

**A WORLD**

UN MONDE A GAGNER KAZANILACAK DÜNYA عالم نزيحہ

**TO WIN**

獲得的將是整個世界 **МИР ВЫИГРАТЬ**

1989/13

UN MONDO QUE GANAR **विजय के लिए सारा विश्व है** UN MONDO DA CONQUISTARE

CELEBRATE THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT



UN MONDE A GAGNER **جهانی برای فتح** EINE WELT ZU GEWINNEN **বিশ্ব বিজয়**

## Peru



An account of the recent resounding advances in the people's war in Peru being led by the Communist Party of Peru (PCP).

## Perestroika

An analysis from the pages of the Indian Marxist-Leninist newspaper *Mass Line* on the factors behind the Gorbachev phenomenon and its significance.

## Bangladesh

The rulers of Bangladesh and their imperialist masters declare that the people of Bangladesh are too poor and ignorant to do anything about the floods which are ravaging their land with unprecedented frequency and severity. A supporter of the Purba Bangla Sharbohara Party (PBSP) shows how this recent increase in the scale and scope of flooding is a result of the rule of imperialism and reaction, and why flood control is impossible without new democratic revolution.

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



PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

1989/13

### Peru:

People's War Prepares New Stage	4
Armed Shutdown in the Jungle Hills: An Eyewitness Account	8
Class-conscious Shutdown in the Capital	8

---

Celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Formation	28
--	----

Photo Section on the International Communist Movement "The Internationale Shall Be the Human Race"	30
--	----

---

Afghan Communists Hold Important Meeting	
Resolution of the RCAC	12
To the Committee of the RIM from the RCAC	14
Message of the Committee of the RIM to the RCAC	15
Tear Down the Prison Walls!	
Statement by the UIC (Sarbedaran)	16
Oppose the Mass Murders of Political Prisoners by the Islamic Republic of Iran!	
Statement by the Committee of the RIM	18
Bangladesh: Masses Will End Man-made Floods	19
Revolutionary China: Teaching Water to Climb Mountains Up to Heaven	24
Advances and Questions in War against Ethiopian Government	60
The Horn of Africa: An Imperialist Battleground	61
Why Perestroika?	65

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UN MUNDO QUE GANAR

KAZANILAGAK DÜNYA

विजय विश्व

A WORLD

जीतने के लिए सारा विश्व है

UN MONDO DA CONQUISTARE

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*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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Photo of PCP guerrillas taken at night, from El Diario.

## Peru People's

In the last year, the revolutionary rural base areas in Peru have flourished in the valleys and plateaus of the Andes mountains and along the rivers descending to the jungle in the east and the Pacific Coast to the west.

The reactionary press describes a quarter to a third of the country as having slipped out of the hands of the Peruvian government — part or all of eight of the country's 24 departments. Reports indicate that the Armed Forces have withdrawn to their strongholds in some areas of the countryside and avoid active patrols. At present, 40% of the conscripts and 5% of the officers sent to the "emergency zones" under military rule are said to desert. Important roads linking the mountains with the coast have been cut. In the provincial capitals the revolution has flexed its organised strength through a series of armed general strikes, and, in Lima itself, the pace of political events has quickened with the blossoming of strikes and demonstrations supporting the people's war led by the Communist Party of Peru, a participating party of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

In the wake of the PCP's First Congress (see *AWTW* No. 11), PCP Chairman Comrade Gonzalo gave an interview to the progressive Lima newspaper *El Diario* in which he analysed the current situation faced by the revolution, as well as many other matters. "They thought they had us beaten in 1984", he said, referring to the "difficult moments" undergone by armed struggle two years after the Armed Forces were sent in to carry out a terrible campaign of massacres in the countryside of Ayacucho and neighbouring departments and tear up the sprouts of the first clandestine people's committees, the village organs of revolutionary political power.

Now, Comrade Gonzalo said,

# War Prepares New Stage

“these people’s committees have multiplied by the hundreds, those in a particular area make up a base area and the whole of the base areas taken together make up the developing New Democratic People’s Republic”. These base areas, he emphasised, “are the essence of people’s war”, which is fought in the city as well as the countryside, with the countryside being principal. The new political power being built in the countryside under Party leadership now involves “thousands of people”, he said. Throughout the country overall, he added, “there has been a leap in our growth among the masses”.

In these base areas, Comrade Gonzalo explained, “we are establishing new relations of production, an outstanding example of which is the way we carry out our land policy, with collective work on the land, and the concrete reorganisation of social life, under a joint dictatorship, where for the first time the workers, peasants and progressive forces rule”.

“The development of the people’s war has brought about a turn and a change”, Comrade Gonzalo went on to say. “This situation obliges us to take up the question of how to prepare the city or cities to generalise it. This has to do with our mass work, but mass work in the context of and for the purpose of people’s war. We have been carrying out this work all along; now we are beginning to develop it further. We believe that our work in the cities is indispensable and must be stepped up more and more, because it is in the cities that the proletariat is concentrated and we cannot leave it in the hands of revisionism or opportunism.”

“Our line has been to take the working class districts and shantytowns as the base and the proletariat as the leading force”, he said, “and we are continuing to carry out this line under conditions of

increased people’s strength. Which masses should we go to? From what was just said, it follows that we should turn the immense working class districts and shantytowns” which surround Lima and other cities “into belts of iron to enclose and trap the reactionary forces”.

“Our work is still developing within the stage of the strategic defensive” of the revolutionary forces in relation to the enemy, he pointed out, “and guerrilla warfare is still the principal form of struggle. It has spread throughout the country, in the city as well as the countryside, and we are fighting in almost all parts of the country.” Within this, he said, mobile warfare, involving larger units, “is beginning to develop and will develop more”. The escalating clash of revolution and counter-revolution is “bringing the perspective of strategic equilibrium” into view, he said. “That is why we must take up the question of how to develop the war to take the cities and prepare the strategic offensive”.

These remarks provide the context for understanding recent events in Peru.

Four “paros armados regionales” — regional armed shutdowns — shook the south-central mountains of the departments of Ayacucho and neighbouring Huancavelica and Apurimac during the course of 1988. These actions involved a combination of workers’ strikes, the closing of small businesses, mass actions and guerrilla attacks. Such shutdowns have taken place in the city of Ayacucho, the department’s capital, since early in the people’s war which began in 1980, but 1988 saw a big step-up in their frequency, duration (two to three days) and radius throughout the region.

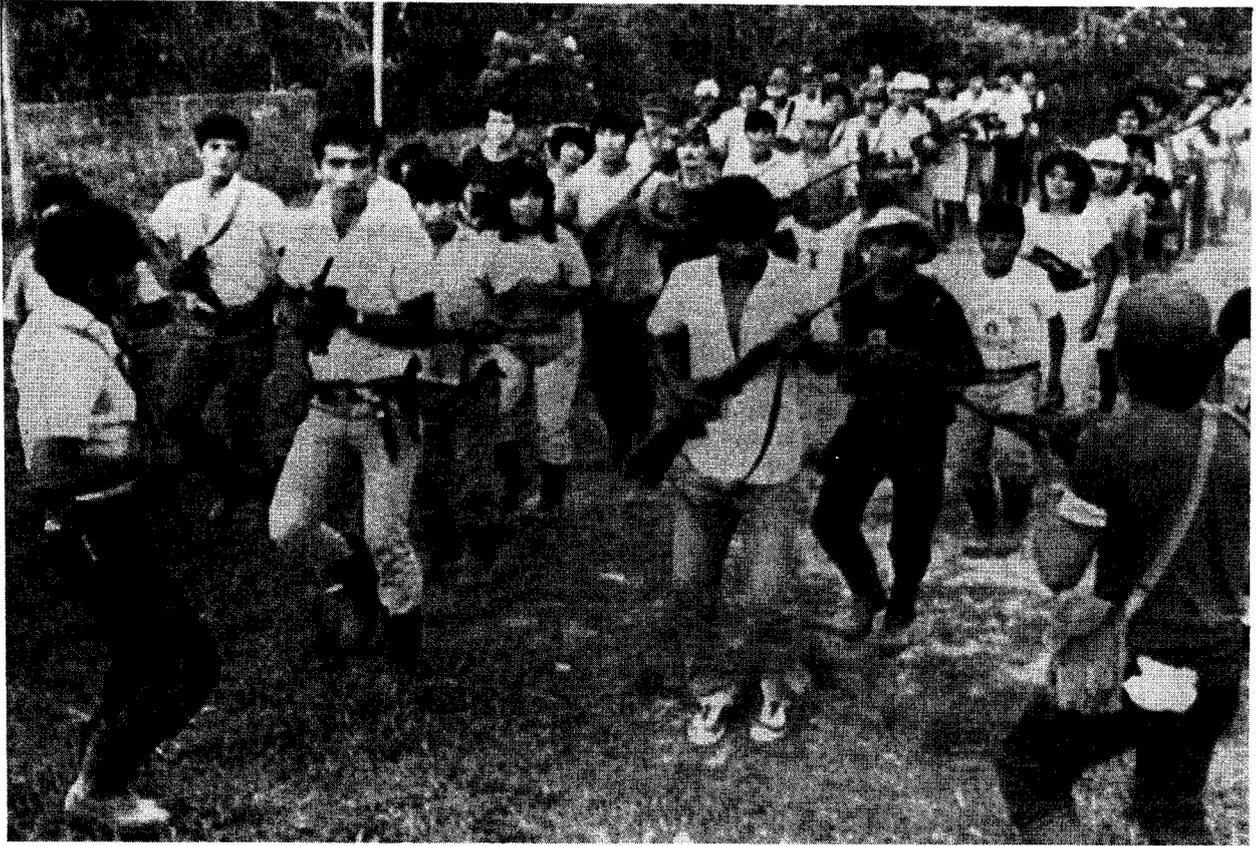
The first call for a seven-day shutdown issued by the PCP came in February 1989. It was an escalation and a serious challenge. In leaflets accompanied by a power

blackout, the Party called “on our people to take part, arms in hand, in a regional shutdown against the fascist, genocidal and starvation-mongering APRA government headed by the cynical Alan Garcia and his evil Armed Forces and police”. Success was complete. Army and police patrol vehicles roamed the deserted streets of the city of Ayacucho, their loudspeakers vainly calling on the population to end the action, while revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces waged a war of graffiti on the city’s walls.

Other towns in the region were also almost totally closed down. Roads in the countryside were blocked; the few lorries that tried to get through were painted with revolutionary slogans or blown up. Guerrilla units hit Army and police positions and ambushed patrols and a military convoy, as they have been doing with increasing intensity and frequency in the region in the last few years. Attacks and a power blackout took place simultaneously in Lima.

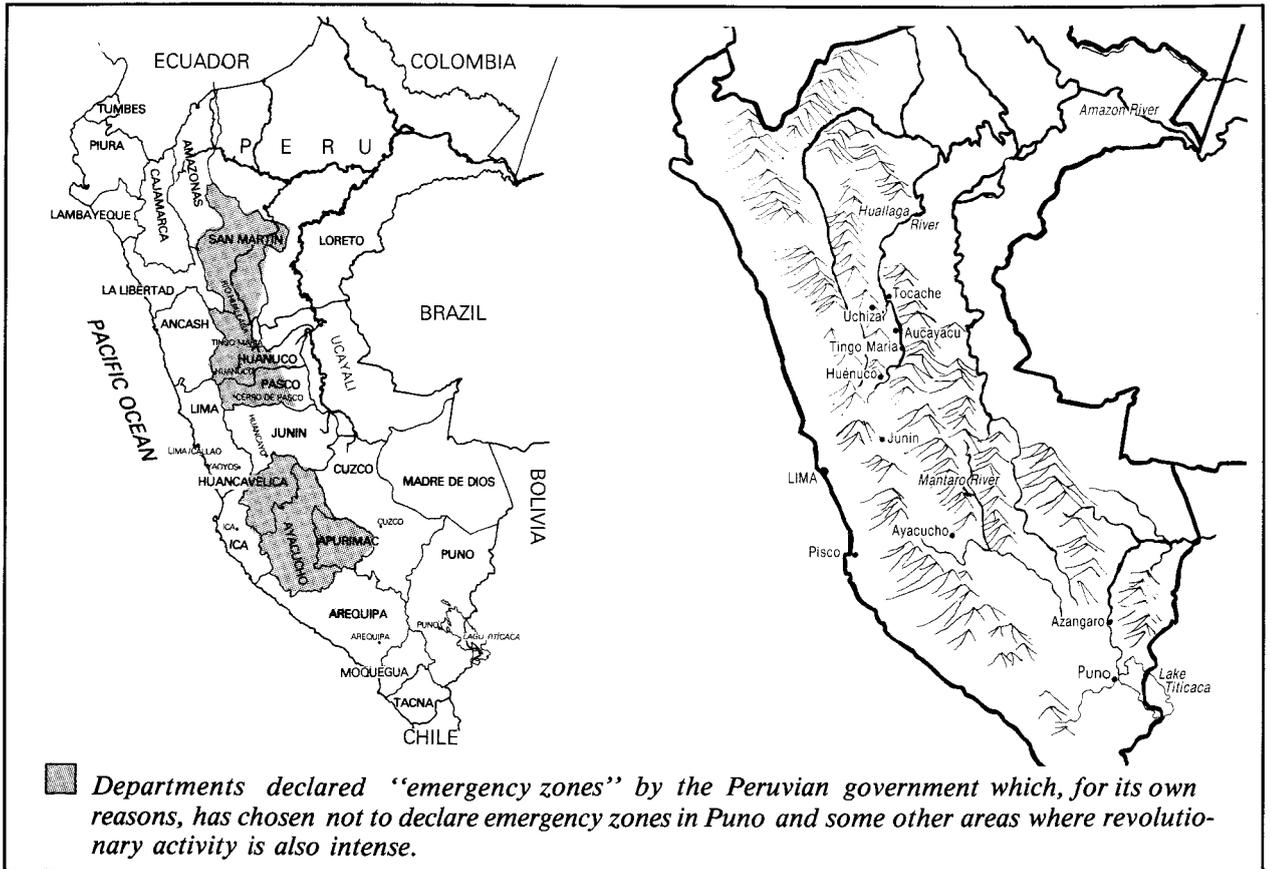
Southeast of Lima, in the altiplano (high plateau) department of Puno, bordering Bolivia, revolutionary forces held the city of Azangaro (population 45,000) and three neighbouring villages for three days in February. Land seizures by thousands of peasants in February and March continued to shake this department where the people’s war first spread in the mid-1980s. Peasants occupied land belonging to half a dozen SAIS, former feudal estates taken over and run by the government. At the same time, massive peasant strikes in Huancavelica and Apurimac and the jungle region around the city of Pucallpa demanded higher crop prices, better credits and debt relief, as various political forces strove to put themselves at the head of a countryside in ferment.

Recently the armed struggle led



Young guerrillas in training

A WORLD TO WIN 1989/13



by the PCP has become particularly sharp in the Mantaro River valley in the mountain department of Junin, to the east of Lima. This area came under military rule in October 1988. (Thirty-seven of the country's 170 provinces are currently run directly by the Armed Forces. President Garcia also granted the Armed Forces the authority to do what they want anywhere in the country in pursuit of their "antisubversive" war. In effect, about half the country's population is living under some sort of military control.) Powerlines and roads leading to the capital were cut that month, amid an armed regional shutdown, blacking out Lima and cutting it off from the mountains that feed it, provoking what Lima newspapers called a "siege mentality" — either sad or ebullient — among the different classes in the capital city.

Some of the largest-scale fighting has taken place in the upper valley of the Huallaga River which leads from the Andes into the jungle, passing through the tropical foothills where peasants cultivate a large part of the world's coca leaf. People in the Andes have chewed coca leaves for thousands of years, especially under the burden of oppression and hunger since the Spanish conquest. Today, these leaves are bought by drug dealers and shipped to Colombia to be processed into cocaine. The peasants of this region are victimised by landlords and police, who often work together. About 300,000 peasants are said to have come to depend on the income from this crop for their survival.

The Party's policy is to protect the peasants from having their land or crops stolen. Without state power, it is not possible for the revolution to simply eliminate coca cultivation overnight. Rather, the peasants are encouraged to plant part of their land to food crops.

Several years ago the U.S. sent in "advisors" to train and direct the Peruvian militarised police unit, the UMOPAR ("anti-drug" police). Their actual mission is to fight guerrillas, not drug dealers; since this programme began the amount of land planted to coca leaf in the region has grown almost four times

over. Funding to help the peasants shift to other crops is notable by its all but complete absence, which shows just how much drug eradication really interests the U.S. This drug trade which is so bound up with the oppression of the masses could not exist if it were not for the complicity of the Peruvian government, and even more of the U.S. government, since the U.S. market is its one and only reason for existence.

Actually, in Peru it is the government and ruling classes who are most dependent on coca production. The estimated \$1-3 billion a year in business provides an enormous portion of the U.S. dollars to which the increasingly import-dependent economy is addicted. Several government officials have been arrested in Europe for their role in million-dollar money-laundering operations, most recently in March 1989. Even more shamelessly, in July 1988 the Garcia government passed legislation to allow — indeed, to attract — the unimpeded, unquestioned and untaxed repatriation of dollars earned in coca sales abroad, in order to gain the foreign exchange necessary for its survival. This whole situation is an ugly example of how imperialist capital has subordinated and disfigured the Peruvian economy, "legal" and "illegal" sectors alike.

Some reactionary press accounts claim that the success of the guerrillas can be explained through the allegedly superior arms they can buy with fabulous sums of money from the drug trade. This is disproved, in fact if not in word, by reports from the same press which indicate that the greatest part of the guerrillas' weapons continue to be "delivered" by the police and Armed Forces, as Comrade Gonzalo put it in the interview, referring to the snatching of war supplies from the hands of the enemy. He added that along with these arms, homemade weapons (especially dynamite) also continue to play a basic role, as well as a relatively small number of purchased guns.

In the town of Uchiza, along a tributary of the Huallaga, a column of 300 guerrillas overwhelmed a 50-man elite police unit at the end

of March, according to a government communique. Guerrilla troops took over the whole town, including the airport. The police station surrendered after a six-hour battle in which a dozen troops were killed and a similar number wounded. The guerrilla fighters are said to have executed several officers and released the rest of the men.

Previously, in January, a police patrol of 30 men in three vehicles was ambushed in Tocache, along the Huallaga in San Martin, as they were heading for their barracks. They were pinned down by rebel gunfire for several hours; four were reported killed and five wounded. Also in January, in Padre Abad, in Huanuco, police said that a column of 200 guerrillas led by a woman ambushed a police patrol, killing seven. Before that, in November, a large motorised Army convoy was ambushed at Aucayacu, in the department of San Martin. The reinforcements sent to rescue the troops were also attacked. The Army reported losing 17 soldiers and killing 100 guerrillas. In a relatively large-scale battle near Tingo Maria in July 1988, 13 government forces were reported killed. One cannot expect the government to give true figures in these communique, but they probably give some idea of the scale of the fighting.

The city of Tingo Maria — public services, buses, businesses and everything else — was shut down for 72 hours in August 1988. Its streets were emptied and no-one entered or left the city except for military patrols. The scene in the countryside during this armed regional shutdown was described in detail by reporters from *El Diario*. They recounted how 5,000 peasants, organised and protected by several hundred guerrillas, assembled at rendezvous points at nightfall to tear up 300 kilometres of the roadway that runs along the edge of the jungle — the main road in the region — in order to cripple the mobility of the Armed Forces and thus improve conditions for the people's war and revolutionary political power in the region.

At the "very portals of the capital", as the press described it, in

(Continued to page 10)

From *El Diario*

## Armed Shutdown in the Jungle Hills: An Eyewitness Account

The armed shutdown had already begun in the Upper Huallaga Valley. Still, the guerrillas had not yet made their appearance. We had seen them before, many times, agitating or marching, but this time was to be different. The soldiers of the People's Guerrilla Army would be in action. This report covers their actions and the active participation of the local peasants.

During the armed shutdown, as we knew, the peasants stayed away from their fields for security reasons.

During the course of the day, the radio constantly broadcast a communique from the Armed Forces military-political command of the zone announcing a curfew as a precautionary measure directed against the night of protest scheduled to begin at 6 pm.

Still, by late afternoon the atmosphere was very tense. The villagers prepared to assemble along different sections of the Carretera Marginal [the road that runs along the whole length of the foothills, connecting them to the rest of the country — *AWTW*]. In the cities, everyday activities had ceased completely. The night of struggle was to begin at 6 pm sharp.

It was at this time, exactly, that someone came to the village to fetch us. A robust housewife, about 40 years old and known only as "Micaela", led us off the main road through a rock-strewn path that wound up into the mountains. With our cameras, tape recorder, light luggage and an indescribable excitement, we were headed towards our meeting with the illegal People's Guerrilla Army.

Almost at nightfall, after an hour and a half of walking, we reached a lonely hut in the midst of thick vegetation. Our guide asked us to wait.

She continued walking alone. We

sat down inside, and by candlelight had some coffee and fried plantains to quiet our stomachs, while we chatted briefly with the family who were our hosts. Soon we hear "Micaela's" voice again, calling from outside, telling us we were to continue on our way.

As we left the hut a lantern's light surprised us. There were two youth, whose faces, which we could barely see, showed they were unmistakably from the countryside. He seemed to be about 23 years old; she was no more than 16. Still, there was something that clearly marked them from all the others present: each carried a rifle over the shoulder. In the midst of the immense jungle, we found ourselves face to face with two guerrillas of the clandestine PCP.

Speaking slowly and softly, they greeted us and invited us to walk with them, this time in the direction of the Carretera Marginal. They took the lead, and our guide motioned to us that we should march behind in single file.

When we got to the road, a lorry was waiting for us with the motor running. Three people were in it. As we climbed in, accompanied by our inseparable guide, 10 others emerged from where they had been hiding, camouflaged in the thick brush. Most of them wore uniforms consisting of thick green pants, a dark polo shirt, rubber boots and a knapsack. Only six or seven wore caps, but all were armed with a rifle or large-calibre shotgun. Handgrenades, a machete and a lantern completed their equipment.

We sat in the back of the lorry, while the armed youth around us faced outward, watching attentively. Their weapons were at the ready and pointed forward along the road. Thus we set off, slowly, heading south on the Carretera Marginal.

From *El Diario*

## Class-conscious

The fighting shutdown carried out by the people of Lima began at midnight last night, called by the powerful Carretera Central Class-Conscious Workers' Struggle Committee, which "calls upon the masses to fight and resist, unitedly, for the next 72 hours, against the APRA government and its revisionist accomplices."

This day of revolutionary struggle is very different from those strikes carried out in the past. The vicious circle of mere economic struggle is being broken, and the struggle is being taken up for political power, against APRA's fascism and corporatism and its criminal plans for the people.

During these three days of direct class confrontation between the bourgeoisie and landlords, and the workers, peasants and masses of people and progressive forces, our people will take to the streets to fight, with all the forms of struggle at their disposal, putting their immense and previously pent-up energies into play to repudiate the government....

(*El Diario*, 27 September 1988)

Yesterday's beginning of the shutdown... was marked by armed confrontations, a great many road-

We had gone quite a distance when the lorry pulled off the road and into another of the many villages in the region. From then on, we continued our journey along the Marginal on foot, separated into two groups, each along one side of the road. Two armed men walked ahead, at a safe distance, and two more a little ways behind, to assure the security of the guerrilla unit.

Five hundred metres further on, a shout suddenly rang out: "A car, take cover, comrades!" In the distance, faint lights could be seen. We left the road and threw ourselves

## Shutdown in the Capital

blocks, sabotage and protest demonstrations.

An outstanding feature of this historic day of struggle was the participation of armed militias of the clandestine PCP, who went out to the masses and exhorted them to take part in the People's War....

There was massive absenteeism in factories and commerce, and public transport was reduced to a few bus lines; absences were also numerous at schools and medical facilities.

Starting at dawn hundreds of workers from the big factories of the area strew tree trunks and stones across the roads, raising banners reading, "Fight and Resist! It's Right to Rebel!"

Showing the full support of the people for this 72-hour stoppage, groups of shantytown dwellers also participated alongside the wage workers, pulling tree trunks across the streets and amassing piles of tyres on the asphalt, dousing them with petrol, so that the anti-riot police found themselves amid thick smoke.

Starting around 6 am, heavily armed military forces also assembled. They used armoured vehicles to cordon off this district of the capital. When the repressive forces were further reinforced, a confronta-

tion could be foreseen.

Just when one would think that the workers would retreat before the military encirclement, suddenly there rang out the sound of homemade explosives thrown by the combative demonstrators....

Inevitably, repression was unleashed and the air was filled with tear gas and rifle fire as the soldiers shot indiscriminantly into the crowds of workers, who dispersed immediately.

Near the El Hilado textile factory, at the 8.5 kilometre mark along the Carretera Central, two workers fell, gravely wounded by the soldiers.... Three Civil Guard police were also wounded in the fierce fighting that broke out after the explosions.

At the same moment, demonstrators broke into the Fiestas petrol station at the 2.5 kilometre mark of the roadway and set it afire....

Later nearly five kilometres of the Carretera Central were almost totally occupied by the Armed Forces, who proceeded to arrest anyone they could find....

(*El Diario*, 28 September 1988)

...on the second day of the 72-hour shutdown, after the first day's many acts of sabotage, road-

blocks and lightning demonstrations, the Armed Forces commanders ordered the military occupation of this important industrial belt.

Thus, at about 5:30 am, the shantytown Huaycan was raided by hundreds of soldiers... who arrested dozens of people and warned the inhabitants that they had better not take part in the struggle.

With the panicky deployment of military forces, amounting to 800 soldiers and Leopard commando units and the Special Services Unit of the Civil Guard, the area was brought under control. But they failed to halt the continuation of the shutdown which today enters its third and final day.

Although there were no actions or roadblocks, unlike the first day, agitation among the workers continued for the second consecutive day. The majority of workers remained on strike, and many factories remained paralysed....

Along with these strikes (in major factories) there was also the participation of the shantytowns... where thousands of people did not go to work.... Schools and markets were also closed....

(*El Diario*, 29 September 1988) □

into the brush. Hidden there, we imagined the worst.

After 30 seconds of high-tension waiting, the same voice announced, "You can come out now, comrades." The approaching vehicle turned out to belong to the guerrillas. It carried food for the compact mass of villagers who, further on, worked to blockade the Carretera Marginal. This was the most important activity carried out by the PCP during the armed shutdown.

In fact, at the edge of the district around Aucayacu, a town located on the last asphalted section of the

roadway, a veritable army of villagers had already begun work in the darkness to completely block the road.

About 5,000 people appeared before our eyes, working like ants. Peasant axes felled giant coconut trees across the roadway. Cries of "Timber!" rang out constantly amidst the thick dust. At dawn, when the villagers completed their prodigious efforts, trunks, whole trees and tons of stones completely cut off 300 kilometres of roadway.

We were there for almost eight hours, recording the peasant's hard

night's work, lightened with great quantities of lemon soda and songs vigorously sung into our tape recorder. All this took place under the watchful eyes of a strong guerrilla unit, who stood ready to fight in case of an attack.

Around dawn on the 21st of July, the masses began to return to their villages, making their way with great difficulty around the stones strewn on the road. We were accompanied by the guerrilla unit, about 200 guerrillas in all, towards an encampment in the jungle....

(*El Diario*, 23 September 1988) □

## Peru

(Continued from page 7)

February, at a small settlement just 15 kilometres outside Lima, hundreds of people raided the potato fields of a large landowner, amid cries of "The potatoes belong to the people, Long live the armed struggle, Long live Chairman Gonzalo!" Thirteen tons of potatoes were distributed to shantytown dwellers in the area, as the Party's flags were raised and leaflets given out. This action along the Carretera Central, the road linking Lima to the valley that supplies most of its foodstuffs and to the mountains beyond, caused grave concern to those who had not yet noticed that the revolution was already gathering strength in the capital itself.

That was dramatically borne out in actions on March 8th, International Women's Day, 1989, when to the great surprise of passers-by and police, thousands of men and women marched through the downtown streets of Lima in the early evening chanting, "For Women's Liberation, Develop People's War! Down with Bourgeois and Revisionist Feminism! March 8th, a Day to Fight! Long Live Chairman Gonzalo, Long Live the PCP, Long Live the People's War!" Police barracks near the route of march were dynamited as the quick-stepping demonstrators passed nearby. Rifle-toting police who cordoned off the area found that the marchers had suddenly disappeared.

This was the first public action called by the People's Revolutionary Defence Movement (PRDM), a mass organisation of the PCP meant to serve as the united front in the cities, in order to "bring together masses from among the workers, peasants, shantytowns and petite bourgeoisie, neutralising the middle bourgeoisie and supporting the democratic forces who favour the war", as the PCP's Congress documents released at the beginning of 1988 put it in a section dealing with the need for Party-generated mass organisations. Expounding the Party's mass line, the document called for "persistence in the only Marxist-Leninist tactic", which me-

ans, it said, to help the masses "get rid of the tremendous heap of rubbish that is revisionism and opportunism"; "to go down lower and deeper to the real masses"; to "educate the masses in people's war"; and to "wage a relentless struggle against revisionism and opportunism".

At the same time as the actions in the city's centre, red banners with the Party's hammer and sickle symbol appeared in several shantytowns and major industrial areas, and PRDM leaflets appeared. Earlier in the evening, before the PRDM action, hundreds of students, workers, shantytown organisation members and others had assembled at legal public meetings held at two university campuses. An account in *El Diario* contrasted these various events with the IWD meetings held by the revisionists and reformists of the so-called United Left that day, which attempted to address the question of women's liberation in isolation from or in opposition to the people's war to liberate the country.

