



# THE MARXIST

Theoretical Quarterly of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

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On the occasion of Lenin's 125th Birth Anniversary

## Marxism of the era of imperialism

*E.M.S. Namboodiripad*

The theoretical doctrines and revolutionary practices of Vladimir Illyich Lenin (whose 125th birth anniversary was recently observed by the Marxist-Leninists throughout the world), have well been called "Marxism of the Era of Imperialism". For, not only was Lenin a loyal disciple of Marx and Engels applying in practice their theory in his own homeland, but he also further developed the theory and practices of the two founders of Marxism.

### EARLY THEORETICAL BATTLES

Born in Tsarist Russia which was seeped in its feudal environment, he noticed that capitalism was slowly developing in his country. He fought the Narodniks who advocated the doctrine of the irrelevance and no-applicability of Marxism to Russian conditions. His first major theoretical work was the *Development of Capitalism in Russia* where he proved that, though in feudal environment, capitalism was rapidly developing in Russia. He thus established the truth of Marxist theory of the working class being the

major political force in the development of society. Further, an alliance of peasantry under working class leadership will form the core of the revolutionary forces in the conditions of backward feudal Russia.

Having thus defeated the Narodniks, he proceeded to demolish the theory of "legal Marxists" according to whom Marxism was to be applied in perfectly legal battles against capitalism. He asserted the truth that the preparation for the social transformation in Russia should be based on the sharpening class struggle culminating in the proletarian revolution. The form of the struggle will have to necessarily adapt to the conditions of illegality in Russia.

Equally decisive defeat was administered to the advocates of the theory that the political party that is to carry out the proletarian revolution is like any other (bourgeois) political party. In his well known work *What Is To Be Done?*, he proved that the revolutionary party of the working class is basically different from the bourgeois political parties. Unlike them, it has to carry on a consistent uncompromising ideological struggle against the bourgeoisie which always strives to bring the proletariat under its intellectual leadership.

#### PARTY BASED ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Furthermore, unlike the bourgeois and petty bourgeois political parties, the proletarian party is based on democratic centralism. He, therefore, successfully fought for the principle of every party member being subjected to the iron discipline of the party unit of which he or she is a member. Inside the unit every member had the right to air his/her opinion. But once the collective decision was arrived at everyone was bound to implement it, irrespective of their personal opinion.

On this question, he fought with the advocates of the theory of a flabby political organisation of which every member is free to do what he or she likes. He proved the necessity of iron discipline enforced by the central leadership of the party, while every member is free to express his or her view on any problem in the party. It was because of this conflict in the party on the relation between the party and the individual member, that the Russian Social Democratic Party eventually split between the majority (Bolsheviks) and the opponents, the minority (the Mensheviks). It was this

battle for ideas that made him the young leader of Russian Marxists.

## IMPERIALISM — A NEW STAGE

This struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks was then carried into the international arena where a big ideological battle was being fought between the right-wing leaders and the left-wing revolutionaries. Taking the side of the latter, Lenin proved that the body of doctrines elaborated by Marx and Engels does not need any revision as alleged by the right-wing. On the contrary, by steadfastly adhering to its revolutionary tenets it required further enrichment in the light of developments in the conditions of the economics and politics of capitalism.

He, in fact, proceeded to re-examine the stage of capitalism as noted by Marx and Engels in their classical works.

He found that post-Marx-Engels developments in world capitalism had made a fundamental change in the character of capitalism: capitalism, as it was in the days of Marx and Engels, was now developing into monopoly capitalism which he called "imperialism, the last stage of capitalism." His famous theoretical work under that title was, in fact, a development of Marx's *Capital* to the early years of the 20th century. The book was a new major contribution to the Marx-Engels theory of the development of world capitalism—a task which Marx and Engels themselves would have undertaken if they had lived in the beginning of the 20th century.

Lenin's major theoretical work on imperialism therefore was the continuation and further development of the economic and political theories of Marx and Engels.

The essence of the Leninist doctrine on imperialism was that world capitalism has so developed that the vast majority of backward and dependent countries were controlled and divided among a small group of developed capitalist or imperialist countries. Sharp competition among the small group of rising imperialist countries on the question of division of colonies and backward dependent countries among themselves was thus the central fact of the economics and politics of capitalism in the era of imperialism.

