle in Turkey opened up a different path for those Kurdish revolutionaries in Turkey who were influenced by the achievements of Mao Tsetung and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Ibrahim Kaypakkaya led the revolutionary communists to split from a revisionist organisation that was pretending to uphold Mao Tsetung against modern revisionism. His struggle to forge a genuine proletarian party through a fierce political and ideological debate over the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought enabled the communist movement in Turkey to attract the most revolutionary forces among the Kurdish people into its ranks. Ibrahim Kaypakkaya's vigorous exposition of the Marxist-Leninist stand on the national question helped the Kurdish revolutionary masses to gain a scientific understanding of national oppression, the chauvinism of the ruling Turkish nation and the nationalist aims of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords in opposition to the interests of the proletariat.

In addition, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya ruthlessly exposed the pacifist and economist distortions of Mao Tsetung's brilliant contributions to the military science and the strategy of people's war. As he pointed out, people's war is the scientific approach to waging revolutionary warfare and seizing power in Turkey, particularly in order to create red political power in the Kurdistan region where the savage national oppression and the suffocating pre-capitalist (semi-feudal relations) had long rendered the prairie dry. Ibrahim Kaypakkaya made the first serious attempt of the Marxist-Leninists of that country to launch armed struggle, precisely in the Kurdistan region of Turkey.

Revolutionary Warfare

For long decades revolutionary warfare and the objective conditions for it have continued to prevail in Kurdistan. But particularly now, it is of crucial importance that such warfare must be carried out resolutely and according to the military science and outlook of the revolutionary proletariat, which has been qualitatively enriched by the contributions Mao Tsetung made on the basis of summing up the experience of long years of revolutionary warfare in China.

Many armies currently exist on the Kurdish terrain. They are led by

various political forces, ranging from those with a revolutionary communist political and ideological line, to those with a revolutionary nationalist or progressive outlook, to those which have been or are becoming tools of reactionary nationalism and imperialism. As much as this situation makes the political and military terrain extremely complex and difficult, it also lays bare the nature and programme of the political forces leading these peshmerga armies, providing the raw material for the revolutionary masses to grasp the international significance of the struggle and the necessity of proletarian leadership to lead it to victory.

"War is the highest form of class struggle," Mao Tsetung said, "for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, states, or political groups, and it has existed ever since the emergence of private property and of classes." ("Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War") For this reason, the troops involved in the armed struggle concentrate the aspirations and the political and ideological aims which move them to action in the first place. Hence it is unavoidable that the organisational principles, composition and structure of a peshmerga army and the way in which it carries out the actual fighting and relates to the broad masses, its allies and enemies will be fundamentally determined by whether in essence it is waging warfare to preserve society based on inequality, oppression and exploitation in one form or another or it is fighting to destroy all this, and those representing this, in order to advance society towards communism as part of transforming the whole world. All armies in the field without exception will have to be tested by the revolutionary Kurdish masses according to this criteria. In effect this has already begun to occur, since those who deserve their wrath are being labelled *Josh* or *josh-e hafif* (sold out or semi-sold out!).

Furthermore it is self-evident that with an army of peshmergas that is not guided by revolutionary principles and a revolutionary military

doctrine, it is impossible in the final analysis to wage and win warfare for social or national emancipation, since the armed forces of the old order have a wealth of experience and superiority in non-revolutionary warfare. Therefore it is indispensable and imperative even from a military standpoint that an army fighting for a genuine revolutionary cause must be *revolutionary in the fullest sense* of the word.

The longer the duration of the fighting, the more apparent becomes the qualitative difference between an army of revolution and counter-revolution, thereby facilitating the victory of the former over the latter. It is not without reason that the reactionaries are always anxious to achieve "quick victories" and worry about prolonging the war, particularly when they are challenged by revolutionary armies. Or they feel the need to periodically introduce cease-fires in order to impede the dissemination of the revolutionary ideals embodied in the discipline, heroism and social practice of the revolutionary army. Mao Tsetung's reference to the Long March as "a seeding machine" underscores this basic truth.

The revolutionary army epitomizes the new, revolutionary society rising up in arms, locked into battle with the old order. Warfare conducted by the revolutionary army is thus assured of victory to the extent that it also comprehends persuasion by arms: by its fighting spirit and style, a revolutionary army can and must induce and spread demoralisation among the troops and the social base of the reactionaries, persuading them of the hopelessness of their predicament and the invincibility of the revolutionary cause. More importantly, it can arouse and persuade ever broader sections of the masses to become part of consciously transforming the world. All this very much depends on the way a revolutionary army conducts its "criticism of weapons." And as pointed out by Lenin, "only the proletariat can create the nucleus of a mighty revolutionary army, mighty both in its ideals, its discipline, its organisation and its heroism in struggle."

Based on this understanding of

Lenin and on the experience of the Bolshevik Party, Mao Tsetung, summing up the development of China's revolutionary war, said "...in an era when the proletariat has already appeared on the political stage, the responsibility for leading China's revolutionary war inevitably falls on the shoulders of the Chinese Communist Party. In this era, any revolutionary war will definitely end in defeat if it lacks, or runs counter to, the leadership of the proletariat and the Communist Party... Hence only the proletariat and the Communist Party can lead the peasantry and the urban petit bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, can overcome the narrow-mindedness of the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie... the vacillation and the lack of thoroughness of the bourgeoisie — and can lead the revolution on to the road of victory." ("Problems of Strategy...") The importance of proletarian leadership as the most crucial condition enabling the revolutionary war to be carried through firmly to the end is also sharply expressed by Mao Tsetung in another statement emphasizing the inseparable connection between political and military affairs: "Our revolutionary war has proved that we need a correct Marxist military line as well as a correct Marxist political line." ("Problems of Strategy...")

Thus for the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan, Mao Tsetung's contribution in the field of revolutionary warfare and military strategy — which cannot be divorced from his contribution to the line for revolution in colonial and semi (neo) colonial countries, specifically the theory of New Democratic Revolution — has, as an integral whole, direct relevance and utmost significance. And it must be bluntly stated that among the revolutionary peshmergas in Kurdistan, those who are not armed with Mao Tsetung's teachings on political and military affairs cannot be — in spite of the weapons they might carry — considered armed against imperialism, social-imperialism and local reactionaries.

The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* pointedly says: "... revolutionary

war and other forms of revolutionary struggle must be carried out as a key arena for training the revolutionary masses to be capable of wielding political power and transforming society." Only this orientation can increase the depth and scope of the revolutionary war, strengthening its social and political base and drawing larger sections of the masses into the war effort. Due to the leadership of non-proletarian forces, much of the armed struggle currently conducted in Kurdistan suffers serious shortcomings in this regard. And the practices of reactionary mercenary armies in the field serve as good lessons by negative example.

Red Base Areas

The establishment of liberated base areas provides a foundation for waging a people's war. A new democratic political power of the masses can be established under the leadership of the proletariat through the political mobilisation of the people for the armed struggle integrated with agrarian revolution and other necessary revolutionary social transformations. Such liberated areas are the embryo of a new independent regime where the masses who have been oppressed, exploited and, as Kurds, subjected to the most brutal national oppression, can exercise political power. Such red base areas hoist the red flag of revolution and become living political manifestos calling to the ranks of people in the respective states and even beyond. The birth of the revolutionary new regime in liberated areas is not an end in itself; it must serve as a base for expanding the armed forces of the revolution, deepening the agrarian revolution, transforming the backward relations of production, and hence creating better conditions both politically and militarily for engaging the enemy in revolutionary warfare on an even grander scale and moving towards final victory. As Mao Tsetung said, "... spreading political power by advancing in a series of waves, etc., etc. Only thus is it possible to build the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country.... Only thus is it possible to create tremendous difficulties

for the reactionary ruling classes, shake their foundations and hasten their internal disintegration. Only thus is it really possible to create a Red Army which will become the chief weapon for the great revolution of the future. In short, only thus is it possible to hasten the revolutionary high tide." ("A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire")

Such red base areas can only emerge through the political mobilisation and struggle of the people and through warfare based on their initiative. Neither defending nor spreading the revolutionary political power can be accomplished without relying on the masses. Their revolutionary energy and initiative can only be truly unleashed through warfare that targets the centuries-old social relations enslaving them in the interests of the exploiting classes as well as foreign imperialism and its agents. Furthermore, actively participating in and supporting such revolutionary warfare enables the masses to revolutionise and train themselves to wield political power as masters of the new society. Herein lies the meaning and superiority of people's war, against which the army of the enemy and its technical superiority will inevitably prove ineffective. Ultimately not weapons but people and their politically conscious revolutionary activism will be decisive.