July 1988 saw Peru's first national general strike in a dozen years. It was called by the country's dominant trade union confederation, the revisionist-controlled CGTP. The PCP called for a "fighting strike" in Lima; in Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurimac the PCP staged an armed shutdown involving attacks on Army and police units. A contingent of young workers, faces covered with handkerchiefs or scarves, chanting the PCP slogan "Fight and Resist", took part in the main street action in the capital, to the consternation of the GCTP leadership.

At the end of September, a three-day shutdown was called by the Carretera Central Class-Conscious Workers' Struggle Committee. This newly-emerging, legal organisation was formed by workers from factories and workshops along the industrial strip of this road. They organised strikes in textile, car parts, refrigerator and other plants, brick yards and so on, carried out mass mobilisations, put up flaming road blockades and fought with police. Organisations describing themselves as class-conscious from

the nearby shantytowns also belong to this Committee and played an important role, as did similar organisations of municipal workers, hotel workers, university workers, street vendors and others. The Class-Conscious Workers' Movement, a clandestine mass organisation of the PCP, supported the strikes. What *El Diario* called PCP armed militias took part in agitation and fighting.

A call for an armed shutdown in mid-January 1989 in the factory district along Argentina Avenue in Lima resulted in heavily-armed Marine units occupying the whole area, as well as strategic points around the city.

During February and March 1989, public employees repeatedly marched and clashed with police in Lima. Some forces among them came forward to support the PCP and the people's war it leads. From October through December of 1988, 70,000 miners from open-pit and underground installations in the mountains east of Lima were on strike for issues relating to wages and retirement. Thousands of miners and their families carried out a "march of sacrifice" of 300 kilometres to the capital. The PCP carried out armed actions in connection with this strike. Saul Cantoral, a United Left reformist who was the head of the mine workers union, refused, for his own reasons, to publicly condemn the PCP. In February 1989 he was murdered by a government death squad.

Government-linked death squads first appeared in 1986, but it was not until 1988 that they began operating massively and openly. They named themselves the Comando Rodrigo Franco, after an APRA official said to have been executed by PCP guerrillas. Their first public communique announced the murder of Manuel Febres, a lawyer who had just won an acquittal in the "terrorism" trial of Osmon Morote, proclaimed by the police to be a top PCP leader. (Morote was kept in prison on other charges.)

The assassination took place in the morning of July 28th, Peru's national day. Within minutes the press received a communique from the Comando declaring that alleged

revolutionaries and suspected supporters were no longer going to be able to escape death by using the legal system. A few hours later, President Alan Garcia echoed this theme in his national day address: "We all know that terrorism uses our democracy, and we must not allow this to happen." Furthermore, he declared, "We all know that terrorism takes advantage of the freedom of press that exists in this country." This was specifically directed against *El Diario*, which had earned the government's wrath for printing the extensive interview with Comrade Gonzalo a week before. Febres was also this newspaper's legal counsellor.

Already, in October 1987, two APRA members were killed when the car bomb they were attempting to plant in front of the *El Diario* offices went off prematurely. There were other failed attempts on the lives of the newspaper's editors. Three weeks after Garcia's speech, a hundred-strong contingent of armed police raided the printshop which had just produced a third reprinting of 100,000 copies of the issue of the newspaper carrying the interview. The newspapers were seized, the plant destroyed and its owner carried off to prison, where he remains.

Soon afterwards *El Diario* editor and publisher Luis Arce was arrested and charged with links to the PCP. After 37 days in prison, charges against him were dropped for lack of evidence and he was released. The newspaper appeared in small weekly editions until early October, when the government finally succeeded in making sure that it could not be printed. Subsequently, its offices were bombed, as were the homes of staff. In December, Arce was again arrested for violating a new decree outlawing "apologists for terrorism", a law aimed at keeping *El Diario* closed down. Once again he was released. This time, he slipped out of the country and launched a tour of Europe to raise funds so that the newspaper could buy its own press, as well as to spread the truth about what is happening in Peru.

On March 8th, after five months of silence, *El Diario* appeared once

again, this time in a weekly edition, limited to about 50,000 copies because of the size of its press. (Its circulation is said to be about half in the capital and half in the provinces.) The first new issue carried an editorial about the solidarity campaign to raise money for the newspaper, reporting that the strongest support for the newspaper had come from the factories and surrounding quarters and shantytowns.

In Europe, Arce spoke of current events in Peru to *A World To Win*. Along with holding a series of public meetings, he had prepared a presentation for the UN's Human Rights Commission in Geneva, which refused to allow him to appear before it in person. Arce's document revealed the extensive links between the Comando Rodrigo Franco, Garcia's APRA party and the government in general. Arce was given some of this information by members of the police, when he was in prison, and later made investigations. The information confirms brief items in the *New York Times* and the European press naming Garcia's Presidential Minister Agustin Mantilla as head of a secret terrorist organisation operating through DIRCOTE (the Peruvian "anti-terrorist" police), utilising APRA members and police trained variously in the United States and North Korea, as well as arms provided by North Korea.

This death squad has assassinated about two dozen people so far. In addition to prominent people accused of favouring or defending the PCP or its members, others who have incurred the APRA party's anger have also become targets. The Comando murdered an Ayacucho reporter for a right-wing magazine in January 1989. They have also engaged in psychological warfare against the revolution, sending out armed units to paint counter-revolutionary graffiti and threats on the walls during shutdowns, bombing the tomb of PCP martyr Edith Lagos and carrying out acts of reactionary revenge and intimidation. Several of their victims are known to have been first arrested in a legal manner by DIRCOTE police shortly before being found shot dead on a beach. The media then received a

communique in the name of the Comando, and the police denied all knowledge.

Arce and recent issues of *El Diario* have also provided important information concerning the prisoners of war who survived the 1986 massacre and others more recently arrested. In June 1986, the Garcia government first provoked the prisoners' resistance, then sent in the Armed Forces to assault them and finally murder many of those who surrendered. In all, 250 revolutionary prisoners were shot, stabbed, tied up with explosive charges and blown up, or buried alive. During the course of these crimes and afterwards as well, to cover them up, the Armed Forces leveled the Fronton island dungeon and the prison at Lurigancho. Since then, all the political prisoners in Lima, including the 100 or so women previously held at El Callao, have been regrouped in the new Lima prison called Canto Grande. Others are being held at local jails throughout the country.

The prisoners at Canto Grande were reportedly preparing to hold an International Women's Day celebration March 8th. There is every indication that they have continued to carry out their highly self-disciplined regime of training, study and revolutionary handicrafts work as part of carrying out the PCP's line of turning the prisons into a "shining trench of combat". Still, they are subject to constant harassment, violence and attempts to break them politically and physically. The modern installation has been without electricity in the prisoners' quarters since earlier this year. Among other things, this means they cannot cook, although most of what they depend on for nourishment cannot be eaten raw. Their families are prohibited from bringing them fresh fruits and vegetables, prepared and packaged foods. The prisoners have responded by having family visitors bring them firewood, but these visits, too, are often blocked.

All reports now coming out of Peru indicate a rising and rather widespread sense of disgust with the regime, even among better-off sec-

(Continued to page 79).

# Afghan Communists Hold Resolution of the of the Revolutionary Cell of

Following are the excerpts from the resolution of the Revolutionary Cell of Afghan Communists' Third General Meeting [also translated as conference or council] printed in issue No. 18 of *Neday-e-Enghelab* (Call of Revolution), the central organ of the RCAC.

The present situation in Afghanistan and the region is a delicate one for the struggle of our people, and also for the communists and the communist movement of the country. It is full of both dangers and possibilities for the advance of the revolutionary struggle....

— The contradictions between the oppressed peoples and the imperialists, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and between different imperialist forces, currently in the form of the contradiction between the U.S. and Soviet imperialist blocs, are all rooted in world imperialist capitalism. They constitute the three major contradictions of the world today. Among these three, the contradiction between the oppressed peoples and the imperialists is the principal contradiction today. After approving this assessment, the meeting expressed certainty that the recent development of an aggressive imperialist trend towards political bargaining and deal-making between the U.S. and the Soviets cannot eliminate the contradiction between the imperialists as one of the major world contradictions; in fact, it is a prepar-

ation for a more severe intensification of this contradiction in what may be a not very distant future. More importantly, the more the various aspects of this political bargaining and dealing become exposed, the more the present principal contradiction, that is, the contradiction between the oppressed peoples and the imperialists, will qualitatively intensify, and will increasingly strengthen the trend of world revolution. In considering this, the meeting confidently pointed out that the tricks being carried out by the imperialists will not be able to undermine the trend of world revolution and this trend will continue to heighten.

— The blows that the social-imperialists and their puppet regime have suffered at the hands of the resistance of the Afghan people is the main factor in the Soviets' recent reactionary and imperialist manoeuvres in Afghanistan. The Soviets, who were not able to suppress the resistance of our people through imperialist aggression, savage destruction, murder and genocide, now seek to preserve their domination of Afghanistan through conciliation with Western imperialism and their puppets in Afghanistan and the region. The meeting emphasised that the more the process of this imperialist and reactionary conciliation gets exposed, the more it can channel the struggle of our people from mere resistance towards a revolutionary liberation struggle against social-

imperialism and reaction and deal further blows to Soviet social-imperialism and its lackeys, as well as Western imperialism and their flunkies in Afghanistan. Thus the ground could become more favourable for revolutionary struggles of the communists and bring about an upsurge in the communist movement in the country. This situation makes it critically important to raise the independent flag of the proletarian struggle, that is the communist flag, on the bloody battlefield of Afghanistan. It must be raised in a principled way and bravely by the strong hands of the communist party of Afghanistan, a Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsetung Thought party.

— On the organisational question, the debate by the participating comrades was relatively extensive and all-sided. The goal was to respond to the necessities of the struggle for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan, as well as to resolve problems regarding the preparation for independent armed activities, that is, the preparation for launching the people's war....

— Only a vanguard party of the proletariat, armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and possessing its own army for carrying our people's war to victory, can lead the Afghan revolution as a part of the world proletarian revolution. The first, urgent and fundamental task confronting the communists of the country at

# Important Meeting

## Third General Meeting Afghan Communists (RCAC)

present is to unite around a correct and principled line, based on Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought, for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan, the leading party of our people's war.

The meeting praised the formation of the Committee for Coordination and Unity of the Revolutionary Cell of Afghan Communists and the Committee of Propaganda and Agitation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as an important advance for the communist movement of the country in this direction and recognised the fact that this committee is becoming a centre of unity for the communists of Afghanistan....

— We must step up ideological-political Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsetung Thought struggle against revisionist, centrist, and opportunist lines among all forces and individuals associated with the *Shoaleh-Jawid*\* trend and we need common struggle against social-imperialism, imperialism and reaction. This demands that we look for grounds for possible and necessary cooperation

\* A revolutionary journal published by a revolutionary movement called Progressive Youth Organisation which comprehended Marxist-Leninist forces during the 1960s. Since then all those who one way or another were associated with supporting Mao Tsetung Thought and revolutionary China are called *Sholehi*. — AWTW.

with all the individuals and forces associated with the country's new democratic trend. While approving this point, the meeting emphasised that the RCAC does not seek cooperation or relation with infamous and suspicious groups and individuals who are carriers or open agents of capitulationism, Chinese revisionism or Hoxahite revisionism. The RCAC does not consider them part of the communist movement or the *Shoaleh-Jawid* trend (new democratic movement).

The meeting emphasised that such cooperation and relations should not interfere with our activities in the Committee for Coordination and Unity and the consolidation and expansion of the RCAC's work and struggle, that is, the struggle for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan, rather it should directly or indirectly serve this work. So it is essential that these activities be carried out with full attention to the ideological-political struggle against the deviations existing among the forces associated with the *Shoaleh-Jawid* trend, as an offensive against these deviations, to help develop the struggle for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan as well as to increasingly isolate the carriers of revisionism, centrism, opportunism, and capitulationism.

— The formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement by the representatives of the parties and organisations at the Second International Conference of Marxist-

Leninist Parties and Organisations and the publication of its *Declaration* in May 1984 is a great achievement of the international communist movement in the recent period. From its very formation in 1987 the RCAC, based on proletarian internationalism and the understanding of the importance of the formation of a new Communist International, has sought to develop contact with the RIM and declared this desire openly in the statement published by its founding meeting.

Considering the success of the Central Committee chosen by the Second Conference in establishing contacts with the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, and considering the comradely attention of RIM towards the Afghan communist movement, the third meeting resolved that based on the necessities of the communist movement of Afghanistan and of the international communist movement, efforts should be made to raise the quality of these relations to a level from which we could really advance our struggle as an integral part of the ICM. The meeting emphasised that the RCAC should bravely and seriously shoulder its tasks and responsibilities in this regard....

Down with social-imperialism, imperialism, and reaction!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought!

Down with revisionism!

Victory or death! □

# Message of the RCAC to the Committee of the RIM

Comrades,

We send our warm communist salute to you and all the participating parties and organisations of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement.

The Third General Meeting of the Revolutionary Cell of Afghan Communists began on.... We consider the message of the Committee of the RIM, which opened our meeting..., to be the message of solidarity of the international proletariat to the participants of the meeting, the members and supporters of the RCAC, and all the communists of Afghanistan. This message increased our determination and the solidity of our steps to go forward on the path we have chosen — the path of new democratic revolution and socialist revolution, moving towards a communist society — and reinforced our understanding in considering ourselves an integral part of the international communist movement.

The Third General Meeting of the RCAC took place at a time when on the one hand, the revolutionary struggle of our people is in a critical situation while on the other hand favourable opportunities are coming within our grasp.

Soviet social-imperialism and its puppet regime in Kabul, which have been dealt irreparable blows by the resistance of the Afghan people, af-

ter a decade of murdering and massacring our people with imperialist and reactionary savageness, are now trying to save themselves from the untenable situation they found themselves in, by conciliation and collusion with the Western imperialists and their clients in Afghanistan and the region. In this way they are striving to accomplish a so-called honourable pull-out from Afghanistan while leaving their domination over the country intact. At the same time, the other reactionary forces who are associated with the Western imperialists and their dependent forces in the region and who claim leadership of the resistance, are now all more or less following the road of conciliation with the Soviet social-imperialists. This and many other factors will increasingly help tear off the mask they are wearing and expose them more and more in front of the masses. In this situation it becomes more likely that the social-imperialists, imperialists and reactionaries will not be able to impose imperialist solutions, but rather that their efforts will lead to an intensification of the contradiction between the people of Afghanistan and social-imperialism, imperialism and reaction, and that the ground will become more favourable for the development of the revolutionary struggle of our people.

The meeting emphasised that the need to seize the potential and existing possibilities to transform the existing resistance into a revolutionary liberation struggle requires that the communists of Afghanistan achieve principled unity on the basis of the ideological line of Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought and form the communist party of Afghanistan. It also emphasised that the very existence of these favourable grounds and shaping up of favourable perspectives for the future brings the achievement of this important and fundamental task more within our grasp than ever. That is why the Committee for Coordination and Unity between RCAC and Committee of Propaganda and Agitation of Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought [see *AWTW* 1989/12], formed some time ago to achieve unity between the two organisations as a basis for principled unity of all the communists of Afghanistan, is not only taking more serious steps towards achieving unity between the two founding organisations but is also becoming a centre of principled unity for the scattered communist movement of the country and attracting more and new forces. The RIM's serious and clear support for the steps we have initiated qualitatively strengthens our efforts and our hopes for a faster and more

# Message of the Committee of the RIM to the RCAC

principled formation of the communist party of Afghanistan, the leading party of our people's war. Comrades!

We cannot take up and accomplish our responsibilities and carry forward our tasks in all fields of struggle, including the struggle for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan, without an organic link with the international communist movement — Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. Indeed, the success of the serious struggle that has been launched for the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan not only depends on the tireless efforts of the Afghan communists; it is also and fundamentally a question concerning the international communist movement.

The Third General Meeting of the RCAC proclaims that in order to achieve this important task in a principled way and as soon as possible, we must conduct our struggle as a contingent of the revolutionary communist army organised in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and with all our force shoulder our tasks and responsibilities in this regard.

With warm comradely greetings, Third General Meeting of the RCAC

Comrades,

The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement welcomes the opportunity to send you its greetings on this important occasion. We hope that the Third General Meeting can succeed in taking significant steps towards resolving the urgent questions faced by the communist movement and the revolution in Afghanistan.

The resistance of the Afghan people has dealt serious blows to the Russian social-imperialists and their puppet regime in Kabul, who are now carrying out various manoeuvres in an effort to reduce the damage, including pulling out Russian troops. At the same time, the non-revolutionary classes and the lackeys of the West who claim leadership of the resistance are themselves riddled with contradictions over what road to follow.

The necessity for a genuine communist alternative is all the more sharply underlined by the interpenetration and interaction of the major world contradictions on the complex battlefield of Afghanistan and the existence of a mass resistance. There the social-imperialists, Western imperialists and reactionaries of all stripes are employing deceit and violence to suffocate, undermine or divert the struggle of the masses. Only the red flag of the proletariat can lead the heroic struggle of the masses away from the dead end of imperialist solutions, and transform it from mere resistance into victory — into a victorious new democratic revolution

and subsequent advance to socialism and communism.

It is up to you, the communists of Afghanistan, to lead the Afghan revolution as part of the world proletarian revolution. Such a great task can only be accomplished by a genuine vanguard party, a party armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and leading its own armed forces.

The unity of the Afghan Marxist-Leninists around a correct line and the formation of the communist party of Afghanistan is an urgent task. The efforts in this direction being carried out by you comrades and the comrades of the Committee for Propaganda and Agitation of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought are of vital importance for the communist movement and revolution of Afghanistan and the international proletariat as well. The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, along with all the participating parties and organisations, send you our warm regards and declare that we resolutely support these efforts. We hope that in the future more steps will be taken towards fulfilling this important task.

Comrades, your understanding of the importance of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and your taking up of your responsibilities in regard to it are very inspiring and instructive to us. With our warm communist greetings, The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

# Tear Down the Prison Walls!

— Statement by the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)

The present genocidal campaign against political prisoners in Iran is clear evidence of the bleak situation of a moribund regime which is trying tooth and nail to turn back the wheel of history, and so perhaps to prolong its vile life a while longer — as if handing out death sentences to group after group of political prisoners could “overturn” history’s sentence on the regime. Such hopes are in vain; the sentence will be carried out by the cocked weapon of revolution.

Oppression and terror, prison, torture and execution, are always the resort of the upholders of oppressive and exploitative systems, especially against conscious revolutionaries. Such methods are an integral part of the practice of bourgeois states of every colour and cloth (from Islamic cloaks to monarchist crowns or the uniforms of democratic Islam...). But the campaign to wipe out Iran’s political prisoners does not just reflect the general necessity of the reactionary classes to preserve their rule against the majority of the people; it also reveals the deteriorating situation and intensifying crisis of the regime. The ominous rumblings of revolution are already audible and grow clearer with each passing moment, thus giving rise to the frenzied, mad reaction of these Islamic animals.

This campaign, taking place only a short time after the ceasefire in the Gulf war, itself clearly reveals the recent difficulties which have seized the regime by the throat. Nothing can hide the rottenness of this regime. The weapons of nationalism and religious superstition have lost their ability to lull the masses. The suffering masses, victims of the

reactionary war, are gradually lifting their heads and seeing before them the path of revolt and the possibility of taking it. The Islamic regime once more finds itself faced with a spectre which it arrogantly thought it had drowned in blood seven years ago and done away with forever. The regime finds that its temporary victories over the camp of revolution are slipping away. How well the great leader of the international proletariat, Lenin, put it: “there are enemies which you can defeat in many battles and silence for a while, but it is *impossible* to destroy them. None of the victories of the enemy, however complete, none of the conquests of the counter-revolutionaries, can... destroy the enemies of the landlords and capitalists. Enemies such as the working class and poor peasants cannot be destroyed... and now, after the defeat of the offensive of the counter-revolution, we can see that the masses of people, those who are the most oppressed, those who have been crushed down and kept in ignorance, those who have been terrorised by different means, are once again raising their heads. They rise up to begin the struggle anew.”

Everything is readying for the burial ceremony of the Islamic Republic. This period is one of intense work and acceleration of the preparations for revolution. Masses whose anger and hatred have increased a hundredfold are prepared, more than at any other time, to cast aside their previous mood and, through taking up the lessons of the earlier defeats of the revolution, to grasp the philosophy of revolution and arm themselves with the theory and weapons of revolution.

The present campaign of geno-

cide was not unexpected. Conscious masses and revolutionaries have long been predicting that the regime, facing crisis and dangers which seriously threaten its very existence, would commit savage crimes. During the course of the 1979 revolution, the figure-heads of the Islamic Republic already witnessed this “scenario”; they have made a so-called “summation” of the weak points of the Shah and are thus attempting to avoid a repetition of those events. What folly! The lessons learned by the Islamic rulers from the experience of the reactionary classes cannot cure their historical short-sightedness. They are standing on the edge of an erupting volcano and, by firing into the depths of the volcano, they think they can prevent its imminent eruption. Such is the ridiculous nature of these reactionary rulers.

The genocidal campaign against the political prisoners is an announcement of the ideological and political bankruptcy of the regime. It is an announcement that the years of mad effort to spiritually and physically torture revolutionaries in their dark dungeons did not succeed in chaining these conscious revolutionaries, and that this huge army of resisting communists and revolutionaries could not be forced to repent by the logic of the torture chamber. The sound of the shooting coming from behind the prison walls is the cry of an impotent, weak regime confessing its political and ideological defeat. The regime, in its ideological-political campaign throughout Iran, itself a prison, as well as in its torture chambers, has indeed been defeated. Now the weakness of the regime has reached such proportions that the elimina-

tion of all political prisoners has been identified as a necessity in order to "remove" the danger. Any sort of opposition — even the most "polite" — threatens the weak foundations of this house of cards.

The genocidal campaign against the political prisoners is the stamp of "endorsement" of the "general amnesty plan" of the Islamic Republic! What they apparently have in mind is to execute all, or at least the majority, of the political prisoners and finally to ostentatiously let out a handful of traitors, stool pigeons and turncoats who have sold out and cooperated even in the interrogation and torture of the political prisoners. Then they will announce that they have "freed all political opponents". The contented silence of the imperialist masters of the Islamic Republic with regard to this genocidal campaign is very revealing. The slaughter of the revolutionaries and the terrorising of the masses are prerequisites for the current plans and schemes of the imperialists to breathe new life into the decaying body of the Iranian regime. *Promises* of reform and of petty privileges pour out of every loudspeaker with the aim of containing the overflow of the masses' mounting rage. But the rage-filled grins on the people's faces show how "successful" the rulers have been in their campaign of deceit. The eyes of the rebellious people are on the wave of genocide against the political prisoners and on the concentration of 100,000 new mercenaries in Kurdish territory. The loud sound of the boots and bullets of these Islamic criminals leaves no room for the faint echo of their hollow and petty promises.

The regime's vicious campaign

must not go unanswered, and it has not. Thousands of relatives of the political prisoners are waging protest by organising gatherings in front of the prisons and by other forms of struggle. The conscious and revolutionary masses must support these struggles and transform them into a scene of fervent overall political battle. The oppressed, in order to defeat the Islamic Republic's present bloody campaign and protect their revolutionary offspring as they would the very pupils of their eyes, must arise and meet the regime's attacks. Just as the value of each revolutionary communist for carrying forward the cause of revolution is known to the regime, it is with the same seriousness that the masses must guard their conscious revolutionaries, as a sacred, inviolable task. But only revolution can dig up the roots of such crimes. The regime is executing group after group of revolutionary comrades and leaders of the workers and peasants. In response, hundreds must arise and fill the trenches of revolution. This is the message of revolutionary communists for the advanced masses who thirst for revolution: in order to genuinely continue along the path of the martyred communist leaders, you must learn their qualities, ability and ideological-political line, with the same skill and daring as they displayed in the scenes of class battle inside the torture chambers, in front of the firing squads and on the gallows, and in this way you can powerfully begin to come to the front lines of the revolution and of the glorious march of the red army of workers and peasants which fights for the realisation of the liberating goals of all the oppressed.

Amol's youth must draw inspiration from communist leaders such as Mansour Ghomashi, from daring fighters such as Omid Ghomashi, Monir Nour Mohammadi, Fereshteh Azali, Rahmatollah Chaman-sara,.... Hundreds of proletarians and peasants — from Mahabad to Sannandaj and Kermashan — must take up the red flag of Naser Ghazizahdeh (Kak Azad), Ghader Anbari, Jamshid Parand, Kazem, Susan, Asghar and Hassan Amiri, Shokrolah Ahmadi,.... The suffering, labouring children of Khuzestan must fill the trenches of Farah Khoramnezhad, Gholam Abbas Darrakhshan, Mohammad Tavakoli, Nader Islami, Behrooz Ghafari, Khalifeh Mardani, Mohammad Farhadi,.... These martyred communist comrades have inflicted deep wounds on the body of the Islamic Republic. These wounds must be made fatal, and this cannot be done by simply turning these heroes into legends. Hundreds and thousands must organise under the banner of their ideas, their goals and their organisation and help to establish the red army, of which they were the vanguard. In this way, we can defeat the campaign of these most evil revolutionary-killing bandits to eliminate the political prisoners.

**The People's Reply to Genocide is People's War!**

**Step Forward as a Communist Fighter, Join the Ranks of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)!**

— From *Haghighat* (Truth), organ of the UIC(S), October 1988 □

# *Oppose the Mass Murders of Political Prisoners by the Islamic Republic of Iran!*

—Statement by the Committee of the RIM

After the ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war, the bloodthirsty Islamic Republic headed by the butcher Khomeini unleashed a heinous campaign of indiscriminate killing of political prisoners and opposition political activists of all tendencies. Within three months, as many as 15,000 to 20,000 political prisoners have been murdered in cold blood, including many members and supporters of the Union of Iranian Communists, a participant in the RIM, and other revolutionary forces. Firing squads, gallows, even machine guns were all used to carry out this crime. In the midst of this wave of terror, the leaders of the Islamic Republic boast that soon they will have no political prisoners in Iran.

Many of those killed had been imprisoned for eight or nine years. The authorities also rearrested and killed large numbers of political activists outside the prisons. Their appetite for blood has not been filled.

This crime cannot go unopposed by the masses of people throughout the world.

The Western imperialists, those self-proclaimed guardians of "human rights", are suspiciously silent in the face of this massive bloodletting by the Islamic Republic. Hardly a word has escaped in the Western media as this medieval barbarism goes on.

This silence from the champions of human rights is part of a blueprint by the U.S. and Western imperialists to reconsolidate their grip on Iran after sacrificing the best daughters and sons of the Iranian people, who fought heroically first against the Shah and later against the Khomeini regime.

The advocates of glasnost have also hidden this crime. The treachery and betrayal by the Soviet social-imperialists was revealed again when they did not raise a voice even of mild protest against the large-scale executions of the Tudeh Party and other faithful supporters of Moscow's new tsars.

In such a tragic situation, the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement calls upon its participating parties and organisations and all supporters of our Movement as well as all revolutionary and progressive forces throughout the world to vigorously expose and oppose this barbaric crime of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The revolutionary masses in Iran and around the world will never forget these crimes, which will not go unpunished.

18 December 1988

By Ataur Rahman\*

In mid-1988, the most severe flood in history once again brought "poor", "ill-fated" Bangladesh<sup>1</sup> into the headlines of the world media. With pretended sorrow, the media ran stories of the devastation and the plight of the people caused by the mammoth flood. Correspondents and photographers picked up credits with their photos and TV images of endless submerged fields and villages and the indescribable distress of the people. With a sincerity that was far more genuine, they portrayed the deep sympathy supposedly felt by the fabulously wealthy bosses of the Western metropolises and the petrodollar barons of the Middle East and highlighted the aid and relief they sent to the stricken Bangladeshi people. Investigative and research-oriented features abounded on the problems springing up in the wake of the flood, for example on relief activity and rehabilitation, as well as on the reasons for the flood itself and means of preventing a future one.

The result of all this was the same old story retold a thousand and one times: Bangladesh is simply another word for "misfortune" and "tragedy". It is a land of "natural disasters" which, because of its "peculiar" geographic position, is destined to be a hapless victim of the capriciousness of nature, an "unfortunate" situation compounded by yet another irony of fate: the corruption of the country's rulers. The Western imperialist media has tried and continues to try to convince world opinion that only relief that comes from the rich, efficient West, be it only the loose change from their coffers, has ever saved and can now save "poor" Bangladesh.

This goes hand in hand with their promotion of the idea that the only permanent solution to Bangladesh's perennial flooding depends upon billions and billions of dollars in loans and "aid" from the West's usurers, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World

\* Ataur Rahman is a supporter of the Purba Bangla Sharbohara Party (PBSP), a participating party of the RIM

## Bangladesh: Masses Will End Man-made Floods

Bank, the various "aid" consortia, etc, all of which is to go towards buying the advanced technology they declare "essential" for any solution (and which, naturally, would be bought from the West). Yet these same self-proclaimed guardians of the world's poor have also determined that Bangladesh is so poor that it cannot afford the enormous amounts of loans required. Thus the result of all their wise discussion and analysis is that the "illiterate, foolish, poor" people of Bangladesh have no choice but to submit forever to the whims of nature and simply survive as cringing dependents on occasional scraps from the table of their Western masters.