## IMPERIALISM AND WARS

He drew from this the conclusion regarding the inevitable

tendency towards world wars — wars among the imperialist powers for the re-division of the colonies, ie, for the preservation of existing colonies by colony-owning powers and for securing control of colonies by the 'have not' imperialist powers. Imperialist wars, wars for the division and re-division of colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries is the basic law of capitalist development in the era of imperialism.

Characteristic of the era of imperialism are also national revolutionary wars waged by the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries for ensuring freedom, sovereignty and national independence. The combination of imperialist wars for the division and re-division of colonies among the imperialist powers and the national revolutionary wars for the regaining of the freedom lost by the colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries is thus the basic law of imperialism.

From this basic law of the character of world capitalism in the era of imperialism, Lenin drew the conclusion that it will be possible for the world working class to take power even in countries where capitalism has not developed. He thus showed the possibility of breaking the imperialist chain of world bondage at its weakest link. His own country, Russia, belonged to this category: the development of its capitalism had not gone to the extent of making it possible for a socialist revolution because of the very immaturity of its capitalist development. It however could have a revolution in which the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry and oppressed nationalities take political power and proceed to start the construction of a socialist society.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF, NOT DEPARTURE FROM THE MARX-ENGELS THEORY

Leninism was thus a development and enrichment of, not departure from, the Marx-Engels theory that socialist revolutions take place, ie, the working class takes political power, only when the development of capitalism has become fully mature. He pointed out that in a country like Russia which was backward in respect of capitalist development, the working class is enabled to take political power because the bourgeoisie and its ally, the feudal lords are much weaker than in developed capitalist countries.

He thus developed the theory of the possibility of the proletariat taking power in groups of countries or even in a single country, carrying out their proletarian revolution. His intimate understanding of the crisis of feudal-bourgeois rule made him assert that it is possible for the proletariat in his own country to have a class revolution.

He, however, pointed out that while it would be possible for the Russian proletariat to start building a socialist society in its own country earlier than the proletariat of the developed capitalist countries, the construction of a fully socialist society will be complete only when the more developed capitalist countries have their revolutions.

He made a significant observation that while Russia's proletarian revolution made the country politically more advanced than the developed capitalist countries, it continued to be socially, culturally and economically backward in relation to the developed capitalist countries. Furthermore, once proletarian revolutions take place in developed capitalist countries whose ruling proletariat starts building socialism, socialist Russia may revert to its backward position relative to such countries.

It is an accident of history that Russia has now reverted to political backwardness not because proletarian revolutions took place in the advanced capitalist countries but because socialism was overthrown in Russia by the betrayal of the proletarian cause.

Successful proletarian revolutions and the building of socialism in Russia where the proletariat has been the ruling class on the one hand and proletarian revolutions and socialist construction in developed capitalist countries on the other are thus mutually related. Said Lenin: While the rapid development of socialist construction in Russia would help the acceleration of proletarian revolutions in developed capitalist countries, the latter would help the process of socialist construction and its development into the building of a communist society.

## PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

This is the theoretical basis on which Lenin took the leadership in the Third (Communist) International. Loyalty to the first land of socialism and fraternal solidarity with all the developed capitalist countries whose proletarian revolutionaries are fighting for social-

ist revolutions, are the fundamentals to which every contingent of the International should be deeply committed. The Third (Communist) International founded under Lenin's direct leadership was thus the continuation and further development of the two Internationals founded by and functioning under the direct leadership of Marx and Engels. It goes to the credit of Lenin that he was at once the organiser of the proletariat revolution in Russia, the initiator of socialist construction in his country and the founder leader of the Third (Communist) International.

He thus carried forward the glorious traditions of Marx and Engels who, in the mid-19th century, participated in the European bourgeois revolutions and proceeded to organise the working class and enabled it to attain leadership position in the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Later on, when the first socialist revolution in the world — the Paris Commune of 1871 — broke out, Marx and Engels drew positive and negative conclusions as guidelines for organising proletarian revolutions in the future. Lenin based himself on Marx-Engels directives on the experience of the Paris Commune to organise the Russian Revolution of 1905, February 1917 and November 1917. He was thus the faithful follower of the Marx-Engels theory and the practical organiser of the Russian revolution.