Leaving aside the reactionary nationalist organisations such as KDP of Iraq (GM), even among the progressive and revolutionary organisations of the Kurdish nationalist forces, their class outlook and nationalist ideology severely hinders their ability to conduct warfare against the reactionary regimes. In contrast to the outlook of the revolutionary proletariat, the outlook of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and other landed property owners naturally does not and cannot allow the full mobilisation and political awakening of the peasants, proletarians and semi-proletarians, whose revolutionary aspirations cannot be fulfilled by just exchanging one set of oppressors for another but requires instead the victory of the New Democratic Revolution over feudalism, bureaucrat

capitalism and imperialism.

These nationalist forces strive to confine the revolutionary struggle of the proletarians and peasants, trying to befuddle the minds of the masses with Kurdish nationalism to the detriment of the interests of the labouring classes and the class struggle of the proletariat. Ironically, this has only prolonged the subjugation of the Kurdish nation to national oppression.

The effort to avoid the integration of the armed struggle with the agrarian revolution in order to enlist the support of feudal property owners in the struggle against national oppression has only dampened the revolutionary enthusiasm of the peasants, who are the main force of the armed struggle. Those who today stand in the way of the poor peasants confiscating the land or storming the warehouses and granaries of the feudal landlords will later on bemoan the shortage of peshmergas or their unwillingness to engage the enemy. Without boldly unleashing and relying on the revolutionary enthusiasm of the broad masses of the people as "a bastion of iron" for the revolution, as Mao Tsetung put it, revolutionary warfare cannot be successfully waged. And against those who accused the peasantry and the masses of "going too far" and of "committing excesses" in their revolutionary vehemence, Mao Tsetung upheld the revolutionary initiative and enthusiasm of the people by saying, "Where there are two opposite approaches to things and people, two opposite views emerge. 'It is terrible!' and 'It is fine!', 'riffraff' and 'vanguards of the revolution' — here are apt examples." ("Peasant Movement in Hunan")

In the areas controlled or contested by the revolutionary or progressive Kurdish nationalist forces, the policy of not tampering with the existing social relations, of not carrying out and spreading the agrarian revolution, of complicity with the old feudal authority, with sheikhs, mullahs and other reactionary elements, of not establishing an independent regime of people's new democratic power in an appropriate form — this can only erode and sabotage the social and political



basis of revolutionary warfare.

To a great extent, the difficulty experienced in defending these so-called "liberated" areas from enemy attacks stems from this non-proletarian policy that hinders or even consciously prevents the toiling masses' struggle from establishing their own revolutionary regime and transforming society. Therefore the "liberated" areas are in effect "liberated" only from the free roving of the enemy troops but not, in essence, from the old structure of reactionary political power and social relations of production. Under such conditions the reluctance of the masses to go all-out in fighting to defend so-called liberated areas can only be attributed to the nature of the political line of the organisations which control these areas. Especially when such a political line is more interested in using the armed struggle to pressure the reactionary regime for concessions at a negotiating table or relying on the "support" of the social-imperialists or other reactionary states rather than maintaining and developing the armed struggle and the base areas, the revolutionary masses' reluctance to fight for the defence of such "liberated" areas should not be so difficult to com-

prehend — after all, the political line leading does not plan to hold on to them itself.

All this closely interpenetrates with military affairs. Without building up and expanding genuine liberated areas as rear areas from which the armed struggle can draw political, social, economic and military support, without fully mobilising and political unleashing the masses, it would be impossible "to lure the enemy in deep," to fight battles where tactical superiority can be wrested from the enemy, to launch surprise attacks, to circle around and trap the enemy, etc. All the military advantages of fighting a people's war would no longer be at the disposal of the peshmergas, hence tendencies would emerge to rely on modern weaponry and aid from at best dubious sources, to depend on foreign imperialists and even to capitulate. As Mao was to put it, "you fight your way and I'll fight my way."

Pessimism, defeatism, overrating of the enemy's combat effectiveness, seeking the support of an imperialist power (these days most often the Soviets) would inevitably set in. This has been the fate of more than one erstwhile revolutionary nationalist (even with pseudo-Marxist coloura-

tion).

Communist Party of Iran

This kind of outlook is both reflected in and reinforced through the political line of the CPI, among others. The opportunist line of the CPI, which includes a lavish amount of Trotskyism, produces some most conservative and liquidationist pronouncements concerning the armed struggle and the seizure of power by the proletariat through protracted people's war. For the CPI, the armed struggle carried out even by their own Komala peshmergas in Kurdistan is a phenomenon which hinders the task of organising the proletarians in party cells that should be constructed at the production place and in the urban working-class districts. The implication of this losing proposition can be nothing but preparing to get rid of this nuisance. Considering the CPI's deep-seated economism, this should by no means come as a surprise.

The most unmitigated economist and liberal-reformist recipes are being tossed back and forth between the CPI and infamous pro-Soviet revisionists such as Rah-e-Karghar (Path of the Worker) regarding the most efficient means for keeping the workers as isolated as possible from revolutionary politics. The CPI proposes to organise a movement for workers councils in the factories as the most suitable way to develop the working class movement and to lay the basis for some future Soviets, which the CPI's vision deems to be the road to political power. Leaving aside the patently absurd caricature of the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution on the Soviets as organs of political power as well as the CPI's untenable schematism, on at least two accounts the CPI's alleged concern for creating organs for seizing political power cannot be taken seriously: firstly, with such liberal bourgeois economism the working class can never be trained in revolutionary communist politics to struggle for and exercise political power; and secondly, such a miserable economist recipe is only a justification for abandoning the revolutionary potential for establishing red political power through armed struggle led by the proletariat in

Kurdistan, despite and in the face of very favourable prospects for doing that. Thus the CPI is, in effect, to quote the *Declaration of the RIM*, "appealing to the workers on the narrowest of bases and negating the necessity of the working class to lead the peasantry and others in thoroughly eliminating imperialism and the backward and distorted economic and social relations that foreign capital thrives on and reinforces."

The CPI, which proclaims to be a communist party, happens to command a relatively significant army of experienced Komala peshmergas and enjoys a respectably large mass base among the more revolutionary sections of the Kurdish people who have a burning hatred of the regime and the existing backward social and economic relations. Yet it is somehow unable to appreciate the immense potential that exists for waging armed struggle to establish red political power in Kurdistan. The CPI is infatuated by the idea of a bunch of workers councils managing the daily affairs of the factory, allegedly to train the workers for exercising state power sometime in the future — instead of fully developing the armed struggle in Kurdistan to establish base areas.

The CPI's flight from the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought stands stark naked when its propositions and the objective circumstances in Kurdistan are weighed against the following scientific formulation of Mao Tsetung: "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries." ("Problems of War and Strategy") Especially when all the objective conditions are present for the execution of this central task, it is evident that the CPI's opportunist line will increasingly be exposed, destroying the militant heritage and experience built up by the Komala in the past. The forces of Khomeini and the reactionary nationalists will exploit their serious errors to try to consolidate their own position and to suppress the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

The Revolutionary Army

Warfare divorced from the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of the old social order through the active and conscious participation of the broad masses will ultimately degenerate into "warlordism." The imperialist powers of both blocs and their puppets in the region exert every effort in this direction, each trying to acquire armies on the Kurdish terrain that can be deployed for their predatory aims. The intensification of inter-imperialist rivalry in particular has been fueling any latent potential for such developments. Furthermore, the existing feudal social structures of *ashirets* (a type of Kurdish clan) and the reactionary authority vested in them provides a basis for this type of degeneration. The KDP-Iraq (GM) stands as a most despicable manifestation of this phenomenon, which can also be observed in KDP-Iran and PKK in Turkey.

A revolutionary army is distinguished by and draws its strength from its revolutionary unity with the masses and the revolutionary unity between the soldiers and the officers. Such an army must avoid at all cost being a burden on the masses as "gallant warriors" who deserve special services. On the contrary, they themselves must serve the people, in addition to fighting battles, by conducting revolutionary agitation and propaganda among them and by taking part in production reorganised on a revolutionary basis. Correctly combining fighting battles and taking part in production can not only meet the cost of maintaining the army but more fundamentally it can provide disciplined and politically conscious production detachments that can lead the masses in achieving self-sufficiency and laying the foundation of the new economic order with an eye towards future socialist transformation. Thus profound political unity can be achieved between the people and their revolutionary armed forces.