### Unprecedented Flooding

The flood of August-September 1988 has exceeded all records in known history in terms of scale, duration, devastation and casualties. It was certainly more severe than the well-known floods which struck in 1954, 1974 and 1987. More than two thirds of the country (according to some sources more than 80 percent), with an area of almost 100,000 square kilometres, was submerged under floodwater. Even the comparatively high lands of the northern region known as Barendra Bhumi were not beyond the flood's reach. The only major areas of the country that remained untouched

were the hilly areas of the northeast and southeast and the highlands in the middle region.

This time, unlike most other floods in the past, the capital city of Dhaka did not escape and was even among the more severely affected areas. In many districts of the capital floodwaters reached the first floor and even several diplomatic and aristocratic districts were affected — not to mention the slums and ghettos of the poor people in the lowlands.

Contrary to the government's distorted, conservative reporting, the number of dead mounted into the thousands. Many simply drowned; large numbers, especially children and the elderly, died from exposure; many died from snakebite, from lack of drinking water and food, or from drinking contaminated water, resulting in illnesses which went untreated, and from many other causes. Millions of houses (in fact often poor huts of straw and salvaged bamboo pillars) were just swept away or soon rotted under the floodwaters, and millions of others were damaged. A great part of the country's cattle (it is difficult to know how many) perished. Material possessions valuing into the billions of Taka (33 Taka = 1 US\$) were damaged or destroyed, including stored food grain.

The flood struck at the high point for the transplantation for the next

crop season of rice plants (by far the principal grain crop of the country). Floodwaters also washed away thousands and thousands of tons of the new jute<sup>2</sup> crop, which was already in the final stages of harvesting and preparation (by being submerged under water, a process called "jag"). For the poorer sections of the people this generally meant the loss of their minimum support.

The floodwater remained for an unprecedented length of time, so that millions of landless and poor peasants and urban toiling masses were pushed to the brink of starvation by inability to find any work. Mountains of rotten garbage and filth, of human and animal excrement, of industrial waste, were swept along by the floodwaters from an area several times larger than Purba Bangla itself, mainly in India; this resulted in disease and suffering which simply cannot be appreciated without practical experience.

In fact, for almost the last four decades, and especially since 1954, countrywide floods have become an almost annual phenomenon. So too has the story of crop devastation and the immiseration and suffering of the masses, especially the poor, lower-middle and middle peasants in the countryside.

### Role of the Reactionaries

Alongside these floods (or any other natural disaster) there occurs another series of events with such regularity that they too take on the appearance of something "natural": inside Purba Bangla, the belittling by the government in power of the true picture of the masses' suffering and the highlighting of the government leaders' imaginary concern and relief activities, all facilitated by their tight control and censorship of the media. Simultaneously, at an international level, the governments, past and present, have launched floods of propaganda, with the connivance of the world imperialist media, which highly exaggerate the destruction and casualties as well as their own reportedly "sincere", "heroic" relief efforts, for the purpose of

drawing international sympathy and "aid" from the imperialist governments and their foundations and the petrodollar barons, etc.

It has become routine activity on the part of government ministers and even prime ministers and presidents following a flood to launch *alms collection tours* in the imperialist citadels and to contract loans and get aid in such a way as to more

the floodwaters to join the floating corpses of the innumerable animals. Those affected expected at least some form of temporary shelter. They gazed with an anxious eye into the sky at the helicopters which carried the president, ministers, generals and foreign journalists and diplomats, in the hope that rescue or at least some help would come — in vain. The government of Gener-

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"The imperialists are helping (ie, sending relief to the flood-stricken people — AWTW) completely out of their own class interests. They are merely trying to preserve their own field of plunder and protect their lackies. It is only due to their class interests that they now try to help the toiling masses, without whom they cannot continue to turn the wheel of exploitation; and this is definitely in their worldwide imperialist interests. In essence, there exists no humanitarianism above class interests — such a thing cannot exist at all. Hence we must effectively and continually tear off the mask hiding their reactionary crime of using the opportunity of the masses' distress for their own political manoeuvring."

- from PBSP flood circular, Sept. 1988

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and more sell out the independence of the country and bind it by thousands of threads to the imperialist masters, especially of the West. It also has become routine government practice for the various government party officials, military and civilian bureaucrats, landlords, etc, to take for themselves huge portions of the loans, relief and project money which comes from their foreign masters. Nor are the leaders of the comprador bourgeois big opposition parties out of power totally deprived of their own share of this plunder, though the overwhelming part goes into the pockets of the party in power. In this way the comprador bourgeoisie and the people in power in Purba Bangla, past and present, accumulate great wealth and black (illicitly gained) money. All the while, to mislead the masses and hide their crimes, they label the flood an "act of God" which mere mortal man can do nothing to prevent.

As in the case of the previous floods, but this time on an unprecedented scale, millions of people were stranded amidst the stagnant flood waters, with no fire, food or shelter, and helplessly awaited death. With broken hearts, they witnessed the deaths of their children and other beloved and pushed their dead bodies out into

al Ershad, a fascist military regime in civilian disguise, and the ruling classes of Purba Bangla both in and out of government, could not and did not take even minimum measures to aid the flood-stricken masses, despite their numerous police, their strong army and their navy and air force. They did not even employ the river police, with their up-to-date equipment (speed boats, helicopters, etc). The people were forbidden to use government buildings for temporary emergency shelters.

Even in Dhaka, the capital city, one of the more severely affected areas with one of the highest urban densities in the world, the government prohibited the masses from seeking shelter in the numerous government buildings, including the giant parliament building and its huge lawns with their exotic imported grass, which the masses call "the mausoleum of democracy", or in the multi-storied commercial areas and the broad boulevards. The government used the armed forces, which it built and maintained in privileges bought with the peoples' blood, not to save the people but to protect the lifeless stones which house its power and to restrict the people from saving lives by using the people's own places!

What happened here in the capi-

tal sharply indicates what the ruling classes did in the small towns and vast countryside. There are virtually no reports of the leaders of the government or the opposition parties in either the cities or the countryside, nor the rich compradors or civilian or military bureaucrats, ever giving shelter to the masses in their own precious residences! These are the people who shed crocodile tears and put caps on their heads (according to Muslim tradition, a show of loyalty to religion and God) and who feign sadness on their faces when they travel to the affected areas and personally hand out 10 Taka bills and relief goods (which they've already pilfered large parts of from their Western masters), as part of their helicopter excursion leisure time social work — nice shots for their photo albums.

Only a part of the people from around the district towns, generally those who could reach the urban areas through their own efforts, were provided shelter and relief through arrangements by the government or big bourgeois opposition parties. In the large and medium-sized towns, most of the relief effort was initiated by local youth and various local social welfare organisations, or by small political organisations, etc, and in many cases their efforts were blocked by the fascist regime and the ruling party because they contributed to exposing and discrediting the regime's own role. In the countryside, millions of people took

ing the floodwaters. Good boats and stronger, higher houses enabled most feudals, rich peasants and some middle peasants a means to save themselves and their belongings.

But many people lost everything they had, if not to the flood then later to the robbers, who invariably work under the patronage of more powerful forces connected to the powers that be. Often young women and wives suffered at the hands not only of robbers, but also of rich shelter owners and local thugs known as "touts", the "natural leaders" of this class society. In these and many other ways the ruling class acted to multiply the tremendous suffering of the people caused by this so-called natural disaster.

During floods and other such natural disasters, the rotten neo-colonial semifeudal social system not only intensifies the existing oppression but imposes new burdens on the people. In such a society, floods and natural disasters do not affect all classes of people in the same way. Workers, landless and poor peasants, middle peasants, day labourers and other toiling masses, low-paid employees and a section of the urban middle class, all become the real victims of natural disasters and especially of their after-effects. People in power and the ruling classes, ie, in a broad sense the bourgeoisie, the feudals, touts, rich farmers, military and civilian bureaucrats and the power-

work, and a thousand and one other means of profiteering. For the landlords and rich farmers, the desperate situation of the poor, lower-middle and even middle peasants is a golden opportunity for an evil game of stealing their land by pressuring them to sign white paper bonds (blank contracts which the landlord later fills in himself) in exchange for pitifully small loans and for raising interest rates to unimaginable levels. In recent years, even comprador bourgeoisie and bureaucrats from the cities also have been involved in such land-plundering schemes in the countryside through their relatives and agents.

Thus while flood (and other natural disasters) is a nightmare for the majority of the people, for the ruling classes it is like a blessing from "Almighty God" that enables them to step up their profiteering. Perhaps this is one reason why they are convinced and try to convince the people that floods are a "natural" phenomenon and an "act of God"! This is also the heart of the reason why they do not, need not and, from their point of view, should not seriously and sincerely take the necessary measures to reduce the suffering of the masses during and after floods and other natural disasters — much less undertake a full-fledged programme of flood control!

### Floods and Imperialism

The imperialists, especially the Western imperialists led by U.S. imperialism, and the Indian expansionists, also seize the situation arising from a flood or natural disaster to supplement their own means of bringing pressure to bear on Bangladesh, to maintain its state of dependency and broaden the scope of their exploitation and domination. What they send in the name of donations for relief for the people is nothing but a tiny fraction of what they have sucked from the people over hundreds of years. While they pretend to be great philanthropists by sending aid, loans, project funds, etc, for the people in distress, in fact they use all these to bind the country more

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"When broad masses are suffering bitterly and even at the brink of death, it is the responsibility of our party to lead the masses to save themselves from such suffering and to organise material help as much as possible.... We resolutely oppose the [reactionary imperialist] policy and method of turning the stricken masses into beggars passively awaiting help. Rather, it is one of our important responsibilities to arouse the stricken masses themselves in relief and rescue activities."

- from PBSP flood circular, Sept. 1988

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shelter anywhere not submerged which, given how few buildings there are in the countryside, generally meant just under the open sky, subject to storms and rain. Innumerable people saved themselves on hastily improvised rafts or floating wood, or by sharing treetops with the poisonous snakes also flee-

brokering politicians, are not harmed much by the floods; and even if they are hurt by the first stroke, they are in a position to recover and even profit in the long run by misappropriating relief money and rehabilitation funds, by price hikes, the black market, picking up contracts for reconstruction

tightly than ever into a position of inequality and oppression. Does anyone really believe that the imperialists are ignorant of the fact that the lion's share of their "aid" goes straight into the pockets of their lackeys? Due to widespread exposure of this and to the increasing discontent among the people, lately the imperialists have had to pretend that they have only now "learned" of the misappropriation of their aid and are "disappointed" with their lackeys. And they have come up with a new tactic: henceforth, they are imposing as a condition on their "aid" that it be foreign relief organisations (which are called NGO, or Non-Government Organisations) in Purba Bangla which directly distribute a great part of the aid. The fascist puppet Ershad regime has already declared that it is removing all restrictions, including registration and audit, on the foreign relief organisations or NGOs. In this way, the imperialists are attempting to set up an alternative and reliable power structure, responsible directly to them, through the millions of dollars funneled through the NGOs, and hope that this will be more acceptable to the masses than their already unmasked corrupt lackey politicians and bureaucrats. The flood, and other calamities, are used to strengthen this new structure.

In 1988, before the flood waters had even drained off, Ershad had run to the imperialist capitals with his begging basket in his hand to ask for alms and magic solutions from his masters, and reportedly worked out new pacts (still not public) selling out the country's independence (ie, debt with interest and unequal conditions), including for some projects for flood control whose existence is confined mainly to their lips. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. imperialists stepped up their efforts to dominate the country in the name of helping the people. A few months after the flood, the U.S. Congress passed legislation making it their "constitutional responsibility" to help the "distressed" people of Purba Bangla if attacked by flood, storms, tidal waves or other natural calamities! Ah, what good friends these are, who have never

even made it a specific constitutional responsibility to remove the real reasons (the racist exploitation!) for the poverty, unemployment, discrimination, distress and suffering of the over 20 million Black people (fairly 10% of the population) of their own country!

The pro-Western petrodollar-rich Muslim regimes of the Middle East are also using the same opportunity to strengthen their own influence among the ruling classes of Purba Bangla through similar relief schemes. The Indian expansionists, who are already rich in terms of agents and influence in the arena of reactionary politics in Purba Bangla, are doing likewise. Thus the flood has turned Purba Bangla into even more fertile ground for political manoeuvring and plunder by the imperialists, social-imperialists and expansionists.

#### **The Politics of Floods and Natural Disasters**

The unprecedented devastation of the 1988 flood has thrown this question right into the centre of the political arena. Why? Why is it only today that the ruling circles have been stirred up, when floods and other disasters have regularly caused indescribable suffering and distress to millions and claimed thousands of lives almost annually?

One evident factor is that this time flood has devastated the capital city of Dhaka itself for two consecutive years (1987 and 1988), submerging several areas where the elite live and work. The comfortable existence of the bosses was disrupted not only by the dirty, polluted floodwaters, but by the flood of people too who fled to the city from the slums and the lowland areas around the capital. It was especially difficult to hide these "dirty, poor masses" from the eyes of the foreigners.

Moreover, factories and mills around the capital were underwater and many of them ceased production. The countrywide destruction of the transport system severely disrupted the supply of food, particularly vegetables, meat and eggs, which are essential for the dinner tables of the rich, the military and the

police. Such serious destruction of the ground transport system also undoubtedly seriously weakens their repressive apparatus. This time then the ruling classes were themselves surrounded and submerged by their "God-blessed" natural disaster. In addition, they were disturbed, though not alarmed in a profound way, by the reliable prediction by the renowned bourgeois water control expert Mr B M Abbas that next time the ground floors of buildings in Dhaka will be submerged by the flood.

It is the norm in class society that the suffering and distress of the masses is never the concern of the exploiting classes unless their own interests are threatened. This was also the case in 1954, in the late 1960s and in 1974 too when Dhaka was flooded or felt the after-effects of a flood. But the political context in contemporary Bangladesh is very different from that of the 1950s and 1960s and even the 1970s, and this is the most important reason for the anxiety of the ruling classes and their imperialist masters. What they really fear is not the water alone, but, more importantly, the threat posed by the mounting anger of the masses at the rulers' failure to control the flood and reduce the people's suffering and the potential this holds to strengthen the revolutionary movement.

For a long time now the masses of Purba Bangla have tolerated the strain of floods and natural calamities. For a long time they have tolerated the cynical profiteering and plundering of the imperialists and their lackeys when floods and natural disasters have hit. Many times the masses were confused and deceived by the pretended compassion, the noisy show of relief activity and the grand talk of massive projects for flood control, all on paper of course.

But since the early 1960s the people of Purba Bangla began to wage powerful mass movements for their life-and-death demand of flood control, which later was integrated into their liberation war in 1971 in their hopes of winning a truly independent, democratic, peaceful and prosperous country where, they believed, flood problems could be

solved forever. But in vain. The new ruling classes and their governments of Bangladesh since 1972, whether pro-India-USSR or pro-Western, have preferred to continue deceiving the masses by accusing Pakistani "ghosts" for not solving the flood problems, to hide their own sins.

On the other hand, just like the Pakistani governments of the past, these new watch-dogs of imperialist interests sometimes come out with empty talk of unrealistic, super-gigantic paper projects. In this way they confused the masses for yet another decade. But now, the masses have, in general, grown convinced through their own practical, historical experience that all these were simply lies backed by the foreign masters. They have been able to discover the reactionary deceptions of U.S. imperialism and Indian expansionism and their local lackeys, as illustrated by quite a number of spontaneous incidents in different areas during the devastating flood of 1987, eg, refusal of relief despite starvation conditions; encircling high government officials and the water control and irrigation offices and relief offices; protest

the potential for a large outbreak of revolt which the imperialists, particularly the U.S. imperialists, understand very well.

So the U.S.-led imperialists, the Soviet social-imperialists, the Indian expansionists, and their big bourgeois political agents, both in and out of power, have renewed their campaign of deception and political manoeuvring around flood control and relief activities. At the same time, these enemies of the people are trying to blame each other in order to mobilise mass support in their own favour for dogfights with their rivals.

### The Reactionary Classes and Flood

The most nakedly reactionary forces are the pro-U.S. Islamic fundamentalist groups who are fed with unlimited petrodollars by the Mideast guardians of Islam, especially Saudi Arabia. These forces are trying to brainwash the masses with age-old medieval formulas like "flood is the curse of God" brought on by the "sins of the masses", "flood is an irresistible, inevitable natural disaster", and that it is "our

using religious sentiments and fatalism. They promote an ideology of subjugation and slavery to imperialism to ensure its plunder. The president of the fascist regime himself propagates this same garbage, simply with different words and in a more sophisticated way.

Other pro-U.S. imperialist agents target Indian expansionism as the one and only reason for floods and mislead the masses with slogans like "Break the Farakka dam" (referring to a large recently constructed dam in India upriver from Purba Bangla). In this way they try to hide the sins of U.S. imperialism and the role of two hundred years of Western colonial rule and plunder, while at the same time promoting the U.S. and their agents like Saudi Arabia for the "generosity" of their "aid".

Among certain of the pro-U.S. lackeys, especially the bureaucrats and technocrats closely connected with big comprador capital, there is widespread support for super-expensive giant projects based on advanced Western technology and requiring huge grants and loans from the imperialists' World Bank. Such projects are unrealistic, ill-suited to local conditions and don't rely on the masses. In the name of flood control, they are actually tightening the chains of imperialist bondage around Purba Bangla and seeking an everlasting bright fortune for themselves at the expense of the blood of the masses.

The pro-Indo-Soviet forces, including the outright pro-Soviet revisionists, are in especially deep trouble on this question. It has been very difficult for them to cover up the obviously criminal part Indian expansionism has played in increasing the devastation of the floods (more on which briefly). Nonetheless, they have not spared themselves in their shameless efforts to save their masters in the name of opposing the government's dependence on U.S. imperialism and the machinations of the pro-U.S., pro-Saudi Islamic fundamentalists.

But all the big bourgeois political opposition forces, regardless of whether they are pro-U.S., pro-Saudi, pro-Indian, pro-Soviet, etc, agree on one point: that the "un-

"For relief activities, we depend completely on the masses. We must consciously develop activities and methods to combat and overcome the perverted ideology of making the nation and the masses dependent on the enemies of the people inside the country or the imperialists outside it.

"We can never allow ourselves to work as the cadre force of the relief agencies of the imperialists and their lackies.

"We also combine expropriation of the wealth of the enemies with our relief activities in the [fighting] areas where this is possible."

- from PBSP flood circular, Sept. 1988

marches in the sub-district and district towns and encircling the local government offices, etc. Such activity mobilised thousands and occasionally more than ten thousand, and compelled the authorities to cut down unscientifically built "flood control" dams and roads, etc, so as to let the roof-high flood waters drain off in three or four days. In some places government and relief officials and local ruling party leaders were beaten up. Such activities, which seem not to have been organised by any opposition party, reflect the growing consciousness of the people and an initial outburst of their rage. They definitely indicate

ill fate" and "misfortune" to suffer, etc. Their flood control programme is to pray to God so that he is pleased and does not curse the country again! What is an "ill fate" for Purba Bangla is that such backward, reactionary forces still exist in the late twentieth century to serve their imperialist masters!

They also propagate that the country is too poor to afford any flood control project, so that there is no alternative but to depend upon "aid" from rich countries, clearly meaning the sheiks and monarchs of the Middle East. In such a way, they try to misguide the masses through ideological brainwashing

democratic" rule of the Ershad regime is the main reason for the floods and the people's suffering. Of course there is partial truth to this, but they present this as if under a "democratically" elected government in power — which for them means democratically sharing out power among the big bourgeois parties, including themselves — there would no longer be floods or suffering! The people of Purba Bangla already have bitter experience with these big bourgeois parties in power in the past, and of course these self-proclaimed standard-bearers of democracy did not stop either the floods or the suffering!

The fascist Ershad government and a section of pro-U.S. forces, along with a section of bureaucrats and reactionary intellectuals, are raising the slogan, "Don't mix politics and the flood" and "National unity regardless of party and ideology to control floods and combat the people's suffering". The advocates of these slogans argue that "the people" and "the nation" cannot let the solution of the flood problem await an uncertain possibility of some remote victory of the struggle for democracy and social change, so that everyone should forget political and ideological differences to unite and cooperate right now with the present fascist regime, at least on the flood question. A number of patriotic, honest and even left-oriented petit-bourgeois intellectuals and political forces have become confused by these deceptively innocent-sounding slogans.

But from their own experience of life over the last four decades, the people themselves have already learned that this slogan-mongering is the favourite, cynical game of all the reactionary regimes. In the name of "national unity to combat floods", these fellows in fact conspire to combat the people's just struggle for an overall flood control programme in order to maintain themselves in power. The slogan of "don't mix politics and the flood" is itself a devious politics which tries to confuse the masses by hiding the simple but essential truth that this problem can never be solved

without political decision, political initiative and political leadership.

In other words, whether this life-and-death problem for the masses will be dealt with by depending upon imperialist "aid" and mortgaging the country's independence or by self-reliance, whether by bureaucratic decrees of generals, bureaucrats and power-broking politicians relying on expensive imported technology or by mobilising the masses and combining their knowledge and creativity with available technology which corresponds to the actual conditions, and whether various projects of flood control would be mere means for those in power to misappropriate funds and build their fortunes or would go to genuinely benefit the masses — all these are above all political questions, which the masses do have the necessity and right to decide. So the demand to not "mix politics with the flood" is in fact a rude dictatorial cry by the regime and reactionary circles that *it is only they* who have the right to politically determine these life-and-death questions for the masses, and that any effort by the masses to determine their own fate will be ruthlessly suppressed.

#### Flood and the Revolutionary Forces

The problem of floods and natural disasters confronting Bangladesh is decidedly a political problem. This approach is not only justified by facts, but it is the need of the hour for revolutionaries and the masses themselves to raise the question of flood control politically and act on it in a revolutionary way.

The imperialists and their feudal and big comprador bourgeois agents have long played politics with the question of floods and the masses' suffering. But the patriotic and left political forces, including the communist revolutionaries, did not and/or could not deal with this question in a correct, concrete way for a long time, due to long-standing revisionist domination in the past, as well as lack of experience and of sufficient contact with the masses. Since its maiden

(Continued to page 27)

## Revolutionary China Teaching

### Excerpted from the *Revolutionary*

...For hundreds of years, floods and droughts had been the "twin scourges" of China. A major flood or drought hit large parts of the land at a pace of almost once a year, destroying crops or making it impossible to plant and thus leading to terrible famines that took the lives of hundreds of thousands at a time...

With the defeat of the U.S.-backed Kuomintang (KMT) reactionaries in October 1949, the revolutionary regime led by Mao and the Communist Party of China faced an immensely difficult situation. U.S. imperialism and its reactionary allies surrounded and blockaded New China in an attempt to smother it to death. The land and the people had been ravaged by the decades of Japanese imperialist invasion and occupation and the rampages of the KMT army, which compounded the devastation from flood, drought and famine. As a 1974 *Peking Review* article titled "Harnessing China's Rivers" recalled, "What did the Kuomintang reactionaries leave behind 25 years ago when New China was born? With all the waterways, dykes and embankments long out of repair, the peasants were completely at the mercy of nature. Flood and drought were common occurrences, wreaking havoc alternately or concurrently and taking a heavy toll of millions of people, with tens of millions more rendered homeless. Such being the plight of old China, certain imperialist prophets gleefully awaited the collapse of New China in the grip of these twin disasters which all past governments had failed to cope with."

For the infant revolutionary regime, the task of taming the great rivers — the Yangtze, the Yellow, the Huai (flowing in the central coastal plains between the Yangtze

# Water to Climb Mountains Up to Heaven

*Worker, voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, 10 June 1985*

and the Yellow), and others — was a crucial aspect of transforming China from a dependent neocolony into an independent socialist country. Without protection from floods and new irrigation systems to fight droughts and open up new farmland, the peasantry — making up the overwhelming majority of the population — would continue to suffer. The worker-peasant alliance would be adversely affected and the ability of China to withstand the attacks of the imperialists and contribute to world revolution would be weakened.

In 1951 and '52, Mao declared that the Huai River and the Yellow River "must be harnessed". These calls were made amidst, and were very much a part of, the fierce two-line struggles within the Communist Party itself over China's direction after liberation. Under the rubric of "harmony" between capitalism and socialism and "consolidating" new democracy, revisionists like Liu Shao-chi fought to lead China down the road of capitalist development (which in China's context inevitably would have meant neocolonial development). In agriculture, these bourgeois-democrats-turned-capitalist-roaders tried to stifle and sabotage the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production and all the relations of production. They argued that mechanisation and development of heavy industry (which in turn depended on foreign technology and "aid") had to precede collectivisation, and that in the meantime the old social relations should remain intact in the countryside. Exploitation is a "merit", Liu even declared.

The two lines were sharply posed in the question of taking on the job of controlling China's rivers. Ac-

ording to those like Liu, such large-scale and technically difficult projects were impossible to undertake since China had neither the funds nor the technology. Liu condescendingly preached that people in areas affected by flood or drought should rely on "relief". As one observer noted in the mid-'70s when the Huai River projects had been completed and the Yellow River brought largely under control, "had the masses waited for machines to do it, there would still be famines in North China."

Mao sharply criticised and fought against the revisionist and capitulationist line of Liu and others, and declared that, "We must now realise that there will soon be a nationwide high tide of socialist transformation in the countryside." Indeed a tremendous upsurge swept through the countryside. The millions of peasants, mobilised in unprecedented forms of cooperation in big water projects, were an integral part of this — leading to the basic establishment of socialist ownership in agriculture (as well as industry) by 1956. The struggle further erupted into the momentous upheaval of the Great Leap Forward in 1958; it was out of this furnace that the people's communes were born. Water conservation projects played a key role once more in this new and major step in socialist transformation.

People's communes started spontaneously in Honan province out of a project to bring water across the Taihang mountain ranges to irrigate a dry plain area that suffered from drought eight or nine years out of ten. The peasant cooperatives took initiative in merging their labour power on a scale unheard of previously to build the Red Canal, which stretched 1500 km across the Tai-

hang. When Mao came to visit this merger of peasant associations, the name "people's commune" was chosen. "This is a new creation of the masses", Mao wrote. Others around the country followed the example: by the end of 1958, 26,000 communes had formed (increasing to 72,000 with new formations and subdivisions by 1961).

One of the slogans raised by the peasants during the Great Leap Forward was: "Teach water to climb mountains up to heaven!" The slogan of course referred directly to the carving of waterways across mountain ranges to bring water and life to arid lands. But it also spoke more broadly to the grand struggles of the masses consciously transforming society and nature, and in the process transforming themselves. Under the oppressive order of the old society, who but the most brave and farsighted would have dared dream of teaching "water to climb the mountains up to heaven"?

## The Scourge of the Rivers

Several examples illustrate the remarkable advances made by the Chinese people after liberation to control the forces of nature, in particular the "scourge" of the rivers. In 1952, the Chinese people completed a large-scale flood-diversion programme on Chingkiang River, a harmful tributary on the middle reaches of the Yangtze. The project involved repairing and reinforcing existing dykes, building new dykes of over 200 km in length, putting up numerous sluice gates, and setting up a safety area to accommodate 170,000 people in case of evacuation during an especially big flood. Three hundred thousand soldiers and civilians were mobilised, and the whole project was completed in

seventy-five days. This contrasts starkly with the "achievements" during the years of reactionary KMT rule. In order to build a small drainage gate on the Yangtze near the city of Wuhan, the KMT begged for funds from five different countries and then took three years to complete the work.

The Huai River basin used to be one of those areas hit by almost yearly flood and/or drought. The diversion of the Yellow River in 1938 by the KMT caused devastation of even greater dimensions. The change in the course of the Yellow River brought down silt that filled the estuary of the Huai River, buried farmland and heightened the beds of many lakes. All this affected the entire Huai River system, making it even more susceptible to floods and droughts.

Mao's 1951 call — "the Huai River must be harnessed" — sparked millions of peasants to begin tackling various water-control projects along the Huai. This vast mobilisation shattered the revisionist whinings about how it was impossible for the "backward" peasants without machines to take on such immense projects. In fact, except for key state-financed projects, modern machinery — such as bulldozers, excavators, earth removers and heavy-duty trucks — was rarely available, especially in the earlier years. The rise of revisionists to power in the Soviet Union in 1956, and the subsequent Sino-Soviet split and pull-out of Soviet technicians, funds and equipment from China, posed further difficulties. The "river-tamers" had to rely on simple tools and equipment — hammers, chisels, picks, wheel-barrow, home-made machines and explosives. And, most important of all, there was the powerful initiative of the masses, unleashed by the revolutionary line of Mao.

By the early '70s, one report noted "conspicuous changes" in the worksites of the Huai River projects compared to the initial stages: "China-made dredgers are working alongside other machines. The degree of mechanisation has increased and the contingents of technicians have grown enormously.

What merits particular attention is that large numbers of peasant-technicians with rich practical experience have come to the fore." The passage gives a glimpse of the actual development of productive forces during the years of Mao's leadership (contrary to the lies and distortions of imperialists and revisionists alike), and, most importantly, the big changes in relations of production, especially through the Cultural Revolution — the differences between mental and manual labour, between town and countryside and between industry and agriculture were *beginning* to be broken down. The changes in one county in the Huai River basin epitomised the night-and-day difference in conditions between the neocolonial past and socialist China. In one township of 11,000 households, floods in 1931 brought death from hunger to 2,600 peasants and forced 6,700 families to flee to other areas. The same area experienced torrential rains in the summer of 1974 — over twelve inches of rain fell in two days and the water level of the Huai rose over six feet. Yet the dykes and the drainage pumps kept damage to a minimum — peasant homes were not washed away, and paddyfields remained green.