Having thus brought out the significance of Leninism as the continuation and enrichment of the Marx-Engels theories and practices of proletarian revolutions, let us examine the contributions made by Lenin in the fields of economic and political theory.

## DEFENCE OF MATERIALISM

Defending the Marx-Engels theory of Dialectical Materialism against attacks from idealist philosophers, Lenin wrote his first major philosophical work *Materialism and Emperio Criticism*. He exploded the opponents' theory that recent findings in natural sciences have made matter irrelevant, proving that energy (which was supposed to be the refutation of the existence of matter) was itself a particular manifestation of matter. He further enriched the Marx-Engels theory of Dialectical Materialism by saying that matter is that which exists independently of our minds but which reflects itself in the human mind.

Thinking, emotions and so on are dependent on and are

creatures of matter existing independently of the human mind. This is the reassertion of the Marx-Engels proposition that life itself has proved that the spiritual world is dependent on and produced by the material world, though the former can influence the way in which the latter moves and develops. Lenin's *Materialism and Emperio Criticism* is thus the finest way of refuting the bourgeois revisionist philosophers of his time who wanted to banish materialism from philosophy.

Earlier, through his works like the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin had established himself as an outstanding leader of the Russian Marxists. Now *Materialism and Emperio Criticism* raised him to the pedestal of an outstanding world leader of the Marxists.

## CLASS NATURE OF THE STATE

The greatest contribution made by Lenin in enriching the theory of Marx and Engels lies in defending the theory of class nature of the state, the contradiction between bourgeois dictatorship masqueraded as "parliamentary democracy", and proletarian democracy which is dictatorship in relation to the bourgeoisie, the need to destroy the bourgeois state, since it is impossible, within the frame work of the bourgeois setup, to bring about socialistic transition etc. In theoretical battles on this question, Lenin had to fight the revisionists in the international working class movement and in the Russian Party itself. While concentrating fire on this major danger, he also turned his guns against "Left" sectarianism and dogmatism.

Apart from a number of articles written for the periodical press in the battle against revisionism, Lenin wrote two major books: *The State and Revolution*; *Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*. In these two major works, he polemised against those who talked about "democracy in general", as if there is no difference between bourgeois democracy (which for the toiling people is bourgeois dictatorship) and proletarian democracy which has to be dictatorial in dealing with the post-revolution remnants of the old ruling classes. This, later, Lenin called "the dictatorship of the proletariat", as had been characterised by Marx and Engels in a number of their major works.

Having thus demolished the right revisionist and reformist

misinterpretation of the Marx-Engels theory of the state, he proceeded to demolish the "Left" communist tactical line of boycotting elections, boycotting bourgeois parliaments etc. This latter work he did in a pamphlet entitled *Left-wing communism: an infantile disorder*.

The three works together laid the basis for the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the nature of the economy and polity of the bourgeois state and the class nature of the revolution. The state of proletarian dictatorship which follows the abolition of the bourgeois state has two phases of building the new socialist society — the lower phase which is called Socialist Society and the higher phase characterised as Communist Society.

The three works together constituted the basis of the revolutionary strategy and tactics to be pursued by the Party of the working class in the period of socialist revolution and the subsequent period of socialist construction. The Leninist theory of the state and revolution thus constitutes the ideological, political and practical weapon with which the Party of the working class will destroy the bourgeois state and proceed to build the Socialist and Communist Society through the state of proletarian dictatorship.

## THE PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

The theory of State and Revolution which Lenin elaborated in three major works enabled him to develop the theory of the Party as the organiser and leader of the proletarian revolution. He called the Marxist Party as "a Party of a new type", clearly distancing it from bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties. The revolutionary party of the working class has the following characteristic features:

Firstly, although the Party of the working class, it is also the leader of all sections of the working people who are opposed to and fighting the feudal-capitalist exploitation. The working class cannot secure its liberation from capitalism without liberating all other sections of the working people — the mass of peasantry above all. The working class takes under its wing even the democratic and advanced sections of the bourgeoisie which are opposed to the main leader of the bourgeois class. The Party of the proletariat as Lenin saw it should become the ruling party of its own nation and of humanity. That is why he fought and defeated the narrow outlook of the trade union bureaucrats and fought for a party of the

working class which is the "champion of the people".