The violation of such principles, created and brilliantly applied under the leadership of Mao Tsetung, has done great damage in Kurdistan and provided opportunities for the reactionary regimes to create hardship

and to demoralize people. Continuous military harassment, bombing of villages and fields, blocking of fresh-water springs, planned raids to burn and destroy the harvest and other retaliatory crimes by the regimes are all intended to daunt the revolutionary masses. At the same time they graphically underscore the dire necessity as well as the material basis for reorganising production and the socio-economic order along revolutionary lines. From the standpoint of the revolutionary communist line, any belittling or neglect

political power does not exist to provide a rallying point for them has also made it easier for the reactionary regimes to recruit mercenaries.

Radical Rupture Required

"A revolution," Mao Tsetung insisted, "is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous." To enable the masses to overthrow the

women is the measure of the thoroughness of one's revolutionary outlook. Whether a political force stands for the complete abolition of all forms of exploitation and oppression or for transplanting itself onto the seats of political power and thus merely changing the form of the system of oppression will be revealed by whether it fights actively to "unleash the fury of women as a mighty force for revolution," as it is powerfully expressed around the world in the May First slogan of the Revolutionary Internationalist



Special ceremony held by Komala in which newly-trained Peshmergas receive their first arms.

of these tasks would be tantamount to betraying the revolutionary masses and sabotaging the material basis for consolidating and expanding revolutionary political power and thereby immensely strengthening revolutionary warfare. Indeed, the neglect or blatant refusal of the nationalist forces to seriously take up these tasks has not only demoralized the masses in these areas but forced them to seek a livelihood in smuggling and other unproductive and harmful practices. The fact that a truly revolutionary

oppressor, they have to also rebel against and overthrow the ideas, values, and culture of the oppressors as part of transforming the whole superstructure that rests on the backward relations of production. A people still enslaved spiritually and ideologically by the ideas, culture and world outlook of their oppressor cannot be successful in smashing the material chains that keep them in captivity either.

Perhaps more than anything else, the thoroughness of the position taken against the oppression of

Movement.

The absolutely reactionary attitude of part of the nationalist forces (and all of the reactionaries) towards women, in defending and even reinforcing the social and ideological shackles that bind them, is nothing but a reflection of the bourgeois outlook. Those who vilify and try(!) to degrade women who join the peshmerga army as fighters by openly insinuating that they are promiscuous or of loose morality must be exposed as defenders of the enslavement of women under the

feudal, bourgeois-feudal male authority, which serves and reflects the existing system of exploitation and oppression. It is worth recalling that it was Karl Marx who said, "Anybody who knows *anything* of history knows that great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment." To be willing to have half of its fighters in chains and bondage is not only to surrender half of the revolutionary army to the enemy, but more significantly it is to blind the remaining half to the real sources of oppression and to fetter the overall struggle for social emancipation which must eliminate not some but *all* forms of oppression and exploitation. The victory of revolutionary struggle and warfare will greatly depend upon to what extent the "feminine ferment," as Marx called it, will be not simply tolerated but consciously and actively encouraged, unleashed and organised to produce peshmergas, military commanders, and proletarian political leaders for revolution.

The revolutionary movement throughout Kurdistan can, and given the current situation in the area, must make use of the contradictions among the reactionary ruling classes of the vassal states. However under no circumstances should such tactical considerations take priority over or assume more prominence than the correct revolutionary orientation. They should never be allowed to blur the cardinal line of demarcation between the enemies of revolution — regardless of which country they are based in or which of the two imperialist blocs they may represent or be allied with — and the genuine forces of revolution, particularly the revolutionary communist forces.

In revolutionary struggle, some concessions and tactical compromises are unavoidable, but the blatant betrayal of the revolutionary cause has been justified only too frequently in the name of "down to earth" politics allegedly intended to make use of contradictions in the enemy camp. The annals of history — and the history of the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan is no exception — are cluttered with painful episodes of either serious set-

backs or outright betrayals that occurred either in blind pursuit of or under the guise of such "realism," strengthening the hand of the oppressor and seriously undermining past victories as well as the strength of the oppressed.

Tactical considerations must under all circumstances be subordinate to the overall revolutionary strategy, which must be based on firm principles that do not wobble in the face of changing circumstances and the sugar-coated bullets or false promises of the enemy. Under all circumstances, the tactics adopted to make use of the contradictions among the reactionaries must drive a wedge into the enemy camp and weaken the enemies of revolution overall, and they must enhance the conditions for revolutionary struggle, not just in one area or even in the Kurdish region of one of the countries in question, but in all of them. It is not too late to learn from the enemy. Even a cursory survey of the policies of the British and the U.S. imperialists against the revolutionary movement in Kurdistan reveals that they tried to avoid the mistake of encouraging the overall revolutionary movement in Kurdistan to the detriment of their loyal puppets. This is true for example when they resort tactically to using certain forces in the Kurdish region of one or another country as an instrument of their reactionary machinations aimed at getting a more desirable performance from any of their own puppets.

The ability to correctly handle these contradictions and to correctly apply the policy of being firm in principle and flexible in tactics requires, above all, a vanguard party of the proletariat. As the *Declaration of the RIM* puts it:

"The key to carrying out a new democratic revolution is the independent role of the proletariat and its ability, through its Marxist-Leninist party, to establish its hegemony in the revolutionary struggle. Experience has shown again and again that even when a section of the national bourgeoisie joins the revolutionary movement, it will not and cannot lead a new democratic revolution, to say nothing of carrying this revolution

through to completion. Similarly, history demonstrates the bankruptcy of an 'anti-imperialist front' (or similar 'revolutionary front') which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a 'Marxist' (actually pseudo-Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led heroic struggles and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist and bourgeois influences. Even where such forces have seized power they have been incapable of carrying through a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reactionary ruling power in league with imperialists."

Autonomy

It is indisputable that the Kurdish national movement has consistently been a most explosive component of the revolutionary ferment in this part of the world, even at times the sole movement to raise and carry the banner of rebellion against the reactionary regimes propped up by various imperialist forces. However a number of factors historically have also forestalled the full realisation of the revolutionary potential in Kurdistan. Overall the movements in Kurdistan have predominantly been under the leadership of bourgeois nationalist forces or bourgeois-feudal nationalist forces whose class interests and outlook have been an impediment to the Kurdish revolutionary masses in their contribution to the world proletarian revolution. Although ferocious national oppression has continued to fan the flames of the struggle, it has also been a factor retarding the development of the working class both economically and politically. Lenin remarked that, "The bourgeoisie, which naturally assumes the leadership at the start of every national movement, says that support for *all* national aspirations is practical." [Emphasis added]. ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," *CW* 20)

Even revolutionary Kurdish na-

tionalism has not always proven "practical" to the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords. The "practicality" of the bourgeois outlook has inexorably driven the various leaders of the Kurdish national movement to concede to what was acceptable to the state of the ruling nation. These reactionary states at certain points, when in a difficult position, manoeuvred to offer "partial autonomy" or "cultural national autonomy" in order to split up or control the growing revolutionary ferment in Kurdistan.

Examples of such fiendish moves can be observed in the wake of the First World War in Iraq in the form of "partial autonomy under His Majesty's mandate," and right after the Second World War in Iran in the case of the Autonomous Republic of Mahabad. In view of the long-standing vulnerability of the Iraqi regime in the face of the movement in Kurdistan, the imperialist counselors of the regime find it opportune to dangle hints of promises for an autonomous Kurdish region in Iraq. Remember Lenin's warning: "Like all reformists, our reformists of 1905 could not understand that historic situations arise when reforms and particularly promises of reforms, pursue *only* one aim: to allay the unrest of the people, force the revolutionary class to cease, or at least slacken, its struggle." ("A Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *CW* 23)

It seems that the French imperialists, who have been quite influential over the Iraqi regime, favour granting some type of counterfeit autonomy status to Iraqi Kurdistan, an area which has tied down a major section of the Iraqi Army that could otherwise be deployed on the Iranian front. Undoubtedly such promises are intended not to be kept but to create splits among the Kurdish nationalists. Saddam Hussein's "granting" of "autonomy" for Kurdistan in 1970 stands as a typical example of what such promises hold for the Kurdish people.