Since the revisionists took power in 1976 and restored capitalism, many of the advances made during socialist China — especially during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution — have been overturned. The people's communes, for example, have been mostly broken up, with land divided again among individual households, and exploitative relations and class polarisation making their return. While there may be some increases in production in certain areas and for a certain period, the larger picture raises the ominous spectre of possibly disastrous consequences of capitalist restoration in the countryside. Some observers have noted, for example, that there has been an increase in the frequency of floods and severity of damages caused by them and have linked these developments at least in part to the breaking up of socialised agriculture. Because the peasants

are being increasingly driven to raise productivity on their private plots and contract businesses, there is mounting reluctance to participate in public works projects — water conservancy works, soil conservation, forestation programs — since they require pooling of labour and resources, and sacrifices on the part of individual units for the bigger whole. Images of pre-1949 floods, droughts and famines are beginning to cast their shadow.

The imperialists say that the situation in Bangladesh is hopeless — a "basketcase", as Henry Kissinger once called it. The same was said of China before liberation. The enormous changes that occurred in China in a relatively short span of years under socialism were certainly remarkable — but they were no mystery. The motive force was the conscious initiative and activism of the masses, unbound from the yoke of imperialism and unleashed by Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought.

In the wake of the Bangladesh tidal wave, imperialist vultures of the news media swooped down to focus on peasants praying to Allah for penance and salvation. As the article "Harnessing China's Rivers" in *Peking Review* pointed out: "In the dark old days class oppression went hand in hand with drought and flood; the reactionary political rule and the ideological fetters imposed on the people not only deprived them of the necessary objective conditions for combating floods but also made it impossible for them to see their own subjective strength in overcoming them. After each natural disaster, the reactionary rulers, while using the pretext of building water-control projects to fleece the people, spread the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and forced the people to build temples and offer sacrifices to appease the gods. The storm of socialist revolution since liberation has shattered the political and economic fetters binding the labouring people and swept away the ideological trammels that hampered their initiative and creativity."

To deal with cyclones and other disasters, "natural" and "unnatural", requires making revolution. □

## Bangladesh

(Continued from page 24)

voyage in the 1920s and up through the 1960s, the rightist revisionist leadership of the subcontinental communist movement failed to grasp the Leninist lesson of revolutionary political exposure of the imperialists, the bourgeoisie and feudals regarding the problems of flood, drought, tidal waves, earthquake, epidemic, famine, etc, and the masses' suffering from these. Unlike the Chinese revolutionaries led by Mao Tsetung, they failed to develop a concrete political orientation for a revolutionary solution of so-called natural calamities. Instead, in response to the masses' suffering, the revisionist leadership responded, in many cases, with honest but petit-bourgeois humanitarian desire and reduced the vanguard's activity to the second front of imperialist-bourgeois institutions like the Red Cross, the Ford Foundation, etc, and diminished their own role to that of social service functionaries of the imperialists and reactionaries, thus leaving the arena of politics almost totally to the reactionaries.

They failed to find the ways to link the mass movements around these questions with the broader struggle for social change and revolution — which in fact they also failed to develop. Rather they reduced the mass movement to a sort of issue-based reformist movement demanding relief, dams, sluice gates, dredging, local irrigation schemes, tax relief, agricultural loans, vaccination programmes against epidemics, "food for the hungry" in famines, etc, and, sometimes, general flood control. All this was done without integrating these activities with political exposure of the reactionary classes and imperialism and to the essential goal — revolution. The pro-Soviet modern revisionist party (the Communist Party of Purba Bangla [CPB]) and many other pro-Soviet, pro-China and middle-of-the-road revisionist parties and groups still follow the same erroneous and in essence deceptive, anti-people line on the flood question and people's suffer-

ing, which actually serves the imperialists and the reactionary classes.

Following the rupture with pro-Soviet modern revisionism in the mid-1960s, a section of the communist movement, generally known at that time as radical left and pro-Mao, though inheriting a strong influence of revisionist line and tradition, did suffer an opposite tendency. Their argument that only revolution could and would solve all such problems, though basically correct, was left general and superficial. They also failed to carry out any revolutionary exposure, to make a revolutionary analysis and to present a concrete revolutionary orientation for an overall solution to this problem. While opposing or at least not following the right revisionist/reformist activities, they virtually abandoned the responsibility of organising immediate initiatives and tasks in a revolutionary way at a time when the masses faced extreme suffering.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the revolutionary communist movement led by martyr comrade Shiraj Shikder and PBSP, which he founded, forged a basically correct line on making revolution and carrying out revolutionary armed struggle and addressed the questions of flood, natural disasters and the subsequent suffering of the masses with a basically correct and relatively concrete orientation. But even this was left too much at the level of generalisations. PBSP also suffered from a lack of concrete analysis and from unclarity on the question of the immediate tasks to deal with the masses' suffering, and subsequently was unable to carry out sharp, deep-going political exposure. Because of this, the revolutionaries were unable to develop concrete tactics in a situation where the masses faced extreme suffering, especially during and after the severe floods, cyclone and subsequent famine in 1974. They were thereby deprived of the opportunity for seizing the political initiative in a very favourable political situation. This situation prevailed until recently, with the result that the revolutionary movement remained in a defensive passive position many times in the

intervening years following floods, cyclones, tidal waves, drought, etc.

It is thus encouraging that recently the PBSP have consciously initiated study on the problem and launched efforts to seize the initiative regarding the flood problem. Under the leadership of PBSP, revolutionaries are trying to develop a correct orientation for a revolutionary, pro-people solution of the flood problem, launching political exposure of the imperialists and their lackey reactionary ruling classes, setting up and implementing immediate tasks in a revolutionary way to help the masses respond to their suffering, and to mobilise the masses in revolutionary mass movements around these questions as a complement to the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside — now being carried out towards the clear-cut goal of developing people's war and making the new democratic revolution.

### The History of Flood

Flood, tidal waves and cyclones are not new phenomena for Purba Bangla or the Bengal region in general. From a geographical point of view, the very existence of the land of this country is the result of a continual, on-going process of the vast accumulation of silts and the formation of a living delta at the mouths of a number of rivers, especially the three mighty river systems — the Padma, the Meghna and the Brahmaputra-and-Jamuna. It is popularly believed that the term "Bangla", the name of the country, originates from the similarity of the shape of the delta formation to that of a letter in the Bengali alphabet.

In this region, flood, which generally occurs in the monsoon, is an almost regular annual phenomenon, and sometimes there are several per year. The process of expansion of the country towards the south, into the sea, is ongoing. In the present situation, an area as large as half the country itself may well emerge over the course of the next one or two decades. Flood undoubtedly contributes greatly to this process. Moreover, flood also contributes significantly to the extraor-

(Continued to page 73)

May Day, 1989

# *Celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the RIM!*

— Statement by the Committee of the RIM

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. In the coming months the RIM and its various participating parties and organisations will be calling upon class-conscious proletarians and revolutionaries to join in the celebration of this anniversary and to support and raise funds for our Movement.

In 1984, when the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations was held, our international communist movement was at a great crossroads. Our great red bastion of socialist China had been taken over from within by a new band of exploiters and capitulators hiding inside the Communist Party.

All over the world the imperialists, revisionists and reformists, anxious to seek revenge for the defeats they had received at the hands of Mao Tsetung and the genuine proletarian revolutionaries, had loudly proclaimed the end of revolutionary Marxism. Thus the formation of the RIM was of great importance in hoisting high the banners of Marx, Lenin and Mao Tsetung when others were trampling them into the mud.

Although the international communist movement has still not fully overcome the crisis brought to a head by the death of Mao Tsetung and the loss of socialist China, the existence of the RIM is itself a very important step in reconstructing the unity of the genuine communists and the existence of such an international grouping is itself a key to further advance in the direction of our goal of creating a communist international of a new type.

In the five years since the formation of the RIM our Movement has continued to advance and spread. The people's war in Peru, led by the Communist Party of Peru, a participating party of the RIM, has advanced wave upon wave and today the roar of the revolutionary armed struggle of the workers and peasants of Peru is truly heard all over the world. The class-conscious proletarians and all revolutionary people should be alert to the possibility of intervention by the imperialists against the Peruvian revolution and be prepared to counter such intervention with a revolutionary storm of support for the people's war.

At a time when revisionists and opportunists of all stripes are betraying the revolutionary struggle of the masses and preaching accommodation and compromise with the existing system, it is the genuine Marxist-Leninists, and above all those grouped in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, who are waging or preparing to wage the revolutionary armed struggle of the masses which alone can sweep away the old order and open the door to the communist future.

In many countries of the world, such as Palestine, the masses continue to wage a heroic struggle against the reactionaries. But despite their sacrifices and heroism, it is impossible for the masses in Palestine or in any other country to win their liberation without correct leadership. As the *Declaration* of our Movement points out, "Experience has shown that proletarian revolution can only be achieved and carried forward by a genuine proletarian party based on the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought."

Furthermore, it is only the revolutionary communists who link the struggle and sacrifice of today with the goal of building a whole world without classes and exploitation. The genuine communists, unlike the pro-Soviet revisionists and the other opportunists, do not use the struggle of the masses as negotiating chips in coming to agreements with the enemy nor do they seek to replace the existing authorities just to sit on top of the same old system of exploitation. Although many so-called "communists" have themselves joined the reactionary chorus of those who call communism a futile dream, the parties and organisations that make up the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement are the most resolute fighters today because they have the most correct, resolute and uncompromising view of the future of mankind and what is required to achieve it.

The existence of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and its *Declaration* is of great assistance to the proletarian revolutionaries in different countries who face the difficult but urgent task of forging a vanguard Maoist party based upon a correct line. Today there are revolutionaries on every continent who are taking up this vital task and who look to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement for inspiration and assistance.

But the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement can only fulfill this task of helping the formation of new Marxist-Leninist parties with the active involvement of the participating parties and organisations of the Movement and the class-conscious proletarians and other revolutionary masses in countries throughout the world. The genuine communists follow a completely opposite approach to that of the revisionists and opportunists on the financial front, as in all fields. Whereas they practice and preach reliance on imperialists and social-imperialists and reactionaries, the genuine communists practice reliance on the workers, peasants and other revolutionary masses as their source of funds. It is for that reason that the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is calling on the revolutionary masses to join in the celebration of our fifth anniversary including by financially assisting the further advance of our Movement.

It is high time that the world be wrested from the hands of the imperialists and reactionaries who now run it. Their rule means continued misery for the immense majority of people throughout the world. And despite their talk of peace and understanding, the real danger still exists that the imperialists will launch a third world war. Only the revolutionary struggle of the people can change this state of affairs and unlock the doors to the future.

**Celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement! Raise Funds and Support the RIM!**

**Make Revolution! Build and Strengthen Maoist Parties United in the RIM!**

**Support the People's War in Peru!**

**Prevent World War, Step Up the Struggle for Revolution Throughout the World!**

**Break the Chains! Unleash the Fury of Women as a Mighty Force for Revolution!**

**Let the "Uprising of Stones" Pave the Way for People's War for the Liberation of Palestine!**

**Forward Along the Path Charted by Mao Tsetung!**

# *The Internationale Shall Be the Human Race*

Over a hundred and fifty years ago Marx and Engels issued the *Communist Manifesto* with their thunderous declaration of war against the bourgeoisie: "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism." Since that time, the revolutionary successors of Marx have carried his battlecry to every nook and cranny of the globe, and they have done so as representatives of the world proletariat, the class that can only finally liberate itself by liberating all mankind. From Marx's time forward, the representatives of the international proletariat have come together at an international level to organise and carry out their combat at a global level.

Marx and Engels guided the work of the First International, till its break-up after the defeat of the Paris Commune. After Marx's death, Engels went on to play a key role in the founding and early years of the Second International. Lenin led the Bolsheviks first as part of the Second International and later, as its leaders sided with their own imperialist governments during World War 1, he did everything he could to expose and defeat it and so give rise to a revolutionary Third (or Communist) International, which exploded into being with the Bolshevik Revolution. Stalin carried on Lenin's work in the Third International, the Comintern, during the period of socialist construction in the USSR, of rising wars of national liberation as that led by Mao Tsetung in China, and in the face of a growing threat of a new world war, imperialist attacks on the Soviet Union and the coming to power of fascism in Germany.

With the revisionist coup in the USSR in 1956, the international communist movement was dealt a serious blow and was cast into disarray. Mao Tsetung led the battalions of the Chinese masses into the breach; they picked up the red flag and swept higher and further than had ever been done before, in the great epoch-making battles of the Cultural Revolution, which gave birth to a new generation of revolutionaries guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement proudly declared in its *Declaration* that, "Today, the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, together with other Maoist forces, are the inheritors of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, and they must firmly base themselves on this heritage." The following section illustrates some of the important moments in the internationalist battles of the proletariat.



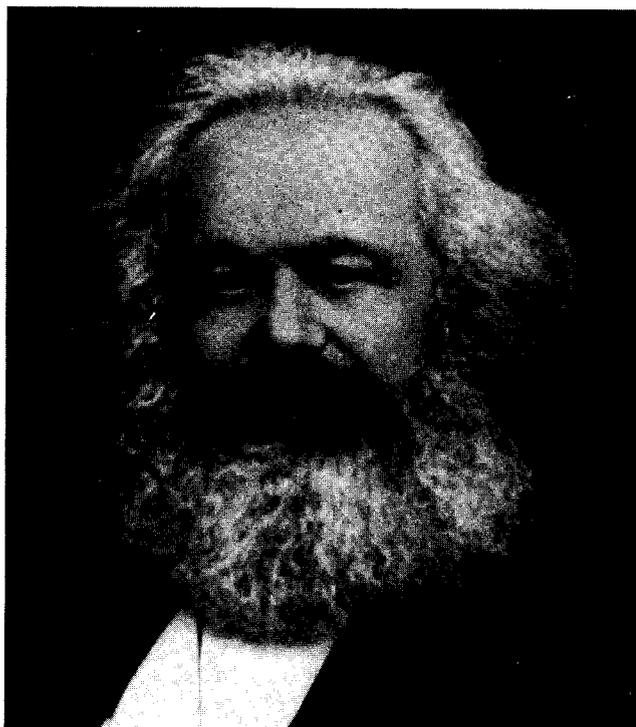
Drawing by Käthe Kollwitz,  
a revolutionary German artist 1867-1945



Frederick Engels played a leading role, including militarily, in the German revolution of 1848.

The International Workingmen's Association (IWA), or the First International, was founded in 1864 in London and spread the revolutionary movement throughout Europe, America and even to Australia. Marx's ideas had to contend with the anarchism of Bakunin and Proudhon, who finally succeeded in wrecking the IWA in 1872. But as Engels remarked, "For ten years, the International channeled European history in one direction — the direction of the future — and it can look back proudly on its achievement." Below: a drawing of the founding of the IWA.





Karl Marx, the founder of communism. He carried out his unprecedented theoretical work and practical leadership of the First International while being hounded by the bourgeoisie throughout Europe.

The English working class stretch the hand of fellowship to the French and German working people. They feel deeply convinced that whatever turn the impending horrid war may take, the alliance of the working classes of all countries will ultimately kill war. The very fact that while official France and Germany are rushing into a fratricidal feud, the workmen of France and Germany send each other messages of peace and goodwill; this great fact, unparalleled in the history of the past, opens the vista of a brighter future. It proves that in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose International rule will be *Peace* because its national ruler will be everywhere the same — *Labour!* The Pioneer of that new society is the International Workingmen's Association.

Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*



The first edition of the *Communist Manifesto*.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite!

— Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,  
*The Communist Manifesto*

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.

— Karl Marx, *Capital*

Labor in the white skin cannot be free as long as in the black skin it is branded.

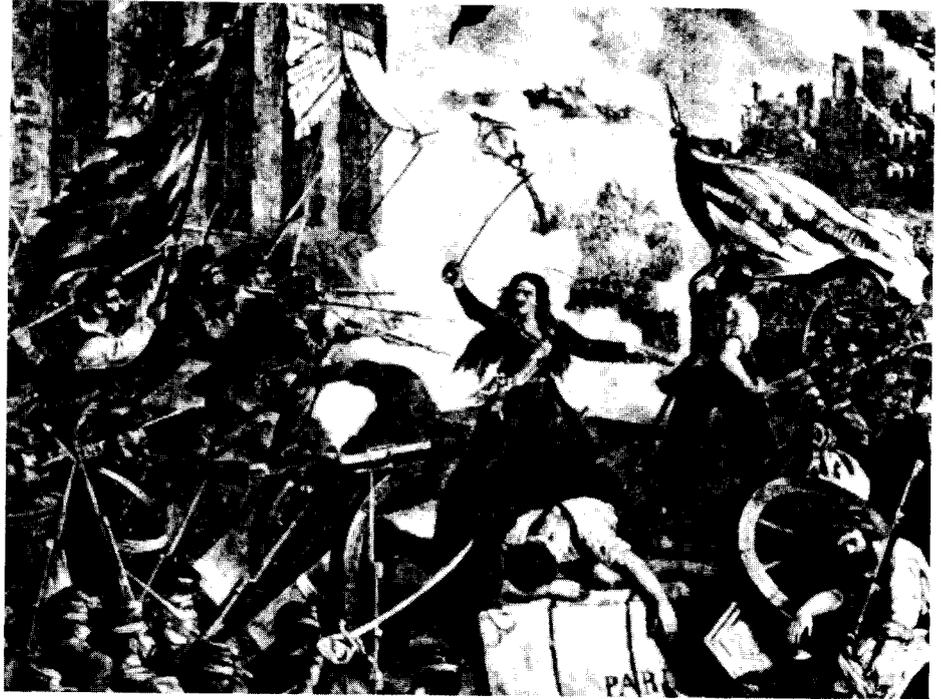
— Karl Marx

**W**e say to workers, you will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international wars, not only in order to change existing conditions but also in order to change yourselves and fit yourselves for the exercise of political power.

— Karl Marx, "Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne"

The Paris Communards held out for over three months, fighting heroically despite the fact that the French bourgeoisie, who had been at war with Germany, turned around and enlisted the German ruling class' aid to suppress their common enemy — the insurrectionary proletariat.





The last battles of the communards; women played a significant role in organisation and defence of the Paris Commune. This was the first seizure of political power by the proletariat. As Engels said, if you want to know what the dictatorship of the proletariat is, look at the Paris Commune.



"Our country" — a word, an error! "Humanity" — a fact, a truth! Invented by priests and kings, like the myth God "the country" has only been used to confine human animals in exact limits, where they can be shaved and bled for their masters' benefit, under their eyes and in the name of their unclean fetish.

Birth here or there, a mere accident, changes our nationality and makes us friends or enemies. Let us reject this silly lottery — a farce in which we have always been the butts.

Let "country" become an empty word — a valueless administrative division — our country is wherever life is free and work is done.

Peoples, workers, light is arising: let our blindness end. Down with tyrants and despots!

France is dead, long live Humanity!

— Written by communard Jules Nostag in *La Révolution Politique et Social*.

**T**he Commune was... a working men's Government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international. Within sight of the Prussian army, that had annexed to Germany two French provinces, the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world...

The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause. Between the foreign war lost by their treason, and the civil war fomented by their conspiracy with the foreign invader, the bourgeoisie had found the time to display their patriotism by organising police-hunts upon the Germans in France. The Commune made a German working man its Ministry of Labour. Thiers, the bourgeoisie, the Second Empire, had continually deluded Poland by loud professions of sympathy, while in reality betraying her to, and doing the dirty work of, Russia. The Commune honoured the heroic sons of Poland by placing them at the head of the defenders of Paris. And, to broadly mark the new era of history it was conscious of initiating, under the eyes of the conquering Prussians, on the one side, and of the Bonapartist army, led by Bonapartist generals, on the other, the Commune pulled down that colossal symbol of martial glory, the Vendôme column.

— Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*

# THE INTERNATIONALE

Eugene Pottier in the wake of the Paris Commune and its bloody defeat composed the words of the *Internationale*. As Lenin remarks, "The Commune was crushed — but Pottier's *Internationale* spread its ideas throughout the world, and it is now more alive than ever." The *Internationale* was adopted as the anthem of the international proletariat by a congress of the Second International. Over the years many different translations of the *Internationale* have appeared in dozens of languages. Some of these translations have lost some of the revolutionary spirit and content of the original French version. Below, the original French text and a translation of the first two verses.

## Music score of the *Internationale*.

1. A-rise, ye pris-ners of star-va-tion! A-rise, ye wret-ched of the earth,  
2. We want no con-descend-ing sav-i-ors, To rule us from a judg-ment hall.

For jus-tice thun-ders con-dem-na-tion, A bet-ter world's in birth.  
We work-ers ask not for their fa-vors; Let us con-sult for all.

No more tra-di-tion's chain shall bind us, A-rise, ye slaves! no more in thrall!  
To make the thief disgorge his booty, To free the spir-it from its cell.

The earth shall rise on new foundations, We have been naught, we shall be all  
We must ourselves decide our du-ty, We must de-cide and do it well.

### REFRAIN.

'Tis the fi-nal con-flict, Let each stand in his place.

The in-ter-na-tion-ale Shall be the hu-man race.

'Tis the fi-nal con-flict, Let each stand in his place.

The in-ter-na-tional Par-ty Shall be the hu-man race.

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!  
Arise, ye wretched of the earth.  
For justice thunders condemnation,  
A better world's in birth.  
No more tradition's chains shall bind us,  
Arise ye slaves! no more in thrall!  
The earth shall rise on new foundations.  
We have been naught, we shall be all.

### (Chorus)

'Tis the final conflict,  
Let each stand in his place.  
The internationale  
Shall be the human race.

We want no condescending saviours,  
To rule us from a judgment hall.  
We workers ask not for their favours;  
Let us consult for all.  
To make the thief disgorge his booty,  
To free the spirit from its cell,  
We must ourselves decide our duty,  
We must decide and do it well.

### (Chorus)

'Tis the final conflict,  
Let each stand in his place.  
The internationale  
Shall be the human race.

C'est la lutte finale:  
Groupons-nous, et demain,  
L'Internationale  
Sera le genre humain.

Debout! les damnés de la terre!  
Debout! les forçats de la faim!  
La raison tonne en son cratère,  
C'est l'irruption de la fin.  
Du passé faisons table rase,  
Foule esclave, debout! debout!  
Le monde va changer de base:  
Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout!

Il n'est pas de sauveurs suprêmes:  
Ni Dieu, ni César, ni tribun,  
Producteurs, sauvons-nous nous-mêmes!  
Décrétons le salut commun!  
Pour que le voleur rende gorge,  
Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot,  
Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge,  
Battons le fer quand il est chaud!

L'Etat comprime et la loi triche;  
L'Impôt saigne le malheureux;  
Nul devoir ne s'impose au riche;  
Le droit du pauvre est un mot creux,  
C'est assez languir en tutelle,  
L'Egalité veut d'autres lois,  
"Pas de droits sans devoirs, dit-elle,  
"Egaux, pas de devoirs sans droits!"

Hideux dans leur apothéose,  
Les rois de la mine et du rail  
Ont-ils jamais fait autre chose  
Que dévaliser le travail?  
Dans les coffres-forts de la bande  
Ce qu'il a créé s'est fondu.  
En décrétant qu'on le lui rende  
Le peuple ne veut que son dû.

Les Rois nous soulaient de fumées,  
Paix entre nous, guerre aux tyrans!  
Appliquons la grève aux armées,  
Crosse en l'air et rompons les rangs!  
S'ils s'obstinent, ces cannibales,  
A faire de nous des héros,  
Ils sauront bientôt que nos balles  
Sont pour nos propres généraux.

Ouvriers, paysons, nous sommes  
Le grand parti des travailleurs;  
La terre n'appartient qu'aux hommes,  
L'oisif ira loger ailleurs.  
Combien de nos chairs se repaissent!  
Mais, si les corbeaux, les vautours,  
Un de ces matins, disparaissent,  
Le soleil brillera toujours!

C'est la lutte finale;  
Groupons-nous, et demain,  
L'Internationale  
Sera le genre humain.



**T**he International itself lived only nine years. But ... the eternal union of the proletarians of all countries created by it is still alive and lives stronger than ever....

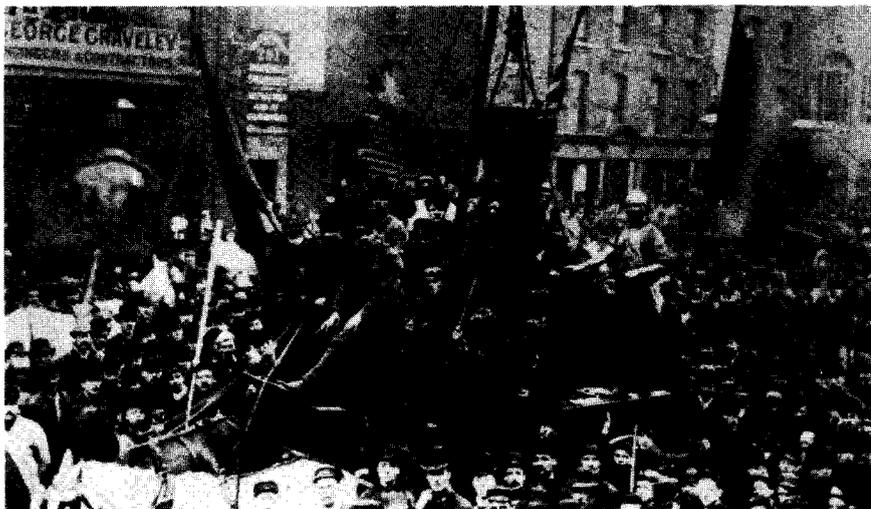
— Frederick Engels, Preface to the *Communist Manifesto*

**W**hat is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations.... The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces.

— V.I. Lenin, To the 2nd Congress of the Communist International



Frederick Engels, August Bebel, Clara Zetkin among others during Congress of the Second International, Zurich, August 1893.



1889 dockworkers strike in Britain. The Second International spurred on the rapid growth of organisation of proletarians in many countries.

Lenin in the 2nd Congress of the 3rd Communist International.



**P**roletarian internationalism demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital.

— V.I. Lenin, *Theses for the 2nd Congress of the Comintern*

**T**here is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is — working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own* country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, *and only this*, line, in *every* country without exception.

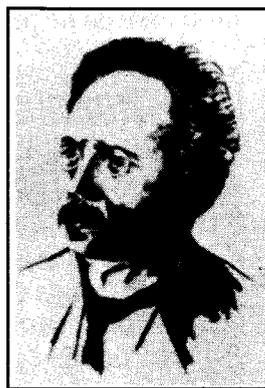
— V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution"

**T**he socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says, "The character of the war (whether it is reactionary or revolutionary) does not depend on who the attacker was, or in whose country the "enemy" is stationed; it depends on *what class* is waging the war, and on what politics this war is a continuation of. If the war is a reactionary, imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world groups of the imperialist, rapacious, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the *world proletarian revolution* as the *only* escape from the horrors of a world slaughter. I must argue, not from the point of view of "my" country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petit-bourgeois nationalist who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.

— V.I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*

Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the masses of the proletariat. The war has made such an alliance particularly conspicuous and inescapable. Opportunism was engendered in the course of decades by the special features in the period of the development of capitalism when the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged workingmen "bourgeoisified" them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalisms, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses. The imperialist war is the direct continuation and culmination of this state of affairs, because this is a war for the *privileges* of the Great-Power nations, for the repartition of colonies and domination over other nations.

— V.I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the 2nd International*



Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, internationalist leaders of the German workers' revolt of 1919, murdered by the German social-democratic government.

Karl Liebknecht is a most celebrated representative of ... the *new* and genuine, proletarian International.

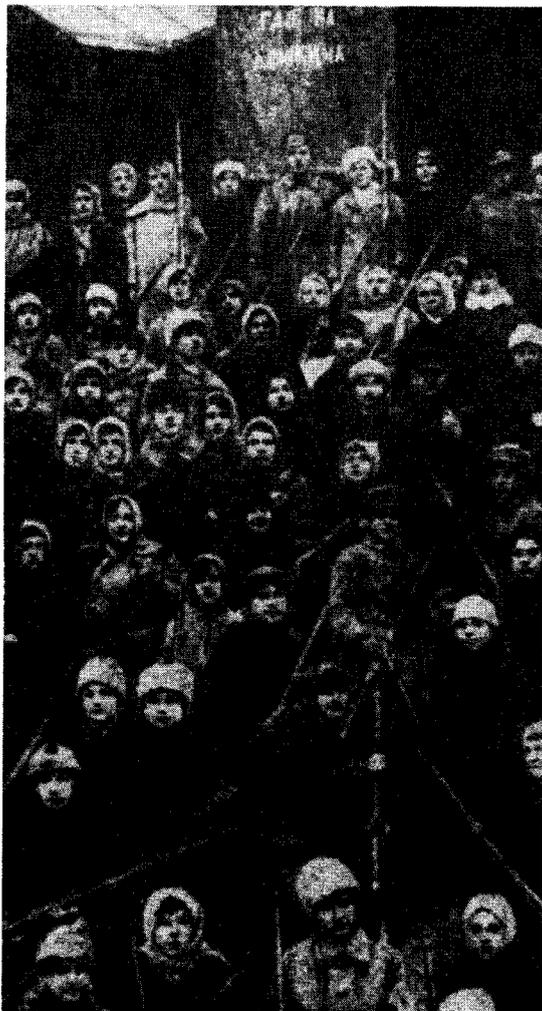
Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soliders of Germany to *turn their guns* against *their own* government.... He was arrested and sentenced to *hard labour*. He is now serving his term in a German convict prison, like *hundreds*, if not thousands, of other *true* German socialists who have been imprisoned for their anti-war activities....

Liebknecht *alone* represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. *All* the rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg, ... is a "*stinking corpse*."

— Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution*, 1917

An International does not mean sitting at the same table and having hypocritical and pettifogging resolutions written by people who think that genuine internationalism consists in German socialists justifying the German bourgeoisie's call to shoot down French workers, and in French socialists justifying the French bourgeoisie's call to shoot down German workers in the name of the "defence of the fatherland"! The International consists in the coming together (first ideologically, then in due time organisationally as well) of people who, in these grave days, are capable of defending socialist internationalism in deed, ie, of mustering their forces and "being the next to shoot" at the governments and ruling classes of their *own respective* "fatherlands". This is no easy task; it calls for much preparation and great sacrifices and will be accompanied by reverses. However for the very reason that it is no easy task, it must be accomplished only together with those who *wish* to perform it and are not afraid of a complete break with the chauvinists and with the defenders of social-chauvinism.

— V.I. Lenin, "Dead Chauvinism and Living Socialism"



A detachment of working women from the Vasilyevsky Island district of Petrograd right before their departure for the front in the revolutionary civil war.



**I**deologically, politically and organisationally the Bolshevik-Menshevik split prepared the way for the victory of the October Revolution. And without the Bolsheviks' struggle against the Mensheviks and the revisionism of the Second International, the October Revolution could never have triumphed.

— Mao Tsetung, *Critique of Soviet Economics*



One of the International Battalions of the Red Army.

At a conference of prisoners captured in WWI, organising to fight in the Bolshevik Revolution a Hungarian worker asked: "Here in the vast expanse of Russia is now being decided the fate of the workers of the world. Is it possible to stay away? Is it possible not to act?!" It was announced to thunderous applause that a group of Hungarians, Germans and Czechs had already gone to the Eastern front to fight the advancing army; it was a stunning moment, for up to that point the imperialist war had seen Hungarian, German, Austrian and Czech against Russians, Englishmen and French — now was developing not only a revolutionary civil war within Russia, but elements of a revolutionary civil war internationally. The slogan went out from the Congress to the POW camps: "All into the Ranks of the Red International Army" — for so it was conceived and built.

The ranks of the Legions swelled. There were cases of a Chinese commander leading Hungarians and Czechs who all tried to speak German; of Germans leading Croats, Serbs, Slovenians; of Turks, Greeks and Bulgarians, and many others. As their ranks further grew, the Karl Liebknecht Brigade from Germany, a revolutionary regiment of Poles, and other units formed. In the spring of 1918, just as the Red Army began to mobilize, between 40,000 and 90,000 soldiers, making up 30-40% of the Red Army, came from outside Russia.



Poster depicting the Russian revolution as the beginning of breaking the chains of wage-slavery worldwide.

**W**e are told that Russia will disintegrate and split up into separate republics but we have no reason to fear this. We have nothing to fear, whatever the number of independent republics. The important thing for us is not where the state border runs, but whether or not the working people of all nations remain allied in their struggle against the bourgeoisie, irrespective of their nationality.

— V.I. Lenin, Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of the Navy, December 1917

**T**he salvos of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism. The October Revolution helped progressives in China, as throughout the world, adopt the proletarian world outlook.

— Mao Tsetung, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship"

**I**n the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, ie, their freedom to secede.

— V.I. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination"



1.



2.



1. French marines, sent to fight as part of the imperialists' intervention against the Bolshevik revolution, mutinied.

2. A Russian and Austrian soldier fraternise in the trenches. Lenin demanded concrete organisation of fraternisation between the warring soldiers to break down the chauvinist animosity fueled by the bourgeoisies and accelerate preparations for revolutionary civil war in all the belligerent countries.

3. During WWI the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party — with the exception of Liebknecht, Luxemburg and a few others, called on the German masses to support their rulers' war effort. Shortly after the war, with Germany defeated and in deep crisis and with Russia in the flames of Bolshevik-led revolution, the Spartacus group, led by Liebknecht and Luxemburg, led an armed uprising (pictured here). The German Social-Democrats succeeded in crushing it and executing its leaders.

3.

**M**uch is given to the Russian proletariat; nowhere in the world has the working class yet succeeded in developing so much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much is given, of him much is required....

It is we who must found, and right now, without delay, a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International.... This is the International of those "internationalists in deed" whom I precisely listed above. They and they alone are representatives of the revolutionary, internationalist mass, and not their corrupters. And if socialists of *that type* are few, let every Russian worker ask himself whether there were many really class-conscious revolutionaries in Russia *on the eve* of the February-March revolution of 1917.

It is not a question of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The thing is not to "proclaim" internationalism, but to be able to be an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying.

Our Party must not "wait", but must immediately *found* a Third International.

— V.I. Lenin, "Tasks of Proletariat in Our Revolution"



Bolshevik poster — Long live the 3rd Communist International.

Me and our corner grocer,  
 we're both mightily unknown in America.  
 Nevertheless,  
 from China to Spain, from the Cape of Good Hope  
 to Alaska,  
 in every nautical mile, in every kilometre, I have  
 friends  
     and enemies.  
 Such friends that we haven't met even once  
 yet we can die for the same bread, the same free-  
 dom, the same  
     dream.  
 And such enemies that they thirst for my blood —  
     I thirst for theirs.  
 My strength  
 is that I'm not alone in this big world.  
 The world and its people are no secret in my heart,  
     no mystery in my science.  
 Calmly and openly  
     I took my place  
         in the great struggle.

By Nazim Hikmet, a revolutionary poet from Turkey.



Delegates to a Congress of the Third International, held in Moscow



Lenin at the Second Congress of the Third International, seated, centre, with international delegates.

**T**he October Revolution has shaken imperialism not only in the centres of its domination, not only in the "mother countries." It has also struck blows at the rear of imperialism, its periphery, having undermined the rule of imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries....

The October Revolution has ushered in a new era, the era of colonial revolutions which are being conducted in the oppressed countries of the world in alliance with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat....

While shaking imperialism, the October Revolution has at the same time created — in the first proletarian dictatorship — a powerful and open base for the world revolutionary movement, a base such as the world revolutionary movement never possessed before and on which it now can rely. It has created a powerful and open centre of the world revolutionary movement, such as the world revolutionary movement never possessed before and around which it now can rally and organise a united revolutionary front of the proletarians and of the oppressed nations of all countries against imperialism.

— Joseph Stalin, "The International Character of the October Revolution"

**T**he Russian revolution is not the private cause of the Russians; on the contrary, it is the cause of the working class of the whole world, the cause of the world proletarian revolution.

— Joseph Stalin, "Concerning the History of the Bolsheviks"

**1** Even as early as the last century the development of capitalism betrayed a tendency to internationalise the means of production and exchange, to eliminate national aloofness, bringing peoples into closer economic relations, and gradually to merge ... territories into a single connected whole.... Inasmuch as this process was a reflection of a colossal development of productive forces, it was and is a progressive process, for it is creating the material conditions for a future world socialist economic system.

2. But this tendency developed in specific forms which were completely at variance with its intrinsic historical significance. The interdependence of peoples and the economic amalgamation of territories arose in

the course of development of capitalism not as a result of the collaboration of peoples enjoying equal status, but by means of the subjugation of certain peoples by others, by means of the oppression and exploitation of less developed peoples by more developed peoples. Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist violence and arbitrary rule, colonial slavery and national inequality, and finally, the struggle between the "civilised" nations for mastery over the "uncivilised" peoples — such were the forms in which the process of economic amalgamation of peoples took place. For this reason we find that side by side with the tendency to amalgamation there grew up a tendency to destroy the violent forms assumed by this amalgamation, a struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. Inasmuch as the latter tendency implied a revolt of the oppressed masses against imperialist forms of amalgamation, inasmuch as it demanded the amalgamation of peoples on the basis of collaboration and voluntary union, it was and is a progressive tendency, for it is creating the psychological condition for the future world socialist economic system.

— Joseph Stalin, "National Factors in Party and State Development"



On the walls of a Spanish village during the Civil War: "Long Live Russia"



Shanghai communist militia, 1927. Due to a wrong line prevailing in the CCP, the communists were disarmed and suffered serious setbacks. It was Mao who summed up the experience and charted the path to the Chinese Revolution, leading the Party to victory.



German revolutionaries who came to fight with the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War



Women undergoing weapons training during the Spanish Civil War

A member of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War relates: "Now the line was decimated, there was nothing between us and the fascists but disorganised groups of weary war-wrecked men.. I saw another IRA comrade, Jock Cunningham, assembling a small crowd, we hurried up, joined forces.... The crowd behind us was marching silently.... I remembered a trick of the old days when we were holding banned demonstrations in Ireland. I jerked my head back, "Sing up ye sons of guns!" Quavering at first, then more lustily, the song arose from the ranks — the *Internationale* boomed out over the ruined countryside.

"On we marched nearer the front; stragglers in retreat stopped in amazement, then turned around and joined us, cheered, the song continued. I looked back; behind the forest of upraised fists, what an unkempt band! 'Manuel, what's the Spanish word for forward?' 'Adelante!' he yells back. 'Adelante!' we shout in a half-dozen foreign accents."



The Third International was active in many sharp battles of workers during the 1930s. Above, striking truckdrivers fight police in Minneapolis, USA in 1934.



The inhabitants of Moscow dig trenches in preparation for the German attack in 1941. Under Stalin's leadership, the workers and peasants of the USSR overcame overwhelming odds, stopped and finally crushed the German Army and saved the world's first socialist state.

The Eighth Route Army, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tsetung, enter Canton in 1945.



Our [Soviet] republic is the cherished child of the world proletariat. There can be no doubt that had our working class not been supported by the working class in the capitalist countries it would not have been able to retain power; it would not have secured the conditions for Socialist construction, and, hence, would not have achieved the successes that it has achieved. International ties between the working class of the USSR and the workers of the capitalist countries; the fraternal alliance between the workers of the USSR and the workers of all countries — this is one of the cornerstones of the strength and might of the Republic of Soviets. The workers in the West say that the working class of the USSR is the shock brigade of the world proletariat. This is very good. It shows that the world proletariat is prepared to continue rendering all the support it can to the working class of the USSR. But this imposes a very serious duty upon us. This means that we must prove by our work that we deserve the honourable title of shock brigade of the proletarians of all countries.

— Joseph Stalin, "Report to the 17th Congress of the CPSU(B)"

**T**he warriors of the Red Army at Stalingrad have performed prodigies of heroism which will affect the destiny of mankind. They are the sons and daughters of the October Revolution. The banner of the October Revolution is invincible, and all the forces of fascism are doomed to extinction.

— Mao Tsetung, "In Celebration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution," November 1942

**W**orld War II cannot be considered a mere repetition of World War I, for, even if the same murderous logic of the capitalist system was responsible for it, it was a complex combination of contradictions. At its beginning in 1939 it was, as Mao then pointed out "unjust, predatory and imperialist in character." But a major change with global implications took place when Hitler's Germany turned his troops on the Soviet Union. This just war on the part of the Soviet Union drew the support and sympathy of the working class and oppressed peoples the world over who were greatly inspired by the heroic resistance of the Red Army and the Soviet working class and people. This was no mere sympathy for a victim of aggression but the profound conviction that the defence of the Soviet Union was also the defence of the socialist base area of the world revolution.

— Declaration of the RIM

Revolutionary partisans hang Mussolini and 16 other fascists in the Piazza Loreto in Milan.



The hammer-and-sickle flies over Berlin as the city falls to the Soviet Red Army on May First, 1945.





"The Chinese people have stood up" — Mao Tsetung

**I**n the fight for complete liberation, the oppressed people rely first of all on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance. The people who have triumphed in their own revolution should help those still struggling for liberation. This is our internationalist duty.

— Mao Tsetung, Talk with African friends (Aug 8, 1963)

**A**s for the relations between the imperialist countries and ourselves, "they are among us and we are among them". We support the people's revolution in their countries and they conduct subversive activities in ours. We have our men in their midst, that is, the communists, the revolutionary workers, farmers and intellectuals, and the progressives in their countries. They have their men in our midst, and in China for instance, they have among us many people from the bourgeoisie and the democratic parties and also the landlord class.

— Mao Tsetung, "Talks at the Conference of Party Committee secretaries"

Women students at Yanan base area



**W**hat kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn.... We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries, before it is possible to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people, and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

— Mao Tsetung, "In Memory of Norman Bethune"

**T**he Chinese and Korean comrades should unite as closely as brothers, go through thick and thin together, stick together in life and death and fight to the end to defeat their common enemy. The Chinese comrades must consider Korea's cause as their own and the commanders and fighters must be instructed to cherish every hill, every river, every tree and every blade of grass in Korea and take not a needle or a single thread from the Korean people, just the way we feel about our own country and treat our own people. This is the political basis for winning victory. So long as we act this way, final victory will be assured.

— Mao Tsetung, Vol. 5

Nanking, 1949. Celebration of entrance of Chinese revolutionary army.



Chinese volunteers going to fight U.S. imperialism in Korea. Ten times more Chinese volunteered than could be sent, as the Chinese masses mobilised to support Korea, as they would again, later, to support Vietnam in the midst of the Cultural Revolution.





Joseph Stalin and Mao Tsetung, at a meeting in Moscow in 1950

I would like to say a few words about the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I think there are two "swords": one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been discarded by the Russians. Gomulka and some people in Hungary have picked it up to stab at the Soviet Union and oppose so-called Stalinism. The Communist Parties of many European countries are also criticising the Soviet Union, and their leader is Togliatti. The imperialists also use this sword to slay people with. Dulles, for instance, has brandished it for some time. This sword has not been lent out, it has been thrown out. We Chinese have not thrown it away. First, we protect Stalin, and, second, we at the same time criticize his mistakes, and we have written the article "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Unlike some people who have tried to defame and destroy Stalin, we are acting in accordance with objective reality.

As for the sword of Lenin, hasn't it too been discarded to a certain extent by some Soviet leaders? In my view, it has been discarded to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still serve as the example for all countries? Khrushchev's report at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize state power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away.

— Mao Tsetung, "Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China"

**A**ccording to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, every socialist country which has achieved victory in its revolution must actively support and assist the liberation struggles of the oppressed nations. The socialist countries must become base areas for supporting and developing the revolution of the oppressed nations and peoples throughout the world, form the closest alliance with them and carry the proletarian world revolution through to completion. But the leaders of the CPSU virtually regard the victory of socialism in one country or several countries as the end of the proletarian world revolution. They want to subordinate the national liberation revolution to their general line of peaceful coexistence and to the national interests of their own country.

— Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party, Apologists of Neo-Colonialism



8 February 1967: there were two weeks of fierce demonstrations in front of the Soviet Embassy in Peking

A PROPOSAL CONCERNING  
THE GENERAL LINE  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

THE LETTER OF  
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA  
IN REPLY TO THE LETTER OF  
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION  
OF MARCH 24, 1963

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
PEKING

"In 1963 the publication of *A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement* (the 25-point letter) was an all-round and public condemnation of revisionism and a call to the genuine Marxist-Leninists of all countries. The contemporary Marxist-Leninist movement has as its origin this historic appeal and the polemics that accompanied it....

"Through these polemics Mao and the Chinese Communist Party encouraged the Marxist-Leninists to split from the revisionists and form new proletarian revolutionary parties. The polemics represented a radical rupture with modern revisionism and a sufficient basis for the Marxist-Leninists to go forward into battle."

— from the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*

## 坚决支持非洲人民反对殖民主义和种族歧视的斗争

Resolutely Support the Struggle of the African People Against Colonialism and Racial Discrimination  
Soutenez résolument les peuples d'Afrique dans leur lutte contre le colonialisme et la discrimination raciale!



Chinese poster of a sculpture from the Cultural Revolution expressing international solidarity with African liberation struggles. The writing says: Resolutely Support the Struggle of the African People Against Colonialism and Racial Discrimination!

**P**eople of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and their running dogs! People of the world, be courageous, dare to fight, defy difficulties and advance wave upon wave. Then the whole world will belong to the people. Monsters of all kinds shall be destroyed.

— Mao Tsetung, "Statement Supporting the People of the Congo (L.) Against U.S. Aggression," 1964

**U**.S. imperialism invaded China's territory of Taiwan and has occupied it for the past nine years. A short while ago it sent its armed forces to invade and occupy Lebanon. The United States has set up hundreds of military bases in many countries all over the world. China's territory of Taiwan, Lebanon and all military bases of the United States on foreign soil are so many nooses around the neck of U.S. imperialism. The nooses have been fashioned by the Americans themselves and by nobody else, and it is they themselves who have put these nooses round their own necks, handing the ends of the ropes to the Chinese people, the peoples of the Arab countries, and all the peoples of the world who love peace and oppose aggression. The longer the U.S. aggressors remain in those places, the tighter the nooses round their necks will become.

— Mao Tsetung



Mao with Latin American visitors.

During the Cultural Revolution, the masses rose up to seize power back from the capitalist roaders in those areas where they had entrenched themselves and to advance the revolution in China as part of the world revolution. Demonstrations were numerous in solidarity with the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America and with rebellions within the imperialist countries.



**W**e have won great victory. But the defeated class will still struggle. These people are still around and this class still exists. Therefore we cannot speak of final victory. Not even for decades. We must not lose our vigilance. According to the Leninist viewpoint, the final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated. Therefore it is wrong to speak lightly of the final victory of the revolution in our country; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts.

— Mao Tsetung, quoted in 9th Congress Party Report

**C**apitalism and the capitalist system “are in the sunset, breathing their last, and may die at any moment.” On the other hand, Communism and the Communist social system are spreading to the whole world like overwhelming waves and thunders and are in their wonderful prime of life.

— Mao Tsetung, cited in Report to the Central Study Class, by Wang Hung-wen, 1974

**T**he future is bright, the road is torturous.

— Mao Tsetung

**I**f China’s leadership is usurped by revisionists in the future, the Marxist-Leninists of all countries should resolutely expose and fight them and help the working class and masses of China to combat such revisionism.

— Mao Tsetung, 1965

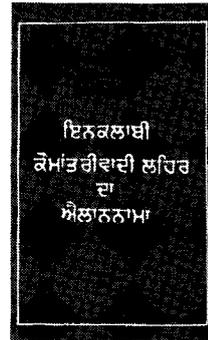


Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chao, leaders of the Cultural Revolution and the foremost representatives in China of Mao's line after his death. They were arrested by the revisionists in 1976, and heroically upheld the banner of Mao Tsetung and the Cultural Revolution. At their trial, Chiang Ching contemptuously told the revisionists, "It is not I, but your small gang which is on trial in the court of history."

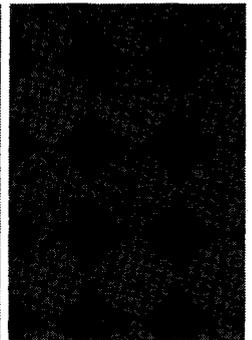
**A**s the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations celebrates its victorious conclusion, it is correct and necessary that we send the greetings of the Conference to the proletarian revolutionaries in China and their foremost representatives, Comrade Chiang Ching and Comrade Chang Chun-chiao, who are holding aloft the red banner of proletarian revolution and communism in the face of bitter defeat. "Comrades, the heroic struggle that you waged under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tsetung, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, can never be obliterated.... Those blustering reactionaries who believe they have permanently buried proletarian revolution await a surprise.

Our comrades in China are an integral part of the genuine international communist movement today and we are confident that when an International of a new type is formed based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, they will be occupying a place of honour. The words of Mao Tsetung continue to ring true today: "The future is bright, the road is tortuous".

- Message of the Second International Conference, 1984



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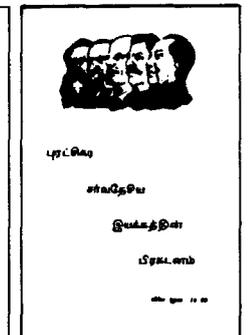
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- 3. Farsi
- 4. Hindi
- 5. French
- 6. Chinese
- 7. Malayalam
- 8. Bengali
- 9. Créole
- 10. German
- 11. English (U.S. edition)
- 12. English (Indian )
- 13. Spanish (Spain)
- 14. Spanish (U.S.)
- 15. Spanish (Peru)
- 16. Spanish (Colombia)
- 17. Turkish
- 18. Tamil
- 19. Arabic
- 20. Danish
- 21. Kurdish

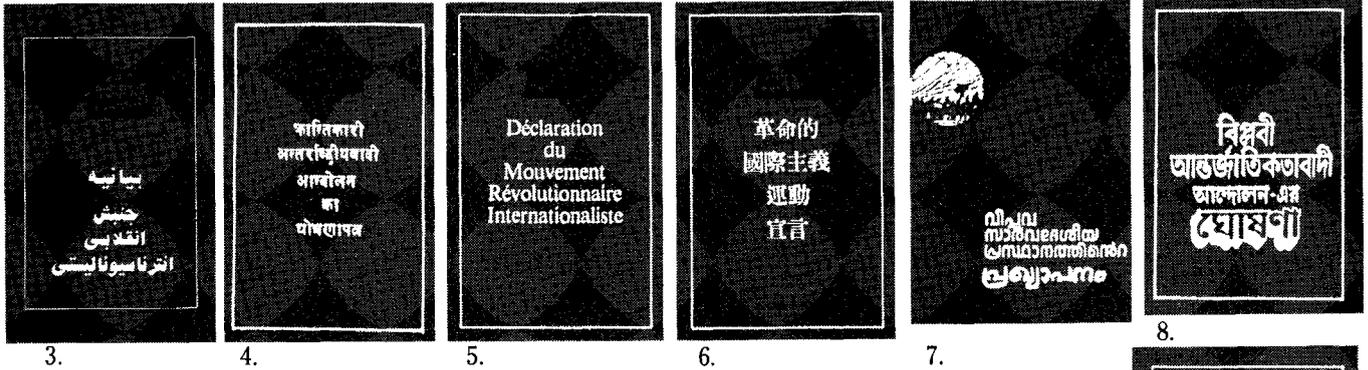


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Central Reorganisation Committee,  
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)\*

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 Revolutionary Internationalist Group

Nepal Communist Party [Mashal]

New Zealand Red Flag Group

Organisation of Marxist-Leninists of Tunisia\*\*

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

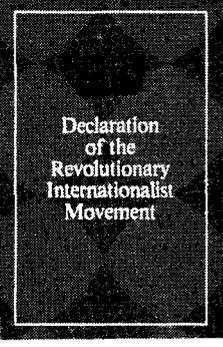
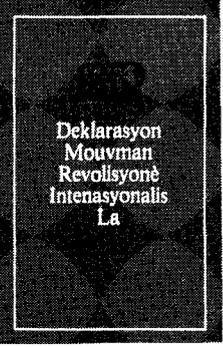
Revolutionary Communist Union [Dominican Republic]

Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)

9.

10.

11.



The Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement has been printed in over 20 languages. Not shown here: Gujarati, Nepalese, Japanese and Kannada

\* The Information Bureau of the RIM has announced the merger of the Leading Committee, RCPI with the CRC, CPI (M-L) in 1987.

\*\* The Information Bureau of the RIM has announced that the Organisation of Marxist-Leninists of Tunisia has been accepted as a signatory of the Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and as a participating organisation of the RIM.

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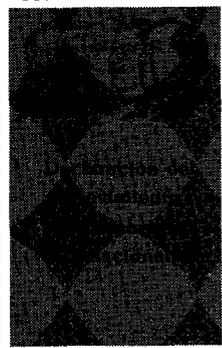
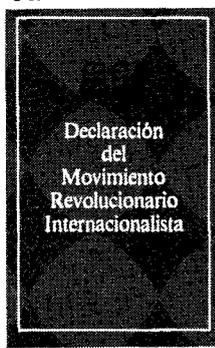
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Poster done by revolutionary prisoners in Peru. Writing says: Long live the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement!

**T**he advance of the struggle in Peru today is of great importance in the context of today's situation in the international communist movement and the revolutionary movement in general...

The Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations calls on the participants in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, on all genuine communist forces, to actively take up support for the New Democratic Revolution in Peru under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru and its Chairman, Comrade Gonzalo.

— Message of the 2nd International Conference to the Communist Party of Peru, March 1984

## Forward Along the Path Charted by Mao Tsetung



Poster issued by the Committee of the RIM as part of its international campaign to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Cultural Revolution and mark ten years since the death of Mao Tsetung and the on-going fight against the revisionists who seized power immediately thereafter.



Press conference, London, 12 March 1984. Representatives of the Ceylon Communist Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA and the Turkish Communist Party, M-L sit in front of bright red banner of 2nd International Conference bearing portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao and the slogan "The proletariat has nothing to lose but their chains, they have a world to win!" written in different languages. The representatives gave presentations and presented resolutions of the Second International Conference and held a question and answer period.

L. to r: Dalal Kamaci of TKP/ML, N. Sanmugathasan, founding member of CCP and now general secretary, Carl Dix, RCP, USA.

The communist movement is, and can only be, an international movement. Indeed the very launching of scientific socialism, the *Communist Manifesto*, declared "Workers of all countries, unite!" With the success of the October Revolution, the formation of the Communist International and the subsequent spreading of Marxism-Leninism to every corner of the globe, the international unity of the working class took on an even more profound meaning.

Today, in the midst of profound crisis in the ranks of Marxist-Leninists, the need for international unity and the need for a new international organisation are urgently felt.

In building up its own organisation on a global level, the international proletariat has accumulated both positive and negative experience. The concept of world party and the resultant overcentralisation of the Comintern should be evaluated so that appropriate lessons from the period can be drawn as well as from the positive achievements of the First, Second and Third Internationals. It also is necessary to evaluate the overreaction of the Communist Party of China to the negative aspects of the Comintern that led them to refuse to play the necessary leading role in building up the organisational unity of the Marxist-Leninist forces at the international level.

At the present juncture of world history, the international proletariat has to take up the challenge of forming its own organisation, an International of a new type based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, assimilating the valuable experience of the past. And this goal must be boldly proclaimed before the international proletariat and the oppressed of the world with the same revolutionary daring of our predecessors from the Communards of Paris to the proletarian rebels of Shanghai who dared to storm heaven and resolved to do the "impossible" — build a communist world.

— Declaration of the RIM

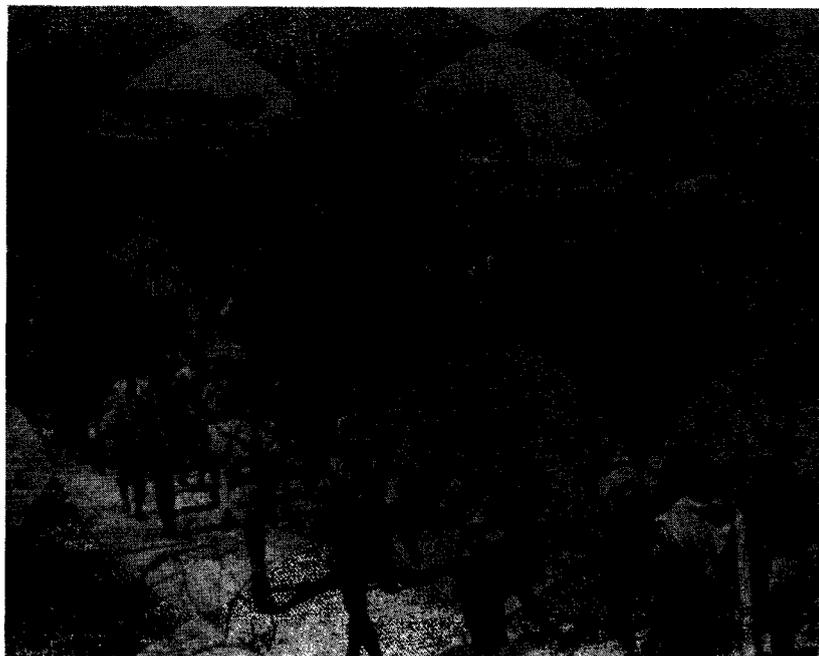
The constitution of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, based on the higher level of ideological and political unity of Marxist-Leninists achieved through principled struggle, represents an extremely important step for the international communist movement. But the need to race to catch up with the objective developments in the world is still apparent. The revolutionary struggle of the masses of the people in all countries is crying out for genuine revolutionary leadership. The genuine Marxist-Leninist forces, in individual countries and on a world scale,

have the responsibility to provide such leadership even as they continue to struggle to solidify and raise the level of their unity. In this way the correct ideological and political line will bring forward new soldiers and will become an ever more powerful material force in the world. The words of the *Communist Manifesto* ring out all the more clearly today: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

— Declaration of the RIM

# Advances and Questions

in War  
against  
the



# Ethiopian Government

A WORLD TO WIN 1989/13

By a contributor to the *Revolutionary Worker*\*

Over the past year, the political and military situation facing the Soviet-backed regime in Ethiopia has seriously deteriorated. This has raised the possibility that the Dergue, the military junta ruling Ethiopia, could fall or suffer serious splits, sparking major realignments and conflicts in the strategic Horn of Africa where both the U.S.- and Soviet-led imperialist blocs have their claws deeply embedded.

In the wake of major battlefield victories by the armed insurgents in Eritrea and in the northern Ethio-

pian provinces of Tigray, Gonder and Wollo in which the Ethiopian army suffered heavy casualties in the spring and summer of 1988, the regime responded by declaring a "state of emergency" and unleashing a major assault on the civilian population, but it has so far failed to decisively reverse its defeats. Meanwhile, the Soviet social-imperialists have continued their military and political support for the Dergue, while the Western powers prop up the regime economically and manoeuvre to bring Ethiopia fully back under their control. And as millions in Eritrea and Ethiopia face the recurring threat of famine, control over the distribution of food aid has become a major weapon both in this imperialist contention

and in the Dergue's attacks on the people.