Nonetheless hopes of being granted "autonomy," "partial autonomy" or "cultural national autonomy" continue to exist among Kurdish nationalists, since this ap-

pears to be more "practical" than overthrowing the reactionary state power of the oppressor nation's ruling classes. Lenin's criticism of such "practical-minded" reformism on the national question remains valid: "A reformist change is one which leaves intact the foundations of the power of the ruling class and is merely a concession leaving its power unimpaired. A revolutionary change undermines the foundations of power. A reformist national programme does *not* abolish *all* the privileges of the ruling nation; it does *not* establish complete equality; it does *not* abolish national oppression in *all its forms*. An 'autonomous' nation does not enjoy rights equal to those of the 'ruling' nation; ...until 1905 autonomous Norway, as a part of Sweden, enjoyed the widest autonomy, but she was not Sweden's equal. Only by her free secession was her equality manifested *in practice* and proved.... As long as Norway was merely autonomous, the Swedish aristocracy had *one* additional privilege; and secession did not 'mitigate' this privilege (the essence of reformism lies in *mitigating* an evil and not in destroying it), but *eliminated* it *altogether* (the principal criterion of the revolutionary character of a programme)." ("The Nature of Self-Determination Summed Up," *CW* 22)

It is "practical" for the nationalists to take the capitulationist and reformist road, even when the struggle against national oppression, far from just beginning, has already reached the stage of full-fledged warfare against the oppressor. Nationalism, even in its revolutionary form, inevitably embraces pragmatism and deems it more feasible to strike a deal with the national oppressor rather than to rely on the revolutionary masses in a protracted struggle to *eliminate* the evil *altogether*. Although there is a qualitative difference between the thoroughly reactionary KDP-Iraq under the leadership of Barzani and progressive and revolutionary nationalist forces today, still the ceasefire struck with the Iraqi regime in 1975 stands as a most stinging indictment of such illusions. How "detrimental" to the cause of the

proletariat and other oppressed masses and how unbearable was the anguish felt by the revolutionary masses came through vividly when peshmergas committed suicide by the hundreds rather than bear the humiliation of surrendering to the enemy.

Lenin warns that "The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations persistently utilise the slogans of national liberation to deceive the workers; in their internal policy they use these slogans for reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the dominant nation... in their foreign policy they strive to come to terms with one of the rival imperialist powers for the sake of implementing their predatory plans...." ("The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination Summed Up," *CW* 22) This assessment by Lenin forcefully depicts the character of a number of nationalist forces in Kurdistan which portray themselves as the champion of Kurdish national liberation while either flirting or directly serving one of the imperialist blocs or sometimes straddling the fence for a better offer. In particular, the KDP-Iran, which has long been cashing in on the prestige of the 1946 Kurdish Autonomous Republic of Mahabad, typifies the characteristics cited by Lenin above. As late as 1985, on the heels of the biggest reactionary military offensive ever by the Khomeini regime against Kurdistan, the KDP-Iran; led by none other than Gasseem Lu in secret collusion with the Tudeh revisionists, noisily scurried about in an effort to come to terms with the Khomeini regime. Internationally, as a strong supporter of Soviet social-imperialism and as friends with European social-democracy, it has been seeking aid and recognition not from the revolutionary masses and genuine revolutionary communist organisations and parties but from the imperialist powers. Lately, under pressure from the social-imperialists, it shows inclinations to sign up on the payroll of the revisionists. Recent reactionary armed attacks by the KDP-Iran on Komala provide indisputable evidence of the former's counter-revolutionary policies.

“Greater Kurdistan”

In terms of “utilising slogans of national liberation to deceive the workers,” various Kurdish nationalist organisations have put forward the slogan of “Greater Kurdistan.” More often than not, this slogan has been used as justification for not waging a militant struggle to overthrow the reactionary government which is the instrument of national oppression in that very same state. The establishment of “Greater Kurdistan” would require the overthrow of several, if not all, of the reactionary states that have divided up the Kurdish territory. Moreover, the emergence of a “Greater Kurdistan” would by no measure be an insignificant event in the region and in the world as a whole; it would effect tremendous upheaval, and thus a fracturing of the existing international and national political matrix in the region.

Clearly all these factors must have entered into the “feasibility analysis” of the “practical-minded” Kurdish bourgeois forces, and the slogan of “Greater Kurdistan” is certainly not intended to blow the biggest possible hole through the imperialist network in the region. As Lenin observed, “the bourgeoisie is most interested in the ‘feasibility’ of a given demand and hence the *invariable* policy of coming to terms with the bourgeoisie of other nations...” (“Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” *CW* 20) If, through the twists and turns of the struggle and the unfolding of contradictions in the region and the world, the prospect of establishing a Kurdish state comprising the Kurdish regions in several of the existing states were to emerge, the communists would evaluate the advisability of such a state on the basis of the overall interests of the advance of the world revolution.

However, the cutting edge of the slogan “Greater Kurdistan” is not so much directed against the reactionary states and the imperialists backing them as it is nationalist demagoguery against the working class, pandering to national prejudices that already exist among the masses in order to lead them by the halter for the class interests of the Kurdish bourgeoisie. It serves to segregate

the Kurdish proletarians from the proletarians of other nationalities, vindicating the failure to join ranks for the overthrow of the existing state power in a given country.

The *Declaration of the RIM* states that: “Due to the establishment of central state structures prior to the process of capitalist development, semi (neo) colonial countries, in the main, have multi-national social formations within them; in a large number of cases these states have been created by the imperialists themselves. Furthermore, the borders of these states have been determined as a consequence of imperialist occupations and machinations. Thus it is generally the case that within the state borders of countries oppressed by imperialism, oppressed nations, national inequality and ruthless national oppression exist. In our era, the national question has ceased to be an internal question of single countries and has become subordinate to the general question of the world proletarian revolution, hence its thorough-going resolution has become directly dependent on the struggle against imperialism. Within this context Marxist-Leninists should uphold the right of self-determination of oppressed nations in the multi-national semi-colonial states.”

There is absolutely nothing sacred about the current state borders dividing the Kurdish territory, nor is it written in stone that the only possible or “legitimate” course for the development of the world proletarian revolution must be in the form of a separate revolution in each state, resolving the Kurdish national question as part of the New Democratic Revolution within the borders of each. The following remark by Lenin is to the point here: “Marx did not make an Absolute of the national movement, knowing, as he did, that only the victory of the working class can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. It is impossible to estimate beforehand all the possible relations between the bourgeois liberation movements of the oppressed nations and the proletarian emancipation movement of the oppressor nation (the very problem which today makes the national

question in Russia so difficult).” (“Right of Nations to Self-Determination”)

Theoretically it would be impossible to determine in advance the exact course of the Kurdish national liberation movement; it is certain however that it will play a tremendously significant role in the revolutionary turmoil of the upcoming period. In any event, the Kurdish class-conscious proletariat must be first and foremost concerned with ensuring the development and the interests of their class as part of a single international class of proletarians worldwide. As Lenin put it, “The proletarian cause must come first, we say, because it not only protects the lasting and fundamental interests of labour and of humanity, but also those of democracy; and without democracy neither an autonomous nor an independent Ukraine [in this case Kurdistan — *AWTW*] is conceivable.” (“Critical Remarks on the National Question,” *CW* 20)

Conclusion

The possibility and necessity of hoisting the red flag in Kurdistan more forcefully than ever before is confronting the communists and the masses. The prospects for establishing red political power in the form of base areas and independent regimes are quite favourable. In this eventuality the revolutionary masses in Kurdish regions in all of the bordering states will provide tremendous support and rally around the red banner hoisted in any one particular Kurdish region to wage revolutionary warfare for its defence and expansion. A genuine people’s war under the leadership of the revolutionary communists in any one of the Kurdish regions can quite easily rip the existing political structure in the Middle East irreparably apart, providing an opening for all the oppressed in the region. Under these circumstances, the question for the international proletariat cannot be to confine such a revolutionary storm to the borders of any one particular state or nation but to liberate as much of the world’s territory as possible from the bloody claws of imperialism and reaction. □

(Continued from page 15)

dependent and minority nationalities. Thus the struggle the proletariat must wage for the equality of nations and for doing away with all national oppression, privileges, etc., would be cast overboard. The right of nations to self-determination would be abandoned. The imperialists' colonisation of backward nations, intervention in their internal affairs and perfidious violation of the right of nations to self-determination would all be legitimised by the notion that "they do not constitute a nation." Similarly, in the multi-national states, the dominant nation's every form of oppression and bullying of the minority nationalities would be legitimised away. Those who claim that there would be no nation to speak of if landlords existed are sounding a trumpet for the dominant nations. Those who claim that the Kurds do not constitute a nation are blowing the horn of the Turkish ruling classes. As is known, the Turkish ruling classes maintain that the Kurds are not a nation. By defending the privileges of the Turkish ruling classes, these gentlemen treacherously sabotage the mutual confidence, solidarity and unity amongst the masses of working people of various nationalities...