## Rebel Victories

After years of relative stalemate between the rebel forces and Ethiopian government troops occupying Eritrea, in March 1988 the armed forces of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) broke through the Dergue's lines on the Nacfa front. The Ethiopian army suffered a devastating military reversal as, according to press reports, the EPLF killed or captured over 20,000 government troops. The insurgents also captured three Soviet military advisers and a major chunk of the Dergue's military arsenal: fifty tanks, over

*The Revolutionary Worker* is the voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

100 military vehicles, and many rockets, artillery, and light arms and ammunition. Ethiopian troops fled their positions in disarray at several points along the battle front, with many reportedly deserting.

At the same time, the popular insurgency in northern Ethiopia was also dealing major blows at the reactionary regime. In late March liberation fighters in Tigray under the leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) took

the two major towns of Axum and Adwa in Tigray province. And in Wollo province, fighters from the multi-national Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) reportedly defeated two battalions of government troops.

Since then the Dergue has retaken a number of towns in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, but the Ethiopian army has hardly regained the initiative. In Tigray, for example, the rebel fighters evacuated major

towns as the government forces were approaching and then staged a surprise attack in which they killed or captured an estimated 19,000 additional government troops. And in July the TPLF reported putting another 8,000 government troops out of action in battles along the Dansha front.

In response to these dramatic military setbacks, the Dergue had to desperately scramble. In April the  
(Continued to page 62)

## The Horn of Africa: An Imperialist Battleground

By a contributor to the *Revolutionary Worker*

Ethiopia is an oppressed country dominated by imperialism and is itself a kind of "prison house of nations". Its history has been one of brutal oppression against the Tigrayan, Oromo and other peoples. And in the 1950s Ethiopia took over Eritrea with the backing of the imperialist powers. This history provides the basis for the crucial role of the national question and the issue of self-determination in the Ethiopian revolution and has called into existence the strong national-democratic movements that are now shaking the region.

Correctly understanding and resolving the national question, within the context of the overall struggle against imperialism and local reaction under the leadership of a proletarian party (or parties) led by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, is key to advancing the new-democratic and then socialist revolution in the Horn. As the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* points out:

"Due to the establishment of a central state structure prior to the process of capitalist development, semi (or 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 thoroughgoing 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." (p. 37)

The Horn of Africa first assumed great importance for the imperialist powers after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and ever since then the region has been a battleground of contending imperialists. The modern Ethiopian state took shape in the 1890s and was as much the product of modern imperialism as was every other state in Africa. Under the reign of Abyssinian monarch Menelik II, power passed decisively into the hands of Amhara feudal lords and the bloody conquest of the Oromo and other nationalities was accomplished with the use of European advisers and great quantities of modern firearms provided by the French, Italians, British and Portuguese.

The French imperialists' ambition was to extend their holdings from "French West Africa" across the continent to Djibouti. The British imperialists, who had effectively occupied Egypt, hungered for a British dominion stretching from "the Cape to Cairo". The dreams of these two plundering jackals collided precisely in Ethiopia. Since neither was in a position to decisively oust the other, the British and the French signed a treaty in 1888 to "protect the independence" of Ethiopia. Menelik took full advantage of the imperialist rivalries to press south and east, overrunning the Oromos, Somalis, Afars and others. These peoples were subjected to forced conversion to Christianity and the mandatory use of the Amharic language. In the newly conquered regions, two-thirds of the land was immediately confiscated and turned over to Amhara lords, while the remaining one-third was left for the indigenous population and dominated by local rulers who had collaborated with the Amhara conquest. Meanwhile the French, British and Italians proceeded to divide up the coasts of Eritrea and Somalia among themselves.

Following the Second World War the United States quickly moved to replace Britain as the dominant imperialist power in the Horn, seeing control of Ethiopia as key for U.S. domination of this strategic area

overall. Menelik's successor, Emperor Haile Selassie, proved a loyal regional gendarme for U.S. imperialism. Ethiopia was made a charter member of the United Nations and a loyal U.S. vote. In 1953 the U.S. and Ethiopia signed a mutual defence pact and U.S. military advisers replaced the British in training the Ethiopian army.

Nowhere was U.S. imperialist domination more blatant than in the 1952 forced "federation" of Eritrea into Ethiopia. During the war the British had dropped leaflets on Eritrea promising independence if the Eritreans would help expel the Italians. Yet as soon as the war was won, the British pushed for a partition of Eritrea between the Western colonial powers. At the United Nations, however, the U.S. proposed a federation with U.S.-dominated Ethiopia as an alternative to either partition or independence for Eritrea. As U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles put it with imperialist arrogance: "From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless, the strategic interests of the United States in the Red Sea basin and considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally, Ethiopia." As a token of gratitude for being given Eritrea, Haile Selassie sent a battalion of his imperial bodyguard to fight with U.S. forces in Korea.

In 1974 a wide spectrum of Ethiopian society rose in a mighty storm and toppled the Haile Selassie regime. This followed a massive famine in Tigray and Wollo provinces in 1973 in which over one million perished. Even the educated elite were infuriated when the emperor not only completely failed to provide emergency assistance but even tried to keep the existence of the famine a secret from the rest of the world and international relief agencies. There was a breakdown in the military, exhausted and demoralized from the reactionary wars to put down rebellions of the Oromo and Somali people in Bale Province and the Eritrean struggle in the north. Soldiers revolted, took over the city of Asmara in Eritrea, and

began broadcasting their demands over the radio to the whole country. Within weeks students at Haile Selassie University were on strike, unions called a general strike and 100,000 Moslems marched through the capital demanding equality in religion. The emperor, in an unprecedented sign of weakness, accepted the resignation of his prime minister and promised a range of concessions to the opposition. The new prime minister formed a "coordinating committee" of reliable military officers which occupied the capital with troops. Thus the Dergue, which means "committee" in the Amharic language, was formed.

In the ensuing struggle the Dergue moved to crush the popular uprising, killing over 30,000 opponents in 1976-1978, according to Amnesty International. Between December 1977 and February 1978 alone, the army murdered some 10,000 people, mostly rebellious students, and finally consolidated its rule. Through a series of internal purges, the Dergue eventually took its present form, headed by the U.S.-trained Lt. Col. Mengistu H. Mariam.

The year 1977 also witnessed a sudden shift in the military and political alignments in the Horn of Africa. The Soviet social-imperialists struck a deal with the Dergue, abandoning their phoney "support" for the Eritrean liberation struggle and dropping their praises of "socialism" in Somalia. Soon Lt. Col. Mengistu began calling himself a "Marxist-Leninist" and Soviet-bloc military hardware and advisers began pouring into Ethiopia. The U.S. lost its significant political and military influence in Ethiopia and turned to backing the reactionary Siad Barre regime in Somalia to maintain a foothold in the Horn.

The Dergue's Soviet-supplied armaments and new-found "socialist" rhetoric allowed it to consolidate its rule and drown the popular rebellion in blood. But its recent military defeats and the deepening economic and political problems have presented the Dergue with the most profound crisis of its bloody reign. □

## Ethiopia

(Continued from page 61)

Ethiopian government suddenly dropped previous preconditions and signed a truce in the long-running border conflict with its southern neighbor, Somalia, in order to free up soldiers and materiel for the Eritrean and northern Ethiopian fronts. Although Mengistu, the head of the Dergue, had previously refused even to admit publicly that there were any armed rebellions in Eritrea or among the oppressed nationalities in Ethiopia, in May he announced that the government was in a "life-and-death struggle" with the rebels and called for a national mobilisation. Thousands of raw recruits were sent to the north and a state of emergency declared in Eritrea and Tigray. Mengistu also reacted to the military defeats with a shakeup in the military high command, executing and demoting top generals who were blamed for the defeats.

The Ethiopian army is continuing to prepare for a major new offensive against the liberation forces. According to the EPLF, the Soviet Union has replaced most of the equipment lost in last year's defeats, and the Dergue has gone shopping for further military supplies from North Korea and East Germany. But by all accounts the government has had difficulty reasserting its control over most of the territory it lost. Indeed, the EPLF reported that their forces inflicted another 5,000 casualties in renewed battles with government troops in late January and early February of this year.

The Dergue is now confronted with the nightmarish prospect of the kind of turmoil which overthrew Haile Selassie in 1974 and which they themselves rode to power. At that time a series of famines and military defeats sparked massive popular unrest and open revolt within the military. (See accompanying article.)

The Dergue has tried to mask its reactionary character and growing instability by declaring themselves the leaders of a phoney "Marxist-Leninist" party, the "Workers

Party of Ethiopia". In 1987 they proclaimed the "People's Republic of Ethiopia" amidst extravagant fanfare in the capital city of Addis Abba, even as massive famine was threatening the lives of millions in the countryside. Now, however, the "revolutionary" rhetoric that has helped keep the Dergue in power is wearing very thin.

### Food as a Weapon

Recurring famines and the threat of massive starvation have fanned widespread discontent against the Ethiopian government. Recognising this, the U.S. and other Western-bloc countries have consistently used their control over food relief to pressure the Dergue to break with the Soviets. The Dergue itself has a sordid record of using food as a weapon against the people and the rebel armies. The government has long worked to prevent safe passage of food aid to rebel-held areas. But in April 1988, as a major new drought threatened the people, the Dergue ordered all relief agencies to leave even areas controlled by the government forces.

According to a report at the time in the *Christian Science Monitor* on the famine situation: "Of three million at risk, more than two million are now in rebel-held areas. There is a special concern for these people because all along the Ethiopian government has allowed relief food to be distributed only in government-held areas. Those areas have shrunk dramatically as a result of military advances by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigray People's Liberation Front.... [I]t is clear that war has taken priority as the government fights to recapture territory lost to the rebels this year. A mass mobilisation is underway to get troops to the northern fronts where war has been raging for 27 years. A top Ethiopian aid official said full relief operations would not resume until these areas 'are cleaned of bandit activity'."

The Dergue also had an even more sinister motive for expelling the relief agencies from the rural areas. As an official of the International Committee of the Red Cross

in Africa pointed out, "No one will be a witness to the way the war is conducted." Unleashing wanton terror on the civilian population, the Dergue is using napalm and cluster bombs in Eritrea and Tigray, killing and maiming thousands. According to the EPLF, an estimated 400 civilians were killed in the government's bombing of the Eritrean town of Sheib on May 12. The TPLF reported that on June 22, MIG fighters bombed the town of Hauzien in central Tigray at the height of market day, killing over 600 people and wounding hundreds more.

While this death and destruction has been carried out with Soviet-supplied weaponry, the U.S. and its allies are hardly innocent bystanders in these crimes. For years the U.S. has tacitly backed the Dergue's policy of "starving the rebellion" by allowing most Western food relief to go through government-controlled channels. The U.S. has also supported the Dergue's policy of "resettling" peasants from the north to government-controlled regions in an effort to deprive the rebels of civilian support.

Recently, as part of increasing the West's "carrot and stick" pressure on the Dergue, some food relief has gone to agencies operating in rebel-controlled areas. But in contrast to some other countries where the U.S. has worked to topple pro-Soviet regimes, its main strategy in Ethiopia has been to try to pressure and woo the Dergue, or elements within it, back into the Western bloc. Like their Soviet rivals, the U.S. imperialists see the current Ethiopian regime as their best bet in averting the complete collapse of reactionary order in the whole region. One indication of the U.S.'s continued support of the Dergue was the cease-fire with Somalia last April. Given Somalia's dependency on U.S. imperialism, it seems unlikely that the Somali government would have agreed to the cease-fire without a nod of approval from Washington.

That all this might lead to a major new re-alignment or conflict in the region cannot be ruled out. In fact, in November Mengistu made new diplomatic overtures to

the U.S. and worried out loud that the Soviets might abandon him and move to cut their losses in the region through other means. It is also possible that the imperialists could reach some sort of mutual accommodation even as they each manoeuvre for greater advantage. In early February the *New York Times* quoted a U.S. State Department official as saying, "We have had quite an active dialogue with the Soviets about the situation in the Horn of Africa." Those seeking genuine liberation should be wary of any such imperialist-brokered "peace agreement", which would only be aimed at buying time for the local reactionaries and allowing the rival imperialist blocs to consolidate their domination of the peoples of the Horn.

### The Revolutionary Forces

Beginning in 1961 in Eritrea and 1975 in Tigray, the armed struggle raging in the Horn of Africa has been the longest-running and is presently the largest-scale liberation war on the African continent. Yet as the reactionary regime faces its severest crisis and the opportunities for unprecedented revolutionary advance are ripening, now more than ever this armed revolutionary warfare is marked by a glaring weakness — the absence of a proletarian vanguard based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

Mao Tsetung correctly identified the forging of the proletarian party as the key link in building and wielding the "three magic weapons" crucial to the victory of the revolution in the oppressed countries: the party, the people's army and the united front under the party's leadership. Among the liberation forces in the Horn of Africa, however, despite the genuine revolutionary heroism of many, there has been a long history of either liquidating the role of the proletarian party altogether, indefinitely postponing the struggle to form a party, or subordinating this struggle to the building of a united front and an army. All these approaches have led to making the struggle for a democratic solution to

the national question in Ethiopia an end in itself, rather than an integral part of the new-democratic revolution which would sweep away imperialist domination and feudal relations and prepare the ground for advancing the revolution on the road to communism as part of the world revolution.

As the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* points out: "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.... [H]istory 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 thoroughgoing 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."

The history of the revolutionary struggle in the Horn of Africa and the objective needs facing the revolution today have laid the basis for Marxist-Leninists there to seriously sum up this lesson.

The rich legacy of the international communist movement, especially the influence of Mao Tsetung and revolutionary China, has in many ways left its mark on the liberation struggle in the Horn. In the 1960s Eritrean fighters received political and military training in China. Many of Mao's writings have been translated and disseminated among the masses, and there are numerous examples of how aspects of Mao's military theory have been studied and applied, although in a piece-meal way, by the

liberation fighters. Historically, the EPLF, TPLF and EPDM have all emphasised self-reliance in waging warfare and transforming the areas under their control, and they have declared their intention of waging armed struggle as a war of the masses. In the liberated areas there are signs of genuine efforts at social transformation, land redistribution, and combatting the oppression of women.

Yet the Marxist-Leninists have not stepped forward to shoulder their responsibility of developing proletarian leadership and formulating a new-democratic line and programme capable of leading the masses through the many twists and turns in the struggle. This has left the masses of all nationalities ideologically and politically disarmed and divided.

In Eritrea, for example, where the armed liberation struggle has gone on for almost three decades, the revolutionary forces under the influence of the EPLF refused to side with supporters of Mao Tsetung in the "great debates" against revisionism in the 1960s and attempted to play a centrist role around the decisive questions confronting the revolutionary movement internationally. Perhaps this was in part because the Soviet Union, in a bid to gain influence in the Horn, was giving some diplomatic and military support to the Eritrean struggle at the time. But even after the Soviets dropped their "support" for the Eritreans and embraced the Dergue in 1977, the EPLF, while courageously leading the Eritrean masses against the Soviet-trained and equipped Ethiopian army, has remained unwilling to fire *polemics* at the social-imperialists and has continued to call on the "fraternal" Soviet Union to recognise its "mistakes" and cease support for the Dergue. The EPLF has also publicly condemned others who have argued for the correct analysis of the imperialist nature of the Soviet Union.

Among the revolutionary forces in Ethiopia, including supporters of the TPLF and EPDM who came out of the upsurge of the mid-1970s influenced by Mao Tsetung Thought, many have correctly iden-

tified and condemned the capitalist, and hence imperialist, nature of the Soviet Union and have denounced both Western-style imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. Yet they have failed to take up the science of Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tsetung Thought in an all-around way. Although there have been instances where forces have proclaimed their intention to work towards building a multi-national communist party in Ethiopia, these have tended to degenerate into the dogmatorevisionism of the Enver Hoxha type and falsely identified Mao Tsetung Thought as the source of the bourgeois-democratic and nationalist deviations that have worked against the formation of a party.

In fact, however, the root of the problem has been precisely the failure to thoroughly grasp and uphold the contributions of Mao Tsetung as a fundamental dividing line, and this remains the most decisive ideological question facing Marxist-Leninists in the Horn of Africa today. "Upholding Mao Tsetung's qualitative development of the science of Marxism-Leninism represents a particularly important and pressing question in the international movement and among class conscious workers and other revolutionary-minded people in the world today. The principle involved is nothing less than whether or not to uphold and build upon the decisive contributions to the proletarian revolution and the science of Marxism-Leninism made by Mao Tsetung. It is therefore nothing less than a question of whether or not to uphold Marxism-Leninism itself.... Without upholding and building on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general." (*Declaration of the RIM*, pp. 14-15)

The recent impressive military victories by the liberation fighters reveal the tremendous potential for developing a powerful people's war under the leadership of a proletarian party (or parties) in the Horn of Africa and uniting the oppressed of all nationalities in their common struggle against national oppression and imperialist domination. □

# Why Perestroika?

By Sunil\*

Perestroika and glasnost have become favourite topics of discussion in even the most fashionable bourgeois circles. It is reported that Ambani, the upcoming comprador tycoon, is even planning to "sell" Gorbachev on Indian TV! Bourgeois analysts have triumphantly seen the "historic defeat" of communism and the victory of capitalist profit-seeking competition and the democracy which goes with it in Gorbachev's rise to power. At the other end of the spectrum, neorevisionists like Deng's chelas [disciples — *AWTW*] have been enthused by the return of a "human look socialism" and "Leninist" norms. As for the old-time revisionists like the CPM and the CPI, they are once again in a fix. As usual they are faced with the nasty task of fabricating explanations which justify both Gorbachev and their own positions of the past. And as usual the bourgeois politicians have found it a good weapon to ridicule them.

In this whole debate, all the participants have been very careful to avoid any mention of the critique and exposure of the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union made by Mao Tsetung more than two decades ago. Obviously, even mentioning

this is risky for them because perestroika is no longer just an internal development in the Soviet Union — today it has been elevated, along with all its other features, into a weapon of the bourgeoisie throughout the world to attack and discredit revolution and communism. Hence it is in their interest to cover up the nature of the development which had already taken place in the Soviet Union since Khrushchev seized power. It is in their interest to present the recent developments in the Soviet Union as a break with socialism initiated by Gorbachev alone.

But this is far from true. Apart from the unbroken continuity of the capitalist content of Gorbachev's reforms from Khrushchev's time onwards, even the measures he is proposing, such as the maximisation of profit as the central goal of economic activity, giving free play to market forces to ensure this and using capitalist cost accounting methods and reforming the price structure to support this measure, all date back to the 1960s. Hungary, in the Soviet bloc, has already implemented such measures long ago and has "progressed" to such an extent that income tax laws have also been implemented — both to siphon off a larger share of private profits to the state and as a matter of political expediency. So Gorbachev's perestroika is not something entirely

new. It is a further unfolding of a development process, a capitalist process, fully inaugurated and legitimised by Khrushchev. Yet it is not just an extension of that process and contains (or reveals) some new aspects related to the internal structure of the Soviet economy and its position in the global imperialist system. Thus it is necessary to examine the question of why perestroika *now*, to fully grasp the internal and external implications of Gorbachev's restructuring programme.

## The Crisis in Soviet Society

Over recent years the Soviet ideologues have been very obliging in exposing the crisis affecting all spheres of their society. The rosy propaganda on ceaseless growth and development has been sharply exposed as a pack of lies. Gorbachev and his coterie inform us now that growth rates had declined by the eighties. Scientific/technological development had stagnated. The financial situation had become tense with expenditures overshooting revenues regularly. The state had started relying more and more on boosting its revenues through such means as liquor taxes which went up from 67 billion rubles in the eighth plan period to 169 billion roubles in the eleventh plan! (These figures symbolise not only lopsided revenue raising methods but also the degeneration of Soviet society over-

\* From the Indian Marxist-Leninist newspaper *Mass Line*, September 1988 - January 1989

all.) Gorbachev goes on and on but we need not recount all he says. Accepting the crisis in Soviet society as he states it, let us see the reasons he advances for this. In the sphere of economy, Gorbachev's argument is that "extensive" methods of development have been the root cause. By this, he means that instead of trying to continuously improve the technological level of industrialisation, Soviet planners have been focusing on tapping more and more of the abundant national resources of the Russian empire and building up more and more factories. He counterposes this to his "intensive" method which emphasises growth through upgrading technological levels. Gorbachev targets centralisation of an omnipotent bureaucracy as the chief culprit for this state of affairs. It has stifled all enthusiasm and initiative and has also become a major drain on resources; the 18 million strong bureaucracy — one official for every six people — accounts for 40,000 million rubles per year, whereas its "contribution" to the national income is only 20,000 million rubles per year. Gorbachev is concerned over the fact that the enterprise managers are blocked from maximising profits, as a result of bureaucratic norms controlling production. Along with this, the bureaucracy also breeds and shelters an all pervasive growth of corruption and black marketing.

Gorbachev does touch on some of the factors underlying the crisis in Soviet society, its lagging behind the West bloc in science and technological development and its failure to resolve its longstanding agricultural stagnation. But he stops short of examining why these factors have come to dominate. After all, one cannot say that there has been no "intensive" development of the sort Gorbachev wants in the Soviet Union. For example, the U.S. bloc technologists generally accept that Soviet space technology is a world leader. It has also built up an efficient defence industry.

So the problem is not really one of a lack of "intensive" development, as Gorbachev claims, but of lopsided development. Then the question of the bureaucracy is not a new one. In the 1960s itself, a

number of measures had been implemented by Kosygin as part of establishing the supremacy of profit. The role of the plan had been curtailed and its content had been transformed into that of making profit the main criterion of plan fulfillment. Why does Gorbachev have to repeatedly stress all this even 20 years later? To understand the root causes of the crisis in Soviet society we must try to analyse the particular factors which have obstructed the free development or implementation of the capitalist reforms of the mid-1960s. The Soviet ideologues have a ready answer: inertia and lack of political will. But these answers only expose the bankruptcy of their outlook which forces them to cover up material causes. The bureaucratic structure and lopsided development continued to exist in the Soviet Union for so long because it served the needs of the new Soviet military class. These needs were not simply related to their position within the Soviet Union, but were given by the imperialist role of the new Soviet bourgeoisie. Hence to understand both the failures of the capitalist reforms of the past and the acceptance of Gorbachev's reform package today, we must look at the changes in the opportunities and limitations faced by the Soviet bourgeoisie in relation to the global imperialist system.

### The Wolf at the Back Door

Gorbachev quite openly accepts that the decisions of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) held under Khrushchev's leadership had paved the way for a "new awakening" of Soviet society. As we noted earlier, Gorbachev's reform packages and his political views on international and Soviet development are very similar to those of Khrushchev. But Khrushchev was quite unceremoniously thrown out by the Soviet leadership in the early 1960s. The usual reasons given for this, even today, are Khrushchev's haphazard methods of dealing with the problems of Soviet society and his "adventurism" in international relations. But apart from individual

characteristics, some deeper questions were involved.

When the new Soviet bourgeoisie seized power in the late 1950s, it was faced with a world situation where U.S. imperialism dominated all the lifelines of the imperialist system. The Soviet bourgeoisie was too weak to challenge this outright and faced the task of building up its strength without openly confronting the U.S. This was the essence of Khrushchev's policy of "three peacefuls" — peaceful coexistence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition. In return for ensuring that revolution was removed from the agenda in the oppressed nations and imperialist countries (ie, peaceful transition), the Soviet bourgeoisie wanted an opportunity to participate in the imperialist plunder along with the other predators. But like all other capitalist powers, it aspired to gain hegemony and also had the task of seizing on the weaknesses of its rivals to penetrate the neocolonies of the third world. Hence within the ambit of collusion with the U.S. bloc imperialists, the Soviet Union used all opportunities to widen its sphere of domination and tried to assert its power vis-a-vis the U.S. bloc. Within the neocolonies, it gave unabashed support to the local reactionary regimes and opposed revolutionary forces because the growth of revolutionary national liberation movements threatened to blow up its scheme of "peaceful competition" to plunder the oppressed nations. But this phase of "three peacefuls" could not last long. The appetite of the Soviet bourgeoisie was growing. Moreover, the heavy blows inflicted on the U.S. imperialists by the high tide of national liberation struggles, with Vietnam in the forefront, created a new opportunity for the Soviet ruling class to initiate the change in its role from that of a tame partner to that of an aggressive contender. A new leadership capable of projecting this role was called for and Khrushchev had to go as part of this shift.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was the first open declaration by the new Soviet bourgeoisie of its imperialist plans. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union now came

out as a resolute friend of the oppressed peoples. As Mao put it metaphorically, it was the wolf at the back door trying to utilise the struggle of the oppressed people against U.S. imperialism and its allies to penetrate and subvert the liberation movements for its imperialist ends. Along with this, more and more emphasis was laid on achieving parity with the U.S. in the nuclear arms race, since this above all determines imperialist penetrations in the contemporary world. This was the period of Brezhnev's doctrine of "limited sovereignty", when the East bloc countries were firmly controlled as the support base of social-imperialism and attempts were made to incorporate more countries through treaties (like the Indo-Soviet treaty) and other means into this bloc. The rapid decline of U.S. imperialism, starting from the late 1960s, as a result of advances made by the revolutionary struggles in the oppressed nations and the growing economic crisis of the neocolonial structure built up in the post-World War 2 period, gave abundant opportunities for the Soviet bourgeoisie to make significant advances in its aggressive designs.

The 1970s produced "detente", an acceptance of peaceful coexistence between the two blocs. But this was qualitatively different from the peaceful coexistence of Khrushchev's time. Now it was a reflection of the parity in nuclear weapons between the chieftains of the two blocs and of the weakened state of the U.S. imperialists. And the Soviets were seeing this as a temporary stage preceding their taking over the position of the most powerful imperialist predator. In the 25th Congress of the CPSU held in 1976, Brezhnev arrogantly declared that "life has refuted all inventions about the freezing of the status quo". Using the double speak of "class struggle" for Soviet social-imperialist contention and aggression, he stated that detente "does not in the slightest abolish and cannot abolish or alter the laws of class struggle".

The Soviet bourgeoisie was riding high in its wild ambitions. But meanwhile the very measures it had

adopted to take up its aggressive stance had started to push it into a deep structural crisis threatening to subvert its capacity to realise its ambitions of conquering world hegemony. Within the Soviet Union, the striving to compete on equal terms with the U.S. in the nuclear arms race and build up a military strike capacity laid a strong basis for the growth and overriding role of the bureaucratic-military combine, a development which checked the possibility of the free unfolding of capitalist growth desired by the Soviet bourgeoisie.

### **Consolidation of the Bureaucratic Class**

Gorbachev's consolidation of power has also seen a torrent of attacks on Stalin. As a rule they are far more obnoxious than those of Khrushchev's times and centre on characterising Stalin as a bloodthirsty, insane despot. But even in the midst of the hate campaign the Soviet ideologues steadfastly maintain the role Stalin played in developing the Soviet Union as an industrial power. This contradiction has nothing to do with a so-called impartial, objective analysis. Rather it is related to the fact that the very way in which this industrialisation took place prepared the breeding ground for the growth of the Soviet bureaucratic class. Even while Gorbachev loses no opportunity to attack "command methods of economic management" to which the bureaucracy is accustomed, he is careful to assert that at that time "no other course could have been taken".

The development strategy adopted under Stalin centred on a one-sided emphasis on centralisation, one-man management and a great degree of dependence on material incentives. The relations between heavy and light industry and industry and agriculture were not handled properly. The tendency of equating development in a backward economy to rapid growth of heavy industry led to a lopsidedness in which agriculture lagged behind and was squeezed to serve as a centre of accumulation for industrialisation. These errors in economic affairs

were accompanied by political shortcomings also. On the one hand Stalin minimised and even denied the continuing class struggle in a socialist society. On the other hand, this objective reality, which asserted itself throughout the struggle to transform Soviet society, could not be ignored and was dealt with by relying more and more on the state apparatus. While the task of continuously raising the political consciousness of the masses was sidetracked, the role of the state apparatus and the bureaucracy kept on growing. (Stalin later on admitted the existence of class struggle. But this realisation was not based on an overall evaluation of the past errors.) Without denying the isolation of the world's first socialist state, without denying historical limitations and the tremendous achievements of the Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership, it is necessary to recognise that the path of development followed by him was not "the only possible one" and that it reflected serious errors in outlook and method. The fact that Mao had to settle accounts with this path as part of his struggle against the capitalist roaders in China is notable.

The bureaucratic class which emerged in the Soviet Union during the pre-Second World War period consolidated its grip in the war period. As soon as Stalin died it emerged into the open and usurped power. As a class it was faced with a contradictory situation. The existing state-economic structure, rid of its proletarian content, suited the bureaucratic class because it ensured its prime position and domination. But the need to develop the economy on capitalist lines, firmly establishing profit in command, inevitably called for reforms. This contradiction has been a main topic of debate within the Soviet ruling class since Khrushchev's time. The immediate need of this class to establish its hegemony on a world scale ultimately decided the outcome of this debate.

Though from concerns totally contradictory to those faced by the Soviet leadership under Stalin, the new Soviet ruling class was faced with a situation where it too had to

catch up with the Western imperialist bloc, and particularly with the U.S., in the shortest time possible. Since its concern was that of becoming capable of imperialist contention and domination, this urgent task was primarily concentrated in the military field. Material and human resources were concentrated for a rapid build-up of the military. This situation was only outwardly similar to the one faced by the new Soviet state under Stalin in conditions of imperialist encirclement. Now, the re-establishment of an exploitative system meant that a weak economy had to support not only the need to boost up a specific sector but also generate surplus to support the parasitic needs of the new ruling class. The particular position of the Soviet Union exacerbated this situation even more. Unlike imperialist powers like Japan or Germany, it could not benefit from any large influx of foreign capital. The nature of the bloc it controlled made a high degree of centralisation inevitable. To be a superpower it had to be the sole power within its bloc. The contradiction between satisfying the demands of a rapid pace of militarisation mainly on its own and the comparatively weak economic base ultimately meant a continuation of forced accumulation and check over the necessities of the other sections and the masses. The bureaucratic structure had to be maintained and even strengthened further. The reversal of the 1965 Kosygin reforms, which to a large extent resembled Gorbachev's plans, was determined by this.