Not just the *Kurdish people* but the whole Kurdish nation is being subjugated to national oppression, with the exception of a handful of big landlords and a few big bourgeois. The Kurdish workers, peasants, urban petit-bourgeoisie as well as small landlords all suffer national oppression.

In fact the target, in essence, of national oppression is the bourgeoisie of the subjugated and dependent nation, because the capitalists and landlords of the ruling nations want to possess the entire wealth and market of the country unchallenged. They want to keep the privilege of establishing a state right in their own hands. By banning other languages, they want to bring about a "unity of language" which is crucial for the market. The bourgeoisie and landlords of the oppressed nationality stand as an important obstacle to this, because they too would like to be the master

of their own market and to control it and to exploit the material wealth and people's labour themselves.

These are the powerful economic factors that pit the bourgeoisie and the landlords of two nations against each other; hence the unceasing attempts of the bourgeoisie and landlords of the ruling nation to perpetrate national oppression; from this stems the fact that national oppression is directed against the bourgeoisie and landlords of the oppressed nation.

Today fascist martial law has filled Diyarbakir Prison with democratic Kurdish intellectuals and youth representing the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords. Today small landlords and some of the Kurdish religious figures are also in jail, or are being hunted down for imprisonment.

As for the handful of big landlords, their cohorts and a few big bourgeois, they have long since established an alliance with the Turkish ruling classes. All the privileges are just as accessible to them as they are to the Turkish ruling classes. The army, the gendarmerie, the police are also at their service... A very large section of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords is subject to national oppression by the Turkish ruling classes. They face oppression even by the big Kurdish feudal beys. A handful of big landlords are taking large sums of extortion money from the small landlords through pressure and force. The fact that the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords are enraged by the big feudal beys and their cohorts is based on these two factors....

By maintaining that national oppression is being administered to *the Kurdish people*, the Shafak revisionists fall into one of two errors: either the concept of *Kurdish people* is being used correctly and therefore not all of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords are included within it; in that case, the national oppression perpetrated against the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords is being overlooked and therefore indirectly being given approval, thus they descend to the line of Turkish nationalism. Or, the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords

are being incorrectly included within the concept of the Kurdish people as a whole; in this case, the heavy oppression of the Kurdish people, who suffer class oppression in addition to national oppression, is being concealed; the national movement and class movement are being portrayed as one and the same thing, and thus they descend to the line of Kurdish nationalism.

Besides, other than the Kurdish nation, there are minority nationalities which do not constitute a nation; and in the form of banning their language, etc., national oppression is perpetrated against them. The Shafak revisionists leave this point aside completely.

3. What is the purpose of national oppression?

According to the Shafak revisionists, the purpose of national oppression is "to daunt the Kurdish people." "The pro-American governments have carried out vicious oppression and torture in order to *daunt the Kurdish people*." (my emphasis) Certainly, one of the purposes of the pro-American governments is to daunt the Kurdish people. In fact the purpose of their oppression over even the Turkish people and generally over the whole people of Turkey including Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs and Vazs, etc., is to daunt them. But is this the purpose of national oppression? If that were true, how could the oppression perpetrated against the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords be explained? What would be the meaning of banning the Kurdish language? If that were true, what difference would there be between the oppression inflicted by the pro-American governments against the Turkish people and that against the Kurdish people? The pro-American governments want to intimidate and cow the Turkish people as well and they carry out the most vicious oppression and torture to this end. The martial law courts are crammed with hundreds of Turkish workers, peasants and intellectuals. After the events of 15-16 June (1970), hundreds of Turkish workers were barbarically tortured by the police. The peasants involved in land occupation were mer-

cilessly beaten in police stations. Leaders were thrown in dungeons. Therefore, the purpose of the pro-American governments does not solely consist of daunting the "KURDISH PEOPLE." That is the policy implemented by all reactionary governments against the whole working people regardless of their nationality. Beyond that, not just the Kurdish people, but the whole Kurdish nation (excluding a handful of the big feudal beys) is subject to oppression and torture in order to achieve not just "daunting" but a more basic purpose. What is that purpose? In its most general expression, that purpose is to own the entire market and material wealth of the country unchallenged. It is to obtain new privileges, to expand and use the old ones to the utmost. To this end, the bourgeoisie and landlords of the ruling nation spend great effort to maintain the political borders of the country in order to prevent at all cost the separation of the regions, where the various nationalities live, from the country. One of the conditions for the development of commerce to the fullest is a unified language. For this purpose, the bourgeoisie and landlords of the ruling nation would like to have their language spoken throughout the whole country and even try to make this accepted through force. In Comrade Stalin's words, "who will control the market," that is the essence of the question. The slogans "national unity," "indivisible unity and integrity of the state together with its country and nation," are the expression of the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie and landlords and their desire to unconditionally control "the market." National oppression which is carried out for controlling the market by the bourgeoisie and landlords and national oppression carried out by the ruling bureaucracy for "caste purposes" extends to the appropriation of democratic rights including mass murder (that is, genocide). In Turkey, there have been many examples of genocide.

Thus the oppression against the labourers of the oppressed nationality assumes a compound character. First, the class oppression

perpetrated against the working people to exploit them more and to suppress class struggle; second, the national oppression perpetrated against almost all of the classes of the minority nations and nationalities for the purposes mentioned above, namely national purposes. Communists must distinguish between these two forms of oppression. Because the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords, for instance, are in favour of the first type of oppression, while opposing the second type. We however are against both forms of oppression. We support the struggle of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords to eliminate national oppression; but on the other hand we have to struggle against them also in order to eliminate class oppression. The Shafak revisionists depict national and class oppression as though they were one and the same thing....

5. Those who champion national oppression in Turkey and their accomplices

In our country, the real champions of national oppression are the big Turkish bourgeoisie, that is, of comprador nature, and the landlords. The U.S. imperialists support and instigate their policy of national oppression and racism. But the Turkish middle bourgeoisie, which has a national character, participates with more refined and stealthy methods in the same crime. As Comrade Lenin expressed it, they:

"...approach the language question in the same way as they approach all political questions — like hypocritical hucksters, holding out one hand (openly) to democracy and the other (behind their back) to the feudalists and police."

While on the one hand opposing the feudal stick in the hands of the state by putting forward that it will be of no use, they cannot refrain from proposing more refined and polite methods of national oppression... *"The wrecking of the brotherhood between the Turks and the Kurds, based on historical roots, of the national unity in Turkey and the territorial integrity of Turkey, in whatever form, would lead to consequences contrary to the real interests of both the Turks and the*

Kurds and strengthen the position of imperialism in this part of the world." (my emphasis).

Is this not exactly ruling nation chauvinism itself? Posturing in favour of the equality among nations in words, but in reality extending the recognition of the privilege of forming a state only to the Turks and liquidating the *right* of the Kurds to form a state with demagogic bourgeois slogans such as "national unity" and "territorial integrity," is this not to defend inequality among nations and the privileges of the Turkish bourgeoisie? Socialists [revolutionary communists —AWTW] oppose even the smallest privilege favouring a nation and inequality. Whereas in Turkey, to form a national state has always been a privilege of the Turkish nation and still continues to be so. We the communists do not defend this privilege either, just as we do not defend any other privileges. We defend and continue to defend the right of the Kurdish nation to form a state with all our might. We will respect this right to the end; we do not support the privileged position of Turks over the Kurds (and over other nationalities); we educate the masses to recognise this right without hesitation and to reject the right to form a state as a privilege in the monopoly of any single nation. Comrade Lenin points out that:

"If, in our political agitation, we fail to advance and advocate the slogan of the right to secession, we shall play into the hands, not only of the bourgeoisie, but also of the feudal landlords and the absolutism of the oppressor nation."

While on the one hand posturing as opponents of privileges, our middle bourgeois of national character and our social-opportunists stealthily and jealously embrace with two hands the privileges favouring the Turkish bourgeoisie. These hypocritical shopkeepers hold out one hand (openly) to democracy and the other (behind their backs) to the reactionaries and police agents, to unbridled and fanatic Turkish nationalism, feudal racism, and become their accomplices.

8. The Kurdish National Movement

The national movements in Turkey are neither new nor solely composed of the Kurdish movement. They began even before the collapse of Ottoman society and have continued to the present. Bulgarians, Greeks, Hungarians, Albanians, Kurds, Armenians, Arabs, Yugoslavs, Romanians... have all repeatedly risen up against the dominant Turkish nation within the Ottoman state; history has brought all, except the Kurdish movement, to a certain resolution. Today, within the borders of Turkey, the national movement that has not been resolved yet is the Kurdish movement. The natural tendency of the national movement in Turkey also has been the formation of states with national unity. Capitalism, which quietly entered the life of East Europe and Asia at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, has aroused the national movements in these regions. To the extent that capitalism and commodity production developed, the other nations within the borders of Turkey have separated themselves from Turkey and become organised in separate national (or multinational) states, with the exception of the Armenians, who were massacred and driven from their lands en masse in 1915 and 1919-20.

The Lausanne Treaty divided the Kurds among various states. Trampling upon the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination and defying the Kurdish nation's own desires and inclinations, the imperialists and the new Turkish government defined the borders by bargaining.

Thus the Kurdish region was divided up among Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

Here another point deserves attention: The partitioning of Kurdistan in violation of its right to self-determination is certainly a historical injustice. And, as Comrade Lenin stated on a different occasion, the task of the communist parties in such a case is to unceasingly protest this injustice and to condemn the entire ruling class. But it would be mindless to put the rectification of *such* an injustice in the programme. This is because there exists a whole number of examples

of historical injustices that have long since lost their character as a contemporary issue. "So long as these are not historical injustices that continue to hinder social development and class struggle directly," the communist parties should not adopt a stand for their redress which would divert the attention of the working class from fundamental questions. The historical injustice, which we mentioned above, has already lost the character of being an issue of the day. Therefore communists should not display stupidity and lack of circumspection by demanding its rectification....

Within the borders of Turkey as determined by the Lausanne Treaty, the Kurdish national movement has continued. From time to time uprisings occurred. The most important of these have been the 1925 Sheik Said Rebellion, the 1928 Agri Rebellion, the 1930 Zilan Rebellion and the 1938 Dersim Rebellion. These movements, along with a "national" character, had a feudal character as well: the feudal beys, who had been sovereign up until that point, clashed with the central authority, which had begun to undermine their sovereignty. This was the essential factor driving the feudal beys to rebel against the central authority. In the face of the central authority held by the Turkish ruling classes, the desire of the Kurdish bourgeoisie to control "its own" internal market merged with the desire of the feudal beys for sovereignty. As for why the peasant masses participated in these movements on a wide scale, this was because of national oppression. As Comrade Stalin pointed out, the policy of national oppression "*diverts the attention of the broad masses of people away from the social problem towards the 'common' problems of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This in turn creates an atmosphere suitable for spreading the lie of the 'harmony of interests,' for covering up the class interests of the proletariat (and the peasants) and for spiritually enslaving the proletariat (and the peasants).*"

All these reasons united the feudal Kurdish beys, the rising Kurdish bourgeoisie and the intellectuals,

and the Kurdish peasants against the Turkish bourgeoisie and landlords, who controlled the new state, and against the ruling bureaucracy which acted in conjunction with them. The Turkish bourgeoisie and landlords, masters of the new state, proceeded to resurrect racism and spread it in every sphere. They re-wrote history from the very beginning, inventing a racist and absurd theory about the origin of all nations from the Turks. The origin of all languages was also Turkish(!). The theory of the "Sun Language" was concocted in order to prove this. The Turks were the master nation (really, those who were masters were the Turkish ruling classes): the minorities were obliged to obey them. Speaking any language other than Turkish was forbidden. All the democratic rights of the national minorities were suspended, and every form of humiliation or immiseration of these peoples was legitimate. Those who were Kurdish were given degrading names. Efforts were made to disseminate Turkish chauvinism among the Turkish workers and peasants, and this was more or less successful. Martial law, implemented throughout the country, assumed especially intense forms in the East. The Kurdish region was frequently declared a "prohibited military zone," etc. As a reaction to this dominant nation chauvinism, the nationalism of the oppressed nation was inevitably strengthened. It was unavoidable that this drove the Kurdish peasants into the ranks of the bourgeoisie and the feudal beys of their own nation. The Kurdish people, the vast majority of whom didn't even speak Turkish, and especially the Kurdish peasants naturally reacted violently to the officials of this new regime who oppressed, degraded and tyrannized them just like a colonial governor. By necessity this righteous reaction of the peasants wound up uniting with the reaction of the feudal Kurdish beys and the Kurdish bourgeoisie. And thus were born the Kurdish rebellions.

The communists support the progressive and democratic elements of these rebellions — those which are directed against oppression and the policy of the oppressor nation,

against inequality and privilege. But they oppose the desire of the feudal beys to secure sovereignty for themselves as well as the bourgeoisie's struggle for its own superiority; and they do not defend the privileges and supremacy of the bourgeoisie and the landlords of any one nation. At that time, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) thoroughly supported the policy of national oppression adopted by the Turkish ruling classes because it followed an incorrect policy. Instead of uniting the powerful and righteous reaction of the Kurdish peasants against national oppression with the leadership of the proletariat, it tailed after the Turkish bourgeoisie and landlords, and thus did great damage to the unity of the working people of the two nationalities; and among the Kurdish labouring people it sowed seeds of distrust of the Turkish workers and peasants.

Those who applaud the barbarous suppression of the Kurdish rebellions by the Turkish state and the subsequent mass-scale massacres as a "progressive," "revolutionary" movement directed against feudalism are incorrigible nationalists on behalf of the oppressor nation. Such people choose to overlook the fact that the new Turkish state not only attacked the feudal Kurdish beys but also savagely attacked all the Kurdish people, including the women and children. Such people forget that, while carrying out these massacres, the new Turkish state was actually quite friendly with the feudal beys, who did not oppose it, and it implemented a policy of strengthening and supporting them. Such people choose to overlook the extremely important difference between the factors compelling the Kurdish peasants to rebel and those compelling the Kurdish feudal beys to rebel.

There are also so-called communists who attempt to defend the national oppression policy of the Turkish ruling classes, claiming that British imperialism was behind the Sheik Said rebellion. Here we shall not discuss whether British imperialism was behind it or not. We shall discuss whether the policy of national oppression could be sup-

ported on the basis of such a claim. Let us assume that British imperialism had a hand in the Sheik Said rebellion. Under such circumstances, what should have been the stand of the communist movement? First, it should have been to oppose the Turkish ruling classes' suppression of the Kurdish national movement by force, to wage an active struggle against this, to demand that the Kurdish nation itself decide whether to form its own state. In practice this would have meant that there should have been a general plebiscite in the Kurdish region, without interference from outside, and that in this or some similar fashion the Kurdish nation itself should have determined whether to secede. The communist movement would have struggled first for the withdrawal of all military units that were sent to suppress the Kurdish movement, for preventing any interference whatsoever, for the self-determination of the Kurdish nation; and it would have vigorously fought against the Turkish ruling class, going among the masses to expose its policy of suppression, oppression and intervention. Secondly, it would have also exposed to the masses the British imperialists' policy of pitting nationalities against one another and the damage this inflicts on the labouring people of all nationalities and on their unity, and it would have vigorously fought against British imperialism's policy of interference in internal affairs. Thirdly, it would have evaluated the secession of the Kurdish nation "on the basis of the interests of the proletariat's class struggle for social development and for socialism as a whole," and reached a conclusion on whether to actually support secession. Had it considered secession beneficial to the interests of the proletariat, it would have conducted propaganda for this end among the Kurdish workers and peasants; and the Kurdish communists especially would have carried out propaganda among their own people for unity, struggling against the attempts to subordinate the fight against national oppression to the strengthening of the mullahs, the beys, etc.....