### Inner Barriers to Growth

The Soviet ruling class could succeed in its ambitions to achieve superpower status, but at a heavy cost which intensified the contradictions in Soviet society. (Incidentally, in evaluating this period Gorbachev once again reveals the continuity of interests of the bureaucratic class. He is all praise for the achievement of nuclear parity which symbolised the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower, though he is critical of the very command methods of economic management that made it possible!) The growth of the

bureaucratic class and its parasitic feeding on the surplus of society engendered the widespread growth of corruption and black marketing. Since property is public in the formal sense, private appropriation in the normal capitalist form is also legally impossible. Corruption and the utilisation of state property for private gain was the only form in which this problem could be resolved. The extent of this specific form of surplus appropriation, inevitable in a bureaucratized state which maintains a socialist facade, is enormous. According to recent estimates of a leading Soviet economist, Tatyana Koryagin, the illegal economy in the Soviet Union is worth nearly U.S.\$ 145 billion. Fifteen to 20 years ago it was estimated to be around U.S.\$ 8 billion. (*Times of India*, 15 August 1988) The unavoidable growth of corruption perpetually affected the capacity of the Soviet rulers to direct the economy as they wished. The understatement of production capacity and exaggerated demands for raw materials by Soviet factory managers has often been noted by critics of the Soviet system. Bureaucratic and unscientific methods of planning and fixing production targets and the effort of factory managers to play safe by ensuring plan implementation through reporting lower capacities is no doubt an important reason underlying this state of affairs. Since the management bonus was linked to fulfillment and overfulfillment of targets given from above, the managers had all the more reason to resort to this practice. But apart from this, understatement of production capacities is also linked to the utilisation of unstated capacity and excess raw materials for production and marketing in the black economy. In other words, the specific form of private appropriation possible in Soviet society laid its stamp here also.

The growth of a parasitic class and the generalisation of corruption, or the appropriation of legally social property for private gain, as the specific form of private exploitation, found its reflection in a collapse of moral standards, the growth of a cynical rob-as-you-can

attitude and degeneration of the ruling class itself. The mode of surplus appropriation of its individual agents was increasingly coming into conflict with the capacity of the class as a whole to manage and develop the economy to suit its imperialist ambitions.

In a capitalist society the capitalist's ceaseless drive to increase his profit drives him to accumulate, invest and continuously develop the productive forces. This is given by capital's "...*necessary tendency*, since it strives limitlessly for surplus labour, surplus productivity, surplus consumption, etc.", as Marx put it. (*Grundrisse*, p. 413) (This essential characteristic of capital appears as the competition of many capitals in a capitalist society, forcefully reminding the capitalist of the needs of capital as an exploitative relation.) Thus his private appropriation and the constant drive to increase it is also at the same time a spur to expand the economy. The transformation of the Soviet economy into a state monopolist one has brought in its wake capitalist values of personal aggrandisement and competition. This competition is manifested at the level of production associations and departments in the form of conflicting demands on a greater share and control of state resources. But while increased exploitation and appropriation by various sections of the bureaucratic class, as each tries to be more capable of competing with the others, will be a spur to expand production, private appropriation, which is basic to every agent of an exploiting class, does not have any such role in Soviet society. It is solely oriented to consumption. One may point out that the production bonuses of the factory managers and so on form precisely such a link between personal gain and the expansion of production. But this state-legitimised form of appropriation can hardly compete with the best possibilities for "illegal" gain. And once individual gain is sanctified and profit is put in command, one cannot expect an agent of exploitation to make a moral distinction between the different forms of appropriation open to him.

While the heavily bureaucratized

state monopolist structure dampened the dynamic of economic development and induced the growth of trends which constantly upset its planned expansion, the rapid build-up of the defence and related sectors intensified the lopsidedness in the economy. Gorbachev admits this in one of his speeches: "... what I saw (at Baikonour Soviet space launch centre) offered a striking contrast that had grown acute in the past few years, between development levels in different branches of the Soviet economy... the gap originated for objective reasons. The state had to concentrate its resources in particular fields so as to resolve the most crucial tasks at once. These included development of heavy industry, consolidation of the defence capabilities of the country and attainment of military parity with the United States..." (Soviet Review No. 23, 1987, p. 24)

This lopsided fixing of priorities intensified the existing problems of stagnant agricultural growth. While there was a spurt in grain production in the 1960s, it has remained stagnant ever since. The demands for grain had to be met by imports entailing an outflux of foreign exchange. Constraints on the resources position, in a context of overall decline of economic growth, were sought to be overcome by exporting the rich natural resources of the Soviet Union on a larger and larger scale. (Even now oil, gas and electricity account for 46.5% of Soviet exports.) This in turn brought about exorbitant outlays for building up the fuel and energy branches, thus introducing new aspects of lopsidedness.

The lopsidedness in the economy as a whole was also reflected in the growing unevenness and division of labour between the different national republics in the Soviet Union. While modern industry was concentrated in the European nationalities, the Asian ones have mainly remained as producers of raw material. The growing conflicts this gave rise to were papered over during the Brezhnev period by giving a free hand to the bureaucratic class in these nationalities to enrich themselves by all means and heavily subsidizing consumption needs.

These internal barriers to growth were manifested in the stagnation and decline of the Soviet economy. In the 1960s there was a spurt in growth induced by some of the partial reforms and the concentration of capital in the form of production associations which dominated different industrial sectors. But from the 1970s the barriers to growth started to make their presence clearly felt. According to the estimates of a Soviet economist, Aganbegyan, the growth of national income between 1978-1980 was just 2% and during 1981-1985 the national income did not grow at all. (*Hindu*, 6 September 1988) The decline of the Soviet economy was seriously coming into conflict with its capacity to expand its global domination.

#### External barriers

By the late 1960s, the Soviet Union had started to push out aggressively, utilising the decline of U.S. imperialism. It heightened its political and economic grip over the East European countries and made significant headway in penetrating and consolidating its position in some crucial Third World neocolonies like India. Using the banner of supporting national liberation struggles, it penetrated and subverted them to achieve domination in Angola and Mozambique. By the late 1970s, the social-imperialists had started dropping such indirect methods. They resorted to open aggression and intervention, either directly or through proxies. The stationing of Cuban and East German troops in Angola and Ethiopia, the Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea and finally the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were examples of this. This was a time when the weaknesses of social-imperialism were also being revealed, even while this aggressive thrust was growing. For example, despite gaining domination in a country like Angola, previously under Portuguese control, the Soviet imperialists were forced to accept the continuation of a significant role for the U.S. bloc in the exploitation of its natural resources. The economic crisis hitting its satellites in East Europe

forced them (and also the Soviet Union) to go in for larger and larger doses of loans from the U.S.-bloc controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank (WB) as well as private bankers. Yet the rapid advance of Soviet hegemony served to play down the implications of such developments. The contradictions of social-imperialism burst out with full force following its invasion of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan became a vicious trap for the social-imperialists just as much as Vietnam had been one for the U.S. For the first time, they were meeting head on with the fierce resistance of an oppressed people. Crushing this resistance became a key question for the social-imperialists because the capacity to enforce their writ in the oppressed nations ultimately determined whether the ambition of gaining world hegemony could be realised or not. In the process, the lopsidedness within the Soviet economy further intensified, as seen in Poland where the capacity of the social-imperialists to throw in their armed force to crush rebellion within the satellite countries of East Europe was itself seriously hampered and the "socialist ally" mask which they had successfully exploited till then was severely damaged. At the same time, for the U.S., the Afghan developments established the efficacy of hitting back at their rival by using its own tactics of penetrating and subverting the liberation movements of the oppressed people. While the Soviet bourgeoisie tried to face up to this serious challenge, its positions in the third world at large, even in countries like India, were being eroded by the growing crisis of neocolonialism as a whole.

Neocolonial relations which determine the shape of the world economy at present came into being at a time when the U.S. was the sole hegemonic imperialist power. During the past decades this position of the U.S. has deteriorated to a great extent, but present-day neocolonial relations and key institutions such as the IMF and the WB which regulate them still bear the stamp of the past. The social-imperialists' lack of access to such institutions forced them to direct their penetration via

bilateral state-to-state relations and special treaties. The Soviet bourgeoisie had established the IBEC in the 1960s and the IIB in the 1970s, with the ambition of promoting them as key institutions of its finance capital in contention with the IMF and WB. But they remained limited to the Soviet bloc countries and also proved to be ineffective in replacing the role of the IMF/WB within this bloc itself. The limitations of the neocolonial relations which the Soviet bourgeoisie tried to build up under its exclusive control were fully revealed with the crisis it faced. It was still out-matched by the U.S. bloc. When the global neocolonial crisis hit the Third World in all its severity, neocolonies which were mainly within the Soviet orbit were forced to gravitate towards closer economic ties with the U.S. bloc, via the IMF/WB restructuring programme. This shift necessarily led to a weakening of the political influence of the Soviet imperialists. The economic crisis within the Soviet Union itself prevented it from stepping up with its finance capital and keeping such countries firmly within its fold.

### The Response

The internal and external barriers to the realisation of the Soviet bourgeoisie's hegemonistic ambitions had started to express themselves with all force by the 1980s. From a position of unchecked advance it had now reverted to a position of desperately struggling to retain the foothold it had secured in the neocolonial system. And it was becoming quite clear to the Soviet rulers that the defensive struggle could only weaken its position. Decisive action was called for. Thus the 1980s saw the rapid growth of imperialist rivalry even while the contradiction of the imperialists as a whole with the oppressed people intensified ever more and expressed itself in numerous revolts and upsurges. The crisis of the social-imperialist system could not (and cannot) be resolved through internal measures limited to the Soviet Union alone, since this crisis was the result of its transformation into an

imperialist power. It was a crisis of the state monopoly capitalist system there. But due to the external factors we have already mentioned, the social-imperialists also could not fully draw on the hegemonic bloc they had already built up to even mitigate this crisis. The question of hegemony had to be settled at a global level. The national resistance of the oppressed peoples directly challenging Soviet imperialism had to be crushed and the rival superpower had to be defeated. A world war was the apparent solution. The heightening imperialist rivalry and war preparations seemed to show that both the blocs had come to this conclusion, since both were equally faced with the vital need of restructuring. The logic of the imperialist system, as understood by the orthodox theory, also seemed to confirm that this was inevitable, not merely as a possibility but as an imminent event.

Yet the recent turn in inter-imperialist relations reveals that reality was quite at variance with this image. Instead of the logically expected war, or a more rapid drive towards it, inter-imperialist contention has eased up in a significant manner and collusion is becoming more marked. Leaving aside Gorbachev's hollow claim of being THE saviour of world peace, we must still accept the undeniable fact that perestroika has played a crucial role in this turn of events. Why did the Soviet ruling class adopt perestroika and consequently an easing of contention as its *immediate* response to the grave situation it faced instead of intensifying contention and going for a world war? Among Marxist-Leninists, answers to this question raised by the logic of events have been quite varied.<sup>1</sup> Some have preferred to dismiss it as deception, a tactic meant to throw the rival bloc into confusion and gain the sympathy of world public opinion. Some others have preferred to evade the question by pointing out that perestroika has not changed the imperialist nature of the Soviet Union or that its war machinery is still being perfected and strengthened. As a corollary to this, the turn to perestroika is seen as a short term measure to tackle the

Soviet Union's socio-economic crisis, because this had become an obstacle to its war plans. But this is a self-defeating argument. The necessity of war as an imminent step was originally seen to be caused precisely by this crisis and was seen as the only way out of it. Obviously, crisis cannot then be seen as an obstacle to war and there can be no room for developments like Gorbachev's perestroika. The problem involved is actually one of grasping the relation between imperialist crisis and war in the concrete conditions of neocolonialism.

Perestroika is *possible* because of the particularity of neocolonialism, because territorial redivision of the world is not a pressing necessity before the imperialist powers and they can penetrate each other's sphere of influence through economic means and local or proxy wars. In this situation, Gorbachev can conceive of advancing social-imperialist interests precisely by integrating the Soviet Union fully with the existing neocolonial relations which still bear the stamp of U.S. hegemony, instead of pressing for an immediate challenge to this hegemony and an immediate restructuring of these relations. It is wrong to think that the Soviet rulers' new stance in international relations, particularly its initiative to ease its contention with the U.S. bloc, is just meant to gain time and favourable conditions for internal restructuring. *Perestroika is a global response of the Soviet ruling class and this international stance is an essential part of it.* In this sense, though Gorbachev's theories on peaceful coexistence and the "interrelated, interdependent and integral" nature of the contemporary world are quite similar to Khrushchev's "three peacefuls", they represent a basic shift in Soviet ruling class perceptions of the opportunities for expression presented by the neocolonial system. This is why Gorbachev commented that, "... while concentrating enormous funds and attention on the military aspect of countering imperialism... (the Soviet Union)... did not always make use of the political opportunities opened up by the fundamental changes in the world..." (*Documents and Materials of the*

19th Conference, Novosti Press, p. 31)

While neocolonialism holds out the possibility of a response like perestroika, its viability is assessed by the Soviet ruling class on the basis of the configuration of forces in the world today. The growing disparity between the military might of the U.S. and its economic decline, the growth of Japan as the leading economic power, the explosive situation created by the debt crisis and the overall financial crisis of the imperialist system, the growing pressure of Third World comprador regimes for relief and a better deal — all these factors are pressing inexorably towards a recasting of existing neocolonial relations shaped by the post-World War 2 global situation. By fully integrating the Soviet bloc within the existing framework, the social-imperialists hope to utilise this situation of flux. Despite being in a weak economic position, it still has the capacity to assert itself and influence the outcome, without necessarily resorting to its military. By pledging to play the neocolonial game, according to mutually accepted rules, above all by willingly cooperating with the other imperialist powers to tackle the powerful challenge of the growing tide of rebellion in the oppressed nations, it is offering a bargain which is acceptable to the others in the present situation. It is not the case that the imperialist powers have suddenly woken up to the horrors of war and have turned into pacifists. Contention remains, because ultimately the question of hegemony has to be settled. But, for the present, the damage of the rebellion of the oppressed exploding with all its force compels the imperialist powers to carry out this contention within the growing ambit of collusion. This is not a static situation. Neither the social-imperialists nor the other imperialist powers can remain happy with their given positions. The very nature of capital forces them to expand their zones of plunder and hence to expand their zones of domination. Since the interests (or appetite for plunder) of imperialist powers keep growing and are realistically determined at each period by the power it can

muster, Gorbachev's call for rebuilding of the international currency and financial systems under the supervision of the United Nations so as to take into "due account the interests of all states" meets both the immediate as well as long term needs of social-imperialism.

### Perestroika in Practice

Perestroika in international issues is based on the approach outlined by Gorbachev in his report on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution: "...developed capitalism... will be unable to do without these countries' [ie, Third World countries — ML] national resources. That is an objective fact. The calls for severing the historically shaped world economic ties are dangerous and offer no solution." (*The October Revolution and Perestroika*, Novosti Press, 1987, p. 66) This outlook is expressed even more precisely in the following words: "We do not want to undermine the interests of the Americans in the world or to disrupt the existing world economic ties." (*Soviet Review*, No. 33, 1987, p. 8) The ongoing efforts to settle the conflicts in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola and Palestine, the joint efforts with the U.S. bloc during the crisis in the Persian Gulf, the attempts to recast policy on the Azanian (South Africa) question so that "the most successful economy [in Africa — ML], which is in South Africa", is not destroyed, the proposal for an Asia-Pacific Conference launched through Gorbachev's Vladivostock speech, the efforts to join the Asian Development Bank (ADB), IMF/WB and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), and the Warsaw treaty proposals on tackling the debt crisis, are all part of this basic outlook. They do not merely reflect a desire on the part of the Soviet bourgeoisie to disengage itself from external conflicts in order to concentrate on internal restructuring. More important than this is the active effort to get integrated as a "responsible" partner in the existing neocolonial framework. Among the numerous initiatives and proposals of Gorbachev, his plans for the Asia-Pacific rim

region hold a special place. This is the area which is fast developing as a critical hub of imperialist trade and manufacturing. It is estimated that two-thirds of today's world gross national product exists within the Asia-Pacific rim. The leading imperialist economic power, Japan; the fast growing neocolonies — South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan; the major Asian power, China; and the U.S. and the Soviet Union are ringed around this zone. The possibilities of manoeuvring and advancing Soviet interests by utilising the contradictions between the different imperialist powers of the U.S. bloc is presented fully in this zone and Gorbachev is eager to exploit it. Over the past years, the Soviet Union has significantly advanced its political, economic and military interests in this region. It has established ties with most of the South Pacific island republics and entered into long term fishing rights agreements with some of them. Its naval presence has also multiplied from a fleet of 200 ships in the 1960s to 500, containing the best of its naval warships and submarines. But this military build-up is not the major weapon it plans to use immediately, though it is essential to back up its claim to be a Pacific power. Rather, the vast resources of Siberia are being held out as a bargaining chip to make the Asia-Pacific zone truly "inter-related". Mending relations with Japan and China has a special place in this scheme. The eagerness of the Soviets to establish closer ties with Japan can be gauged from a recent article on Soviet-Japanese relations in *New Times* (No. 45), which openly calls for a public debate on the benefits of retaining the Sakhalin Islands at the cost of a deadlock in relations between the two countries. In his Vladivostock speech, Gorbachev made a revealing observation on the Asia-Pacific zone: "Everything is in motion here, far from everything has settled."

At the other end, the Soviet Union is keenly pursuing a closer relation with the West European powers, mainly West Germany and France. Gorbachev has tried to promote the Soviet scheme under the

slogan of a "Common European Home." The Eurocentrism of the Soviet rulers and their cynical, inhuman outlook towards the oppressed nations is revealed most fully in their arguments to realise their plans for a closer relation with the West European imperialist powers. Since Europe has been a key arena of inter-bloc military postures and threats, the Soviets have made disarmament or at least a large scaling-down of forces their bargaining chip. They point out that, "Even a conventional war would be fatal" in Europe with its high density of nuclear and chemical industries and would destroy the "common home" of the social-imperialists and other powers. So war as a continuation of politics "has become obsolete for Europe", though it is still quite active in the oppressed nations! The message is quite clear — let us keep peace in our "common home" and, if necessary, fight out our battles in the oppressed nations, preferably at their own expense.

In the economic sphere, perestroika amounts to a full-fledged turn to capitalist profit-seeking on the basis of a greater concentration of finance capital. This concentration is sought to be achieved through two means. On the one hand, the enterprises directly controlled by the centre are to be drastically reduced from 37,000 to "several" thousands, and they are going to be reorganised as "sectoral, inter-branch and territorial-branch and amalgamations capable of implementing the entire cycle of work — research, investments, production, marketing and maintenance." The remaining enterprises, medium and small enterprises including cooperatives, will have the role of serving the needs of these large amalgamations as well as catering to the local market. (*Soviet Land Documents*, p. 52) Simultaneously, the central bank has been divided and attached to the concerned industrial, agricultural and service sectors. It is on the basis of this qualitative leap in the centralisation of finance capital that the legalisation of the hitherto illegal service trade and manufacturing is being carried out.

It can easily be seen that this plan

of reorganisation does not indicate any abdication of control by the Soviet ruling class. This control is going to be more polished and efficient and its social base is going to be enlarged by leaving room for private enterprise in industry, agriculture and service. Price reforms and giving free play to market forces to determine prices through competition does not contradict this because the state will still be retaining control over decisive assets and instruments to influence the economy. The conversion of not only consumer goods but also capital goods (means of production) into commodities, directing trading between enterprises, instead of routing it through the planning bodies, full scope for profit, price reforms, reducing the role of the plan to defining long-term objectives and priorities, enlarging the scope of the market and accepting it as a form of "democratic supervision" of the plan, utilising the New Economic Policy (NEP) to camouflage all these steps as a "return to Leninism" — there is nothing original in any of these measures. All of them were already debated and some partially adopted during the mid-1960s reform. What is new is the leap in the level of centralisation of finance capital (modelled on existing multinationals) and granting a large scope for private or local enterprise within the limits of this centralisation and serving its needs.

The dismantling of the state monopoly in foreign trade/investment and giving the large amalgamations the right to directly enter into collaborations with other imperialist multinationals is in keeping with this plan. This decision does not just reflect the desire to attract capital and technology from the other imperialist powers in order to raise the efficiency of Soviet enterprises, though this is an important objective. It has the larger aim of achieving integration within the existing neocolonial framework. Meanwhile the Soviet bourgeoisie is pressing for shifting the focus of the economic relations between it and the COMECON countries from trade to joint enterprises so as to strengthen the base of the multinational concerns it is aiming at establishing.

The new economic restructuring programme also tackles the existing division of labour between the various national republics. So far, manufacturing industries have been concentrated in the European republics, principally Russia, and the extractive industries have been centred in the Asian republics, which have mainly served the role of an industrial and agricultural materials producer. This arrangement has so far been favourable to the Soviet bourgeoisie centred in the dominant Russian nation. Now it is to be reorganised so that while the industrial sector in Russia will be renovated at a higher level of technology, the backward republics will undergo a new round of industrialisation so as to make them more capable of meeting the local needs.

The political reforms being implemented, ie, the shift to a presidential system, which will enormously raise the powers of the centre, and glasnost, mirror the thrust in the economic restructuring. As Gorbachev has frankly commented, glasnost is meant to make cost-accounting a success. These reforms have certainly given more room for dissent to come out into the open. But as soon as the ruling class saw the direction it was taking, they have enacted new plans which strictly control all public activity. Naturally, this control is selective. While groups protesting against various state policies have been harassed, notorious anti-Semitic, Russian chauvinist groupings like Pamyat have been treated with kid gloves. The democracy of the bourgeoisie cannot be anything else.

### Prospects of Perestroika

Gorbachev and other representatives of the Soviet bourgeoisie have grand dreams about their future. All of them hinge on the belief that the oppressed people of the world and the proletariat and oppressed nations within the Soviet Union will somehow remain passive while they build up their integrated world in company with their new-found imperialist friends. Afghanistan is already giving them a taste of what is really going to happen. The situation in the Soviet Union is not much

different. It cannot be, because while perestroika holds out a glowing future to the upper strata of the middle class and new-born small capitalists, the prospect for the working class is large-scale retrenchment and erosion of its standard of living, due to price rises. The extent of retrenchment in production sectors alone is estimated to affect three million workers during the current plan period itself. (*Soviet Review*, No. 7, 1988, p. 20) While Gorbachev is eloquent about the rich quality of life perestroika will offer, his prescription for the worker is quite different. It is to "... resolutely establish order, improve organisation, tighten discipline and boost the working people's initiative [ie, production — ML]." (*Soviet Review*, No. 42, 1987, p. 9)

While order and discipline is being dinned into the workers' ears, the "... egalitarian justice that has taken root in mass consciousness" (one more of Stalin's crimes in the eyes of the Soviet bourgeoisie) is targeted as a major "stumbling block for perestroika."

The Soviet bourgeoisie is aware of the sharpening contradictions in society. Thus their ideologues note that the new economic management system is making the difference between managers and workers more visible and state that, "The division into 'we' and 'they' leads to serious consequences." (*Moscow News*, No. 25, 1987) Some of these consequences have already made themselves felt through workers' strikes and attacks on exploiters. As perestroika unfolds, such "consequences" are also bound to multiply.

The division into "we" and "they" is not limited to the classes in contemporary Soviet society. It is present in full force among the national republics which make it up. As reports indicate, the national contradictions in the Soviet Union, basically determined by the contradiction between the dominant Russian bourgeoisie and the oppressed peoples, are getting intensified with perestroika. The specific demands and contradictions propelling the national movements vary, but common to all of them is a recognition that perestroika means

greater centralisation and further loss of autonomy. The first steps in this centralisation had been carried out with the removal of leading party functionaries from the concerned nationalities under an anti-corruption drive and their replacement with trusted Russians. Now the new constitutional reforms, reportedly removing the formal right of secession and giving sweeping powers to the president, seek to institutionalise it. The Baltic republics and Georgia have already raised the banner of opposition to the reforms and quite certainly this contradiction will heat up in the future.

Gorbachev has repeatedly declared that the Soviet bourgeoisie will play the neocolonial game of plunder strictly abiding by the rules. But this is itself a slippery field. The rules of inter-imperialist relations are quite elastic because each one of them is out to gain the most. The global crisis forces them to be even more reckless and disregard consequences. While the U.S. bloc powers have generally welcomed perestroika, they are also pushing to gain maximum advantage. Besides, conflicts in the Third World are not totally under their control so that they can stop them at will. On the other hand, the Soviet bourgeoisie itself cannot remain passive and surrender its hard-won gains unilaterally. A failure to make the Afghan accord stick, or a move by one of the COMECON countries to make the most of glasnost and move closer to the U.S. bloc — any such development will have tremendous repercussions within the Soviet Union. It is not just that Gorbachev might be pushed out. The defeat will be one affecting the Soviet ruling class as a whole, exposing all its weaknesses and encouraging more determined struggles against it, because a return to the old style social-fascism will not be easy now.

#### Footnote

1. Incidentally, the question of why the new born imperialist power faced with a greater necessity of waging a world war for redivision has itself taken the initiative to de-escalate the war drive demands an answer from those who still maintain the correctness of the concepts underlying the Three Worlds Theory.

## Bangladesh

(Continued from page 27)

dinary fertility of the land. In sum, flood is not a surprise guest to the country — but in past times floods were less devastating as the waters were not as high and drained off relatively quickly to the sea.

Floods — but of course only up to a certain level — have even been considered a necessity and a blessing due to their role as an unparalleled source of natural fertiliser (silts carried by floodwater) and for their part in the process of soil reconditioning. Up to a certain level, it is also needed for natural fish breeding and cultivation (as long as the present cultivation system, crop pattern and pattern of fish culture is not radically changed and modernised) and for the ecological balance specific to this country in its present situation. Due to the existing crop pattern, production system, method of cultivation of crops and fish, the level of technology, situation of forest preservation and growth, etc, no flood at all for several successive years is quite harmful. In other words, both severe floods and no floods seriously harm the national economy and survival of the population.

One explanation which is generally accepted for the lack of ancient historical relics in this country is that most of the ancient cities and civilisations were built up alongside the great rivers and that most of them were destroyed by the breaking up of the river banks. The breakup of river banks is a common phenomenon at the beginning and end of the monsoon and occurs on an especially wide scale during and after floods. Much evidence, including folklore and ancient literature as well as modern research, shows that this process also causes big changes in the courses of the rivers, especially the largest ones. But the records over the last two centuries show very clearly one most important change in the whole process, that frequent, virtually annual floods with their vast scope and rapidly increasing scale, extent and devastation, including the lengthy periods of high standing water, are

phenomena unique to only the last few decades.

There are records of a severe flood, though far less so than those recently, around two hundred years ago, sometime between 1767 and 1787, which claimed one-sixth of the population of one of the larger districts in the northern region. Other severe floods were recorded in 1917 and then again, 26 years later, in 1943. Especially since the 1950s, flood, bringing wide-ranging devastation of life, crops, wealth and social stability, has struck almost annually, sometimes more frequently. In the four decades since 1943, there have been at least 30 devastating floods of which 12 have been extremely severe, bringing the water level several metres over the danger point in many places. Since the less densely populated hilly forest areas remain out of reach of the floodwaters, the percentage of the population affected by flood generally exceeds the percentage of the area submerged. In the last several decades, even the least severe floods devastate over 30,000 square kilometres, ie, about 30 percent of the country, and claim destruction worth 3 billion Takas (33 Taka = 1 \$US) at a minimum annually.

Other than these countrywide floods, the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, which are surrounded by foothills in India, are hit by flash floods several times a year. Though these floodwaters linger only a few days or hours, because of their sudden appearance and high speed of the water flow they cause great harm to crops and wealth and claim numerous lives and destroy livestock.

### The Causes of Flooding

Nowadays there is much discussion of the reasons for flood and the means of flood control, with different forces each presenting their analysis according to their class outlook and interests.

There are of course many natural ecological processes involved which require scientific investigation and research, including a lengthy period of observation. In the main, these processes include:

the gradual filling up of riverbeds with silt for a long period of time, which both increases flooding and also restricts the rapid draining off of the flood water; the numerous twists and turns in the course of Bangladesh's rivers; an extraordinarily long period without repair-work (dredging, embankment of river banks, etc) on rivers and canals during the long past colonial period and the present neocolonial period; heavy rainfall or, more correctly, "excess rain"; the pressure of ocean tides in the southern region, which retards the flow of river water into the sea during the monsoon and rainy seasons; the low elevation of the entire country (an average 10 metres above sea level), and particularly of the southern region (an average of merely 0.25 metre above sea level); increased amount of silt carried in by the great rivers from the Indian regions at the foot and basin of the Himalayan range due to increasing deforestation and also from within Bangladesh due to the same reason; a gradual process of the depression of the land level in many regions due to the strong underground earthquake in the early 1950s, etc.