The national oppression perpetrated by the Turkish ruling

classes has continued until this day. And it still continues. Parallel to this, the Kurdish national movement has continued as well, with the difference that a section of the Kurdish feudal beys have defected to the ranks of the Turkish ruling classes. Also, certain big Kurdish bourgeois, whose number is extremely limited, have joined the ranks of the Turkish ruling classes. The Kurdish bourgeoisie has developed quite a bit of strength, while feudal influence over the Kurdish national movement has weakened. Today the Kurdish national movement is being led by the strengthened Kurdish bourgeoisie, and by the Kurdish intellectuals and small landlords who have adopted their ideology. As for the Kurdish workers and peasants, compared to the past they stand relatively more free of the influence of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords. Marxist-Leninist ideas have begun to develop roots among the Kurdish workers, poor peasants and intellectuals, and are spreading rapidly.

Under these conditions, what should be the attitude of the communist movement in Turkey toward the Kurdish national movement? We pass on to this point now and shall examine the line of the Shafak revisionists, which is erroneous and harmful to the unity of the peoples....

10. Within the Kurdish National Movement, the "positive" action of the bourgeoisie and small landlords strives to fortify nationalism

Generally in every national movement and specifically in the Kurdish national movement, the real aim of the bourgeoisie is to obtain its own supremacy. Its real aim is to control the market, and to monopolize the material wealth, etc., in its region. It is to attain inequality and privileges in its own favour and to ensure its own national development. The bourgeoisie and, to the extent that they participate in the national movement, the landlords, thus demand inequality and privileges in their own favour. They want to appropriate the democratic rights of other nations. They want to inflict national oppression on those who are weaker and less powerful than

themselves. They seek to segregate the proletarians with national barriers and to have the proletariat and other labourers of their own nation support their nationalist aspirations unconditionally. They want to substitute their own national culture for the international culture of the proletariat and democracy; they want to develop the national culture (that is, the culture of that bourgeoisie in power), to feed the proletariat and labourers with national culture and to make them unconditional supporters of its own class aspirations.

The bourgeoisie and landlords resist the historical tendency towards the assimilation of nations, leaving aside the question of forced assimilation; that is, they resist spontaneous assimilation, they resist the spontaneous obliteration of national distinctions, they resist the unity and amalgamation of the workers of all nationalities in a given country into united workers' organisations and instead want to divide the proletarians according to nationality and to unite the proletarians of their own nation not into class organisations but into "national organisations" and for their own class aims.

Within the Kurdish national movement today, it is impossible not to see, along with the general democratic content, the reactionary aspirations, similar to those above, that strive to fortify nationalism. These are the aspirations of the bourgeoisie and landlords which lead the Kurdish national movement.

The Shafak revisionists have completely ignored the "positive" action of the bourgeoisie and the landlords that strives to fortify nationalism within the Kurdish national movement. According to the Shafak revisionists, the movement that is developing in the Kurdish region of Turkey is not a national movement, with its progressive and reactionary aspects, but a completely progressive *people's movement* waged against "national oppression and assimilation" and for "democratic rights, equality of nations and self-determination." Thus the Shafak revisionists provide support for the nationalist and anti-proletarian



aspirations of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords and, by tailing them, hamper the solidarity of the two peoples. The Turkish-chauvinist line of the Shafak revisionists has been reconciled with Kurdish nationalism....

11. What should be the stand of the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey on the Kurdish National Movement?

First of all, it should be pointed out that, regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey shall not take up a position under the banner of bourgeois nationalism. In Comrade Stalin's words: "*The conscious proletariat has its own tested banner and there can be no need for it to hold rank under the banner of the bourgeoisie.*"

Second, regardless of its nationality, the conscious proletariat in Turkey shall endeavour to gather the masses of workers and peasants around its own banner and lead the class struggle of all labouring classes. On the ground of the state of Turkey, it shall unite the workers and labourers from all nations in Turkey within common class organisations.

Third, regardless of its nationali-

ty, the conscious proletariat in Turkey shall unconditionally support the general democratic content of the Kurdish national movement that is directed against the oppression, tyranny and privileges of the Turkish ruling classes as well as the removal of all forms of national oppression and the equality of nations. It shall resolutely and unconditionally support the movements of the other oppressed nationalities that strive in the same direction.

Fourth, whatever the nationality, the conscious proletariat in Turkey shall remain totally neutral to the struggle waged by the bourgeoisie and landlords of various nationalities to secure their own supremacy and privileges. The conscious proletariat in Turkey shall never support the tendency within the Kurdish national movement which strives to strengthen Kurdish nationalism; it shall never aid bourgeois nationalism; it shall in no way support the struggle undertaken by the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords for their own supremacy and privileges; namely, it shall be content to support the general democratic content of the Kurdish national movement and shall not go beyond that....

The Shafak revisionists present the Kurdish national movement, within which there are different elements, as a homogeneous “Kurdish people’s” movement and depict it as a movement which is completely and utterly progressive; by not specifying which points are progressive and which are reactionary, or the point beyond which the reactionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie and landlords take over, they reach exactly those conclusions which benefit the bourgeoisie and landlords. Thus in relation to the Turkish proletariat generally and the Kurdish proletariat specifically, the Shafak revisionists make concessions to the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords! Tomorrow, when the “positive action” of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords makes itself more strongly felt, we are curious what the Shafak revisionists will do. But really what they will do is already evident! They will unconditionally join ranks with the Turkish nationalists.

Let us state this point as well: communists always and absolutely distinguish between the nationalism of an oppressed nation and that of an oppressor nation and between the nationalism of a small nation and that of a big nation.

Comrade Lenin has the following to say on the subject:

“In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it....

“That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or ‘great’ nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petit bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of

view.”

Comrade Lenin continues with the following:

“...nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; ‘offended’ nationals are not sensitive to anything so much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest — to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades. That is why in this case it is better to overdo rather than underdo the concessions and leniency towards the national minorities.” (The Question of Nationalities or ‘Autonomisation’ [Continued], Sel. Works, Vol. 3, p. 690)

Is what the Shafak revisionists do anything like what Comrade Lenin proposes? No, not at all! The Shafak revisionists today follow a line which is in essence Turkish nationalism; with a heap of demagogy, they wantonly trample on the Kurdish nation’s right to self-determination; and they take the representatives of Turkish chauvinism as their flag-bearer. What they do is completely at variance with what Comrade Lenin upholds....

Previously we have mentioned that the general tendency of every national movement is to form an independent national state, that the requirements of capitalism and commodity production are best satisfied in this manner and that the most profound economic factors operate in this direction. Certainly the general tendency of the Kurdish national movement as well is in the direction of forming an independent national state. However, the general tendency is one thing and the concrete demands formulated by a national movement are another. The concrete demands do not contradict this general tendency. But not every national movement may choose this general tendency — namely, to form a separate state — as its concrete aim. There are innumerable factors that determine whether this happens. The relation of forces in the country and on a world scale, the considerations of the bourgeoisie and the landlords of various nationalities within the country con-

ning their own interests, the character of the national oppression, tactical concerns, etc. — all such factors determine the concrete aims formulated by a national movement....

In Turkey, the Kurdish national movement has not yet openly formulated the demand for secession. Currently the demands openly formulated by the Kurdish national movement are the recognition of the Kurdish language (in reading, writing, and speech), radio broadcasts in Kurdish, the removal of obstacles hindering the free dissemination of the “national culture” (in reality, the culture of the Kurdish bourgeoisie and landlords), the ending of the policy of assimilation, the availability of schools providing education in Kurdish, the recognition of the right to self-determination, etc. The various reasons that we have gone into above prevent the Kurdish national movement from openly formulating the demand for secession; therefore, at least today, it is not correct to say that, not the Kurdish people but the Kurdish nation is struggling for self-determination.

In maintaining this we do not at all overlook the powerful desire among the Kurdish bourgeoisie and small landlords to secede. But we hold that this desire has not become the open demand of the national movement. For instance, today the national movement in Northern Ireland has actually openly formulated the demand for secession. The Kurdish national movement in Turkey had also, in the past, openly come out with the demand for secession, etc. The fact that the Kurdish national movement today has not openly formulated the demand for secession does not mean that it will not do so at a later date either.

Furthermore, various compromises are possible between the bourgeois and landlord classes of the two nations as well; let us not overlook this either. Indeed, the Barzani movement in Iraq has rested content with partial autonomy. Besides, while a section of the Kurdish national movement might demand secession, another section might not do so. Consequently, let us not roll up our trousers before the

river is in sight.

12. Let us not deny the influence of the nationalism of the dominant nation over the Turkish workers and peasants

The Shafak revisionists hold that "all of the workers and peasants of Turkey" are supporting the struggle of the Kurdish people (!) struggle "against the policy of national oppression and assimilation," and the "struggle for democratic rights, equality of nationalities and for self-determination" (my emphasis—I.K.).