There are more than 200 rivers in this small country, of which the three largest rivers alone — the Padma, Meghna and Brahmaputra — carry 5 million cubic feet per second of water. They also wash 25 billion tons of silt into Bangladesh in a normal year from the valleys in their upper reaches which cover about 600,000 square miles, overwhelmingly in India. This amount of silt equals about one-fourth of that carried by all the big rivers in the world, and if it were to be blocked up and stored in the mouths of the three rivers, it could create a land mass equal to half that of Bangladesh within a mere five years. As the rivers already are filled extensively with silt, making many of them virtually dead in the drought season, and due to the heavy pressure of the ocean tides in the southern region in the monsoon, the huge amount of water comes down mainly in only the three to four months of the monsoon. Thus it cannot empty quickly into the sea and overflows most of the country.

Because the water remains almost at a standstill for long periods, unimaginable levels of silt accumulate, thus filling the riverbeds further and creating conditions for even more extensive flooding in the coming years. So flood brings silt, which in turn brings on more severe flood — it is a vicious cycle.

In addition to the water brought in from India, Nepal and Tibet, the rivers of Bangladesh are overloaded also by the heavy rains falling inside the country itself during the monsoon. Average annual rainfall in the country is around 375 cm (150 inches); moreover, this falls overwhelmingly in only three to four months. But the quantity of annual rainfall varies in different years and the variation increased in recent decades, causing frequent droughts or, worse still, over-raining amounting up to 500 to 625 cm (200 to 250 inches) annually with unprecedented heavy showers continuously for 15 to 20 days. Worse yet, heavy rain in Bangladesh is usually accompanied by heavy rain in the upper reaches of India, Nepal and Tibet as well as by a higher rate of the melting of ice in the Himalayan heights. This kind of unprecedented heavy shower for two or three weeks was rare in the past, but is a frequent phenomena today. All these together have further contributed to the severe floods and disasters of recent years and, in particular, to the floods of 1987 and 1988.

On the other hand, drought in the monsoon in Bangladesh is usually accompanied by drought in the upper reaches, which causes river-flow well below normal level and facilitates the upward flow of saline seawater from the southern coast towards the interior.

### Man-made Factors Behind Floods

All the aforementioned factors which contribute to flooding appear to be "natural" and "innocent" of social and political causes, as if they were simple discoveries of scientific research and observation. While *there is* a natural ecological process at work which is important, there are other factors besides these natural processes. In fact, the prin-

cipal reason for the dramatic increase in the frequency, scale and devastation of flood in Bangladesh has a lot to do with the changes imperialist colonial and neocolonial domination has brought about.

Under British colonial rule, nothing was done to prevent silt accumulation or the breakup of river banks, except around the few trading centres necessary for their continued plunder and profiteering. Problems of cultivation, ecological balance or the people's suffering were not their concern.

The British colonialists cleared a vast area of forests and hills for highly profitable tea plantations at the foot of the Himalayas, an area extending several hundred miles into the Indian territory of Darjeeling and Assam to the north and east of present-day Bangladesh as well as part of the hilly district of north-eastern Bangladesh. This gave rise to the migration and settling of a huge population from other parts of what was then India, which resulted in the further rapid destruction of forests and the clearing of hills. This in turn gave rise to an increase in soil erosion and the amount of silt carried downriver especially by the Brahmaputra, which flows through those parts of India before reaching the sea in Bangladesh.

In the interests of their trade and plunder and to strengthen their administrative claws and to suppress any rebellions, the British imperialists built up a limited network of railways and roads, beginning especially in the second half of the 19th century, as well as during World War 2 for military purposes. But they generally did not take into account the long-term ecological impact of all this, especially in relation to silt accumulation (except for a few of the largest rivers) and the net flow of floodwaters into the lowlands, which constitutes the majority of the country. Instead they simply tried to build as cheaply as possible, with a minimum of bridges, culverts, sluiceways, bypass canals, etc. Nor did the British take any measures to prevent erosion in the northern hill districts, nor dredge or embank rivers. All this contributed to the gradual but at that time unseen buildup of silt in

the riverbeds. The disastrous results of their policies became evident only long afterwards, towards the end of British rule.

For the people of present-day Bangladesh, the end of British colonial rule only gave way to neocolonial domination by the U.S.-led Western bloc, along with an additional internal national oppression by the Pakistani central ruling classes. The liberation struggle of 1971 against Pakistani national oppression was misled and could not end the neocolonial domination by the imperialists, but in particular led to an intensification of infiltration and plunder by Indian expansionism and Soviet social-imperialism.

Under imperialist domination during the Pakistan period and also after the emergence of Bangladesh, the reactionary regimes built many highways, rural roads, projects such as dams, irrigation works, etc, in the name of "development", "flood control", "irrigation", etc, without scientific planning regarding the ecological impact. These projects depended on foreign imperialist "help", ie, mortgaging the independence of the country, and were mainly financed and set up by the U.S.-led imperialists through the World Bank, the IMF, various "aid" consortia, etc. This entire network of projects has become a network of death, a rope around Bangladesh's neck, for together they act to block an enormous quantity of water during the rainy season and prevent it flowing quickly to the sea, which results in flooding the fields of almost the entire country, with water standing for a lengthy period (almost one month in recent cases).

The increasingly frequent and severe floods result directly from the "development works" implemented under imperialist designs such as the "Marshall Plan", "Green Revolution", "Food for Work Programme", "Krug Mission" plan, etc, carried out by their lackey regimes from the late 1950s up to the present. Just as the level of their "development" projects rises, so too rises the level of the flood water and its destruction.

Some concerned people in Bangladesh strongly hold the view that

if obstacles which are man-made and unscientifically developed, such as many of the roads, irrigation works, etc, were removed so that the water could drain freely, then regardless of the heavy rain and despite any harmful manoeuvring by Indian authorities upriver, the floods would be so much less severe that the masses might be able to combat them to a great extent.

Another major cause of floods is Indian expansionism. Fifty-four of Bangladesh's rivers are common to India, and among these the main three, which are also among the largest rivers in the world, originate in the Himalayan range and flow through Nepal, China (Tibet) and mainly India. The expansionist ruling classes of India use its geographical advantages as an upper riparian country to solve its own problems at the expense of inhuman suffering of the Bangladeshi masses and even to blackmail Bangladesh. The Farakka barrage erected by India on the Ganges river near the Bangladesh border has already made its lower branch (called Padma) running through Bangladesh virtually a dead river in the dry season and a terribly destructive one during the monsoon. The Farakka barrage is contemptuously called the "death trap" by the people of Bangladesh.

In addition, the Indian expansionists unilaterally erected large dams on at least nine rivers and dykes on at least 25 rivers in Indian territory near the Bangladesh border — all the rivers are common to Bangladesh. The Indian expansionists unilaterally divert huge amounts of river water in the dry season, which means leaving Bangladesh far less than the minimum necessary for ecological balance, let alone agriculture. As a result, desertification has already proceeded rapidly in the western and northern belts of the country; salinity from the Bay of Bengal is rapidly extending its claws northwards; and many of the rivers in the region are virtually dead in the dry season. During the monsoon and rainy season, India diverts its excess waters towards Bangladesh, opening wide the barrages and sluiceways, thus sending enormous quantities of ex-

cess water pouring towards Bangladesh and flooding virtually the entire country. Indian expansionism uses these dams, canals and sluice-gates near the border for two purposes: 1) for their own narrow interests; 2) as levers of pressure on Bangladesh — to which the reactionary ruling classes of Bangladesh very often submit.

According to many scientists, even the reasons for the unprecedented heavy rain in recent years have a lot to do with the imperialist-neocolonialist system and Indian expansionism. In Bangladesh, the comprador bourgeoisie's unquenchable thirst for profit has led them to clear off major areas of forest, contributing to the causes of the twin disasters, drought and over-rain, one following the other. Even more important is the widespread deforestation carried out by the Indian compradors, including for supplying firewood and raw materials for "development" projects and industries. This process of deforestation of the Himalayan valleys conditions ecological imbalance, and thus on the one hand, promotes both over-rain and drought, and, on the other, accelerates soil erosion and thereby enormously increases silt accumulation in Bangladesh's riverbeds.

The most reactionary aspect of India's policies is, however, the ill-designed promotion of migration of huge numbers of people into the forest-hill regions of the Himalayan valley, which from time immemorial have been the homelands of various small nationalities and tribes. In big nation chauvinist style, the Indian rulers proclaim they are bringing "civilisation" and "development" to "backwards" peoples — a process which involves destroying the forests and hills and sometimes cruelly evicting the tribal masses from their homelands in order to make way for India's immigrants. One insidious goal of this policy is to transform the small nationalities and tribal peoples into a minority in their own homelands and thereby suppress them forever.

All these processes overseen by Indian expansionism are wreaking dramatic ecological havoc in the northern region of the subconti-

nent, especially in Bangladesh.

Thus it is almost a literal truth that the unprecedented scale and duration of recent floods and their devastating consequences is a creation of man. Some bourgeois experts very correctly called the floods of 1987 and 1988 "man-made" floods. Of course they were. But the more profound truth that they either failed to acknowledge, or dare not, is that these are *imperialist-made* floods. Their "man" is especially U.S. imperialism and its Western allies, abetted by Indian expansionism.

#### **"Flood Control" by Imperialists and Reactionaries**

It was after a series of severe floods in consecutive years (1954, 1955 and 1956) that the demand for an overall flood control and irrigation programme came up sharply among the masses. In the face of the serious political and economic crisis engendered by the flood, the then Pakistani government, instead of relying on the masses' own initiative, begged help from the United Nations (UN) and its U.S.-led imperialist masters. The UN sent a team of experts, led by previous U.S. Secretary of the Interior Mr G A Krug. In 1957, the Krug mission, as it came to be known, came up with a plan — the first official general plan in the history of the country — which combined the development of flood control and irrigation, including the production of water power and electricity. Though the full report of the Krug mission was never made public, the plan relied heavily on loans from the U.S., the World Bank and other Western financial institutions. The comprador government of Pakistan began to implement this mysterious plan, which was supposed to be completed by 1985.

Thereafter, each time severe floods occurred, the Krug mission plan was put into question, then re-evaluated or revised by the various reactionary regimes, all of which contributed nothing but more severe devastation and suffering along with a heavier load of foreign debt on the backs of the masses. American and other experts also suggest-

ed many new paper projects, including the dredging of the main rivers, erecting huge dams, and many others. The various reactionary regimes of Pakistan and Bangladesh, including today General Ershad's fascist military regime, looked for a magic solution for flood from their imperialist masters, but finally produced nothing for the people except pleasure trips to the imperialist citadels for the many Bangladeshi government officials and, for the foreign experts, exotic holidays in nice, green Bangladesh. It is a bitter truth that the cost of all these innumerable "surveys", "project planning missions", "project review reports", "project feasibility evaluations", "reviews of the previous project budget", "aid-seeking tours", etc, etc, all conducted by expensive imperialist experts and high officials of various regimes, could have easily financed a significant part of a genuine flood control effort.

All these imperialist, debt-generating projects not only provided opportunities for profiteering and wind up simply contributing to the scale, duration and severity of the floods, they also worsen social injustice and class exploitation, especially for the peasants. Thousands of peasants have been dislocated, *without compensation*, due to the construction of dams, roads, and irrigation projects, while landlords, rich peasants and relatives of the ruling circles have profited handsomely. Thus these projects have intensified the ongoing process of the impoverishment of the poor and lower-middle peasants, and even some middle peasants. The big hydroelectric project built in the Chittagong tract hill district in the 1960s forcibly displaced tens of thousands of minority nationality people, without any compensation, and is an exemplary case of human and national cruelty and injustice, which has still not been resolved.

All this shows that the imperialists and their collaborationist comprador bourgeois/semifeudal ruling classes of Bangladesh are unwilling and unable to provide a real solution to the problem of flood and to the suffering of the masses.

What they do want is a partial solution, what they call a "controlled flood" — one that softens the difficulties and irons out any problems for their own comfortable existence, so that the population can go on as before, naturally in distress and poverty, so as to keep the wheel of exploitation and profit smoothly turning.

### **Can They Solve the Flood Problem of Bangladesh?**

From the long experience of the failure of the imperialist and neocolonialist system to solve flood control and alleviate the people's suffering, the question naturally arises: can the reactionary exploiting ruling classes of Bangladesh and their imperialist, social-imperialist and expansionist masters solve the flood problem truly and permanently? The plain answer is: "No."

It is not simply that they are unwilling. Nor is it a matter of technical or financial ability of the imperialists. Rather, it is a question of their class interests and limitations, which is related to the very basis of imperialist relations and the system of exploitation in Bangladesh — in a word, the social system of Bangladesh. They cannot solve this problem because Bangladesh is not an independent, bourgeois democratic society, let alone a socialist one, but instead is an imperialist-dominated, neocolonial semifeudal society. The bourgeoisie in power is not an independent bourgeoisie in the true sense, but is a comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie totally dependent on and dominated by foreign imperialists. This comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie and the capitalist development they preside over did not grow from within the society, relying mainly on its own resources and through its own internal dynamics. It did not develop through an overall balanced and interrelated process of capitalist development of the entire society, including agriculture, basic industry, the base and infrastructure of scientific research and innovation, culture, etc. Rather it was created and imposed by external imperialism to serve its own interests. This development has been

truncated, distorted and lopsided, mainly relying on external sources and guided by external influences. It is based upon and tied by thousands of threads to backward feudal production relations. So the imperialist-dependent comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie themselves objectively and subjectively lack the strength, vigour and ability to implement any overall permanent programme for flood control, standing on their own feet and relying on their own resources, including in terms of finance and technology.

On the other hand, the solution of the flood problem in Bangladesh is not merely a question of erecting several dams, barrages, dykes and digging a few new canals. Rather it is an immense task of rebuilding the entire river system, including several mighty rivers. It definitely includes the questions of irrigation, drainage, the methods of agricultural production (ie, mechanisation and modernisation of agriculture), crop patterns, fish cultures, forestation and land transport system, etc.

These cannot be accomplished without a radical rupture with the present semifeudal land tenure system and without the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist-capitalist institutions of plunder and domination. And it is inconceivable that the imperialist-dependent comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie can do this without liquidating its own existence.

The problem of flood control is also a question of an indispensable struggle against Indian expansionism, for not only establishing just rights to share the waters of the rivers, but also of state sovereignty, political independence and equality. This struggle will take a protracted course, and essentially demands a relentless, courageous stand, including firm self-reliance and the courage to endure hardship and a risky but firm solidarity with the just revolutionary struggles of the Indian peoples and masses for emancipation against the Indian ruling classes and their imperialist masters. The imperialist-dependent, comprador-bureaucrat bourgeois and semifeudal character of the ruling classes of Bangladesh

does not allow them to wage any such struggle — instead, they always compromise with and serve the interests of Indian expansionism.

So the reactionary ruling classes cannot solve the complex and difficult flood problem without relying on an enormous amount of foreign imperialist financial aid and advanced technology (which in recent times is the most profitable commodity of imperialist capital). This does not serve the imperialists' interests at this moment because the prospects for a profitable return on such huge amounts of loan-capital investment in Bangladesh would be remote, and even then risky, due to the country's economic situation, including its level of productive forces and growth rate, and more importantly because of its unstable political climate, including the possibility of unfavourable political changes and even revolution.

These are the real reasons — class interest and class limitations — that they are not able to solve the flood problem of Bangladesh. Rather, their strategy is to contain the problem with occasional plastic surgery, ie, their so-called controlled flood; it is this that conforms to the reactionary class interests of the imperialists and their local allies.

### **Can the Flood Problem in Bangladesh Ever Be Solved?**

This is the challenge that the revolutionaries in particular must face. Can the floods be controlled, can the rivers be harnessed and the great torrents of water from the Himalayan heights be mastered and used for the benefit of the masses?

An accompanying article discusses how revolutionary socialist China under the leadership of Mao Tsetung harnessed wild, mighty rivers like the Yangtze and many others. It explains how the masses under a revolutionary communist leadership transformed the centuries-old "curse from heaven" into a "blessing of nature", and how they "taught water to climb the mountains up to heaven". If such miracles were possible under socialism in an underdeveloped, backward, third world country like

China, without any foreign help or so-called advanced high technology, and totally depending on the self-reliant masses, then why couldn't the masses of Bangladesh, with revolutionary power in their hands, teach the water coming down from heaven to flow in a gentle, controlled manner into the sea?

Certainly the revolutionary communists are confident: *This is possible*. Mao's teachings, together with the lessons of socialist construction in the USSR under Lenin and Stalin, are still an unlimited source of inspiration and courage, and give invaluable guidance for the proletariat and exploited masses everywhere and particularly in the more backward countries to combat natural disasters and conquer nature.

The essence of these lessons, especially from the experience of revolutionary China, was that only revolution led by a revolutionary proletarian party and guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought can enable the masses to solve these problems in ways that are permanent and serve the people's interest. The key to this method is to mobilise the masses and rely on their initiative, enthusiasm and great creativity, to depend on one's own resources and follow the Maoist principle of "self-reliance" and "hard struggle". This is an affirmation of the great truth that man can conquer nature and perform every kind of miracle.

Such miracles can be performed only under the rule of the masses themselves, under socialism, as has been seen in the revolutionary Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin and in revolutionary China under Mao. It is only under socialism that, as the Chinese said, "the initiative and creativity of the masses can be brought into full play and quickly turned into a matchless material force, which cannot be calculated on any computer, and which thus becomes a magic weapon to conquer nature." As Chairman Mao pointed out: "Socialism has freed not only the labouring people and the means of production from the old society, but also the vast realm of nature which could not be made use of in the old

society."

### Conclusion

In neocolonial, semifeudal Purba Bangla, the lofty goal of socialism and performing miracles like ending the suffering of the masses from floods and the many other natural disasters can be achieved only by going through new democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat and guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. In other words, flood control requires revolution; it requires the revolutionary overthrow of the five basic enemies of the masses — imperialism, social-imperialism, Indian expansionism, comprador bureaucrat capitalism and semifeudalism. These five enemies are the principal reason for the persistence of floods and for the growth of conditions which will aggravate the scale and destructiveness of future floods. These five are the enemies who welcome the difficulties the masses face during floods or other natural disasters as opportunities to intensify their plunder and exploitation, and so increase the masses' poverty and distress. These five enemies are the principal, living obstacle to unleashing and organising the limitless initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of 100 million people to control floods and conquer nature through self-reliance and hard struggle.

Certainly many other questions are involved in the effort to control flood and natural disasters: money, technology, scientific research, economics, the level of the productive forces, ecological balance and the social impact of flood control measures, the method of cultivation and crop pattern, of fish culture, and so on. Looking at all these from a revolutionary viewpoint, two basic points can be made: Firstly, the existing semifeudal land tenure system, based on private ownership, renders flood control impossible. A revolutionary transformation of the land tenure system is the indispensable condition for creating the socio-economic basis for realising any permanent solution for floods in Bangladesh and for mobilising the overwhelmingly peasant mass-

es in this enormous battle to control floods. A revolutionary transformation of the land tenure system in Bangladesh means abolition of semifeudal land ownership and the distribution of land on the basis of the principle, "Land to the Tiller". This is not merely a matter of a piecemeal, peaceful reform to redistribute the land with good intentions. Rather it requires revolutionary struggle to overthrow the semifeudal, neocolonial social system, which is essentially a life-and-death struggle for the masses to seize political power. It is thus a matter of overthrowing the five enemies of the masses, an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle for new democratic revolution. This is only possible through waging protracted people's war led by the revolutionary party of the proletarian class, along the path charted by Mao Tsetung, which will principally take the form of protracted guerrilla warfare in the countryside mainly by the peasant masses following the Maoist strategy of "encircling the cities from the countryside". Secondly, Purba Bangla is a poor, backward country which cannot afford advanced technology and set up huge capital-intensive projects. The country has no choice but to mobilise the masses in their millions, to arouse and organise their initiative to erect dams, dykes, reservoirs, dredge rivers, dig canals, as well as to transform and modernise agriculture, to restore ecological balance and to develop a modern communications system, all with a revolutionary new approach that corresponds to the specific geographical situation and to the available level of technology of the country. Here again only the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought can lead the masses in this earth-shaking struggle to conquer nature and only a popular revolutionary government which represents the will and interests of and has the support and confidence of the 100 million people of Bangladesh can do this.

Ultimately then the problem of flood control is a problem of the new democratic revolution. Making revolution, a new democratic revolution led by the proletariat and

paving the way for socialism, is the principal groundwork for flood control in Bangladesh. Without revolution, without defeating the five enemies of the masses, flood control is impossible.

Floods can be controlled, rivers harnessed, droughts defeated, calamities combatted, and suffering ended, as matters of finance, technology, scientific expertise, etc, are increasingly mastered along with the masses' increasing mastery of nature itself — if and only if the people have political power in their own hands and are being led to apply and consolidate their power under the leadership of a revolutionary proletarian party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Mao Tsetung Thought teaches that, "Without political power, all is illusion." With political power, under a correct, revolutionary proletarian leadership, everything can be transformed. As the Great Teacher Mao Tsetung also pointed out, "under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people every kind of miracle can be performed".

### Footnotes

1. What is now officially known as Bangladesh was formerly called Purba Bangla (the Bengali name for which the British used East Bengal). Under British colonial rule, this area formed the easternmost and greater part of an undivided state of Bangla (British — Bengal). In 1947, in the process of India's gaining independence from British rule, this state, like India, was divided up, and was included as a province in the new-born state of Pakistan. Under Pakistani rule, it was first called Purba Bangla (East Bengal) and later East Pakistan. In 1971, following the war of liberation against Pakistan, the province of East Pakistan was split off and the new-born country was proclaimed Bangladesh. Because the PBSP considers that renaming the country "Bangladesh" formed part of Indian expansionism's political manoeuvrings surrounding the creation of the country, it prefers to use the term Purba Bangla, which will, for this article, be used interchangeably with Bangladesh.

2. Jute is a fibre crop, the main cash crop of Bangladesh. The fibre is separated from the rest of the plant, called the jute stick, which is used as raw material in the manufacture of some papers, cardboard, etc. The fibre itself is used to make rugs, rope resins, bags and other packaging materials. Before the introduction of rayon and other synthetic fibers, jute was the principal material used to make such packaging material, and even today jute and jute products account for the major part of the export earnings of Bangladesh. □

## Peru

(Continued from page 11).

tions of the people. An important factor in creating this mood was the June 1986 prison massacre. Despite Garcia's efforts to throw the blame on the murdered prisoners themselves, a long echo of details leaking out revealed the cold-blooded premeditation and horrifying savagery with which this slaughter was planned and carried out. His unlimited hypocrisy in attempting to cover up what had happened has helped reveal his own blood-stained role as the author of this crime.

This has been followed by recent revelations concerning the continuing Armed Forces massacres of whole villages in the "emergency zones". For months, an investigating commission headed by an APRA Senator laboured to discredit rumours that in May 1988 the Armed Forces had wiped out the village of Cayara, in Ayacucho. The unexpected discovery of a mass grave and some 30 bodies put an ignominious end to their efforts. It turned out that the peasants had been rounded up and killed in retribution for an ambush on an Army unit the day before. (The People's Guerrilla Army had annihilated a patrol of 25 soldiers, Comrade Gonzalo explained in the interview.) The regime had gone to great lengths to portray such massacres as a thing of the past in order to avoid the discredit that had been heaped on the previous government. Nevertheless, even after the bodies were uncovered, Garcia issued a statement backing the Armed Forces in this matter, saying that "they are expected to produce results". The event has had continuing repercussions.

Perhaps one sign of just how desperate the Garcia government has become was the roundup of a number of musicians, actors, poets and painters in the first part of 1989.

For several months now, it has been a commonplace saying, high and low in Peruvian society, that the government is losing the war. The optimistic image that Garcia was able to project during the first

period after his 1985 election has been replaced by public manifestations of depression and despair. A popular joke has it that the only reason the Armed Forces have not yet staged a coup is because no one wants to preside over the untenable situation in which the country's ruling classes find themselves.

Upon taking office, Garcia adopted an economic policy meant to stabilise the political situation for the government. Government measures did stimulate what was then an almost stagnant economy, but their effect was perverse, since the most profitable areas of the economy are those linked to imperialist capital, and inputs required imports which had to be paid for in dollars. Thus the economic growth itself played a major part in bringing about economic crises.

In an attempt to present himself as the champion of the nation against imperialist capital, Garcia announced that the country's debt payments would be limited to 10% of its exports. In spite of this promise, which would have meant little even if he had kept it, debt payments amounted to about 20% of export income, and the country was caught between dwindling export earnings and increasing dependency on imports. At first Garcia demagogically broke relations with the IMF, saying he would not accept the austerity measures that have brought riots in country after country where they were applied; then he implemented such measures "independently". Finally, his recent attempts to crawl back to the IMF have failed because the country is unable to make any debt payments at all.

Inflation hit 2000% in 1988 and was climbing vertiginously during the first part of 1989. Alongside power blackouts, the government's virtual bankruptcy has also led to water shortages in the capital and to the sewer system backing up in the public water supply, with horrible results for the city's masses. Food shortages have become chronic, caused by a combination of the severing of roads to the countryside, import restrictions and overall economic chaos. Bubonic plague is reported to be breaking out in some

rural "emergency zones".

This situation of extremely sharp political infighting among the ruling classes, against a background of acute economic crisis and a deteriorating military situation for the government, cannot last long in its present form. This is something on which informed observers of even the most opposing class viewpoints agree.

The PCP Congress documents enumerated "the concrete situations and possibilities we face" and that the Party must take into account in developing its work in the present situation:

1) The appearance of "armed groups like the MRTA...in the service of imperialism and social-imperialism".

As Comrade Gonzalo pointed out, the MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru) held out the hope that the newly-elected APRA government would not "attack the people" and offered it an indefinite truce, even while Garcia was directing the slaughter of imprisoned revolutionaries and other atrocities. The ambiguous relations between the MRTA and the government were demonstrated after the recent capture of the head of the armed organisation, when the head of the APRA party paid a prison visit to his life-long friend.

2) The "unfolding fascism and corporatism" of the ruling APRA party.

3) The possibility of "urban explosions" which "social-imperialism and reaction in general could use their representatives to take advantage of".

4) "A coup d'etat could take place, and furthermore, Garcia himself could arrange his exit through a phoney coup, to save himself for the future." Garcia cannot legally succeed himself as president; further, at the moment his political disgrace is so complete that he is the butt of popular suicide jokes.

5) "An Allende-type government", referring to the reformist Chilean government headed by Salvador Allende, overthrown by General Pinochet in 1973. "The sinister role of the United Left should be considered with this pos-

sibility in mind." General elections are to take place in Peru in 1990 and the former Lima mayor, United Left leader Alfonso Barrantes, is said by the reactionary press to be a frontrunner at this point. In regard to these elections, Comrade Gonzalo said in the interview, "the main thing is to boycott them and if possible prevent them from happening."

6) The "problems at the country's borders which could become very acute at any moment". Brazil temporarily took over Bolivia at the U.S.'s behest in the early 1970s; politically and economically Brazil itself has a great deal at stake in Peru. Chile and Ecuador both have had important border conflicts with Peru.

7) "The sending of Yankee troops has already occurred, and is no longer just a possibility." The U.S. admits having 20 military men (under the authority of the well-named U.S. "Drug Enforcement Administration") in the upper Huallaga Valley. In the last few months the U.S. sent in four more helicopters to the area, bringing the total to nine. Foreign reporters speak of higher numbers of U.S. personnel, mention the presence of other U.S. aircraft with American crews, and add that the U.S. is also building itself an airstrip near Uchiza. According to editor Arce, in reality the U.S. presently has about 200 military personnel and advisors in Peru.

It should be pointed out that the U.S. troops invaded southern Bolivia in 1986 with the pretext of controlling the coca crop and 300 U.S. troops have been stationed there since. What seems to be an orchestrated campaign of news reports abroad about the inability of the Garcia government to control the situation reflects an aspect of truth, but it could also very well be part of preparing foreign public opinion for escalating intervention.

While the U.S. and the USSR and their respective imperialist blocs pursue opposing interests in Peru, they have in common implacable hatred of the revolution. The USSR, Peru's main supplier of heavy arms since the self-styled "revolutionary" military government of the previous decade, was

said by Arce to have about 400 advisors in the country, including 60 military personnel. North Korea's role in the government death squads can be assumed to be tied to Soviet social-imperialism's efforts. It is noteworthy that the U.S. is not making a fuss about the Soviet military involvement in Peru, as it is with Cuba and Nicaragua, the only other recipients of significant amounts of Soviet weapons in what the U.S. considers its "back yard". Still, the U.S. has been said to have protested to the USSR about its relations with the MRTA.

8) "Imperialist wars and aggression continue to multiply; a world war for hegemony between the USA and the USSR is still being prepared through their contention and collusion on a world scale, and therefore people's war is an urgent necessity, and people's world war the inevitable perspective for the future.

"All these possibilities must be taken seriously into account in order to conduct the people's war with politics in command, especially with the perspective of the seizure of countrywide political power that could present itself and has to be taken up. Therefore we must be firmly prepared, ideologically, politically and organisationally."

This Congress, Comrade Gonzalo explained in the interview, "summed up the long road we have traveled. It established the three elements of the Party's basis of unity: its ideology, that is, Marxism-Leninism - Maoism, Gonzalo Thought; its programme; and its general political line. Further, it established a solid basis to march towards the future seizure of state power." "Our revolution", Comrade Gonzalo also said, "is firmly linked to the world revolution; world communism is our final and definitive goal."

"The prospects for full-fledged political power are coming into view", the Congress concluded. "This gives encouragement to the world's revolutionaries, especially to the international proletariat."

The events of the last year in Peru show that this assessment is no idle boast; rather it is a description of the work the Party has been carrying out with giant strides. □