Here concrete reality has been betrayed for the sake of embellished sentences. First of all, let us correct the error that, leaving aside "all of the workers and peasants of Turkey," *not even the class-conscious proletariat* should, under all circumstances, support the struggle "for self-determination" (not the right of self-determination). It should support secession if, in the concrete situation, it happens to be in conformity with the struggle waged by the proletariat for the goal of socialism; if not, it should respect the demand of the Kurdish nation for secession and accept secession without supporting it actively. We shall return to this point later on.

Besides, we cannot claim that "all the workers and peasants of Turkey" *today* support even the most righteous and progressive demands of the Kurdish nation. That is only something which is desirable and not, unfortunately, something that actually exists. The consciousness of the Turkish workers and peasants has been blinded greatly by the Turkish ruling classes with the demagogy of nationalism. Leaving aside the peasants, even the sights of the most advanced elements of the proletariat have been more or less benighted by the nationalism of the dominant nation. That is, there stands before the communists in Turkey the task of destroying Turkish nationalism and ridding the workers and peasants of the remnants of all forms of bourgeois nationalism. Any evaluation that leads to neglecting or belittling this task is only harmful with respect to the class struggle....

15. "Self-determination," "the

right to self-determination"

"Self-determination" and "the right to self-determination" are different things. "Self-determination" means to secede, to form an independent state. However, "the right to self-determination" means, as we pointed out above, "*the right to form an independent state.*" What the communists unconditionally uphold under all circumstances is "*the right to self-determination,*" that is, *the right to form an independent state.* "The right to self-determination" and "self-determination," or, phrasing it differently, "the right to form a separate state" and "forming a separate state" must never be confounded. Although the communists uphold the first under all circumstances, the communist movement, in Comrade Lenin's words, "*must decide the latter question exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of social development as a whole and with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.*"...

What is the stand of the Shafak revisionists? To uphold the people's right to make revolution(!), to trample on the right of nations to self-determination. Moreover, by saying that "the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination cannot be separated from the struggle against imperialism and from the struggle for agrarian revolution which rests on the poor peasants," they make even *the right* of self-determination dependent on conditions. Don't forget, this is the solution (!) that the Shafak revisionists propose for the national question....

16. When does the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey support the secession of the Kurdish Nation? When does it not?

Regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey views the question of the Kurdish nation's forming of a separate state from the standpoint of the development and the strengthening of revolution. If the forming of a separate state by the Kurdish nation will increase the prospects for the development and success of the People's Democratic Revolution under

the leadership of the proletariat in the Kurdistan of Turkey, then regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey shall support the secession. If the secession will delay and encumber the development and success of the People's Democratic Revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, then regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat shall not support the secession. Let's assume that the communist movement developing in our country were rapidly to grow roots among the peasants in Kurdistan, that the land revolution were developing swiftly and spreading, and that the revolutionary movement were developing more rapidly in the Kurdish region than in the western region; under these circumstances the retention of the Kurdish region within the borders of Turkey would have only hindered revolution in this region through the obstacles caused by the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie and landlords of the Turkish nation. Or, let us consider that in various areas in Kurdistan, red political power emerged while revolution was developing in the West at a much slower pace. Again under these conditions, the repression by the Turkish ruling classes and their state would have delayed and obstructed the revolution developing in the East. In that case, the secession of the East would accelerate and strengthen the development of revolution. Such a situation, by accelerating the development of revolution in the West and the East, would certainly affect and accelerate the development of revolution in other countries of the Middle East as well. In such a situation, regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey would desire and defend the secession of the Kurdish nation and the securing of conditions for even faster development of the revolution which were unfolding rapidly in Kurdistan

On the other hand, if in the other regions the revolution were developing more quickly, and its development were slower in the Kurdish region; if the secession of Kurdistan were to slow down the development of revolution still more and

strengthen the domination of the feudal sheys, beys, mullahs, etc. in this region; and if the revolutionary struggle in the East were to be weakened, being deprived of the support from the West, then in that case, regardless of its nationality, the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey would not support the secession. If, after the victory of revolution in Turkey, a secessionist movement under the leadership of the Kurdish bourgeoisie were to develop, then regardless of its nationality the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey would not support the secession, etc.

What we have said is certainly based on assumptions. But in terms of grasping under what conditions the communist movement shall take a position in favour of or against secession, it is useful to consider these hypothetical cases. Besides, they are not cases contrary to reality, nor things which cannot possibly emerge; they are in conformity with reality and things which can quite possibly occur.

17. If the Kurdish Nation decides to secede, what shall be the attitude of the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey?

In case of secession, two problems would present themselves:

The first is the situation, as we mentioned above, where secession positively affects the development of revolution, in which case the question is straightforward: the class-conscious proletariat of every nationality resolutely supports and defends secession.

The second is the situation where secession negatively affects the development of revolution. If that were the case and, despite this, the Kurdish nation wanted to secede, then what would be the stand of the class-conscious proletariat in Turkey? In their discussion of this question, the Shafak revisionists responded: prevent secession by resorting to every method including the use of force. The response of our movement to the same question is that in such a situation communists would categorically reject the use of force. Although carrying out propaganda in favour of "uniting" with the Kurdish workers and peasants,

they would never confront the demand for secession with force. Recognising "the right to self-determination" means never to prevent secession nor to cause hardship when a nation wants to exercise this right, that is, to secede. Communists leave it completely and strictly to the Kurdish nation to decide whether the Kurdish nation will form a separate state or not. If the Kurdish nation wants to, it forms a separate state; if not it does not. Those who will determine this are not others, but the Kurdish nation. In addition to not placing obstacles in the way of a nation's demand to secede, the communists would themselves also wage an active struggle against the attempts of the government of the bourgeoisie and landlords to prevent secession and the use of force. The communists would struggle against every form of interference from outside. If the Kurdish workers and labourers are conscious of the fact that secession weakens the revolution, then they would in any event do everything in their power to unite. If they are not conscious of it, no one would have the right to interfere from outside on their behalf....

19. The Shafak revisionists buttress themselves up with the ruling-nation nationalism of M. Kemal and I. Inonu

The Shafak revisionists approve of the national oppression brought against the Kurdish nations and other minority nationalities in the past. They applaud the fact that in the Sivas congress [September 1919 — *AWTW*] Mustapha Kemal [Ataturk, the first head of the new state] said, "in Turkey, Kurds and Turks live." They warmly embrace the fact that in Lausanne [referring to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty] Ismet Inonu [the foreign minister at the time] said, "I am the representative of the Turks and the Kurds," and they use these statements to buttress themselves up. It is as if they are beckoning the ruling classes: See, even Ataturk and Inonu recognised the existence of the Kurds; that's all that we do too, so what is there to get angry about?

By recognising the existence of a

nation, the revisionist renegades presume that they have the national question resolved (in fact they, at the moment, recognise the existence of, not the Kurdish nation, but the Kurdish people(!))... The bourgeoisie of the ruling nation might recognise the existence of other nations and might even grant certain rights when it is in a bind, as does the bourgeoisie in Iraq. But at every opportunity it tramples upon these rights and wants to oppress other nationalities. What distinguishes the communists from the bourgeoisie is not whether to recognise the existence of the minority nationalities.

Be that as it may, in the Sivas Congress under conditions where there was no such thing as the central state authority and when it had fairly nearly collapsed, M. Kemal wanted essentially to prevent a possible secession movement of the Kurdish nation by hypocritically alluding to the Kurds' existence. He wanted to bring about a situation where they would reconcile themselves to accepting the yoke of the Turkish bourgeoisie and landlords. M. Kemal's whole life is full of examples of perpetrating national oppression against the Kurdish nation and the other minority nationalities. If there is anyone in Turkey whom the communists cannot use to support their line on the national question, it is M. Kemal. In fact, the nationalism that needs to be struggled against first and foremost is M. Kemal nationalism, which is dominant nation nationalism. Inonu's claim in Lausanne that he was also the representative of the Kurds is a blatant attack on the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination. It is the perfidy of determining the destiny of the Kurdish nation from outside. It is the shrewdness of including the region inhabited by the Kurdish nation within the borders of Turkey, namely the territory under the domination of the Turkish bourgeoisie and landlords through bargaining with the imperialists. And it is Turkish nationalism manifesting itself in a most rapacious form. This is what the revisionist renegades use to buttress themselves up! □

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