Secondly, the Party of the working class arms itself and arms all other sections of the working people with the advanced theory of Dialectical and Historical materialism. There cannot be a revolutionary party, he said, without a revolutionary theory.

Thirdly, the advanced theory of Dialectical and Historical materialism is not an abstract theory but the theory which is applied in practice and which is enriched by the experience of practice. That is why Lenin attached utmost importance to a national journal of the working class in every country. His fight in the old Social Democratic Labour Party of Russia for an "all-Russia" paper was the beginning of the foundation of the Party.

### CLASH OF IDEAS

Fourthly, the party uses its own paper as well as all other journals and periodicals — including those run by the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie — to engage its theoretical and political opponents in ideological battles. Marx, Engels and Lenin developed themselves into Marxist-Leninists by continuous uncompromising battle of ideas with their opponents.

Fifthly, the Party and its mouth piece is intimately connected with the movement, including those organisations which are led by its political opponents. The biography of Marx, Engels and Lenin is a chronicle of the continuous uncompromising battle of ideas in which they engaged themselves. It was these writings, as much as the more fundamental theoretical volumes like *Capital*, *Imperialism*, *Materialism and Emperio Criticism* and so on, which gave birth to Marxism and its expansion to Leninism.

Sixthly, the party which engages itself in continuous battle of ideas also engages itself in the social and political battles. As Engels put it (which, it may be noted, was quoted by Lenin), the proletariat has to fight and defeat its class enemy not only economically but politically and above all theoretically. It is through such comprehensive battles with the enemy that the Party of the Working Class becomes the organiser of the proletarian revolution.

### STRIKING AT THE RIGHT MOMENT

Seventhly, the Party and the working class should master the

art of correctly estimating the concrete changes in the objective situation and create the subjective force — the organisation for conducting a political revolution with which power is seized at the right moment.

As Lenin remarked on the eve of the October Revolution, "it would have been premature to attempt a revolution ten days ago: it will be too late to organise a revolution ten days later." It goes to the credit of Lenin that he discerned the exact moment when the decisive blow should be struck against the class enemy.

It was because such a revolutionary party of the Russian working class had been created that Lenin was able to organise the three Russian Revolutions of 1905, February 1917 and November 1917. In his book, the *State and Revolution*, Lenin had planned to write a chapter on the experiences of the Russian revolutions but, by the time the first sentence of the first chapter was written, the November 1917 Revolution had broken out. He, therefore, wrote that it was far more fruitful to go through a Revolution than writing about it.

#### POLITICALLY DIFFERENT

The November 1917 Revolution was basically different from the revolutions envisaged by Marx and Engels. It was taking place in a socially, economically and politically backward country. He therefore did not have before him any guidelines from his masters. He had to apply the principles of Dialectical materialism (of which he was a master) to the concrete conditions of the Russia he knew.

The question arose before him whether it is correct and desirable for the proletariat in a backward country to take power. There were "Marxist scholars" like Germany's Kautsky and Russia's Plekhanov who thought that the Russian proletariat should wait for the social conditions to mature, ie, Russia to develop its own advanced capitalist society, before the Russian proletariat takes power into its own hands.

Lenin disagreed and said that, since political power was passing into the hands of the Russian proletariat, it should be used to overcome Russia's backwardness, complete the bourgeois democratic revolution and pass on to the socialist revolution.

This was the essence of his April (1917) theses which said that the February Revolution was a bourgeois Revolution but that it

created a "dual power". The power of the Soviets led by the workers, peasants and soldiers and the power of the revisionists and bourgeois-led politicians. The tactics that he worked out (which incidentally changed more than once between April and November) facilitated the rapid change in the attitude of the Russian masses that they overcame their initial illusions regarding the character of the regime that came into existence in April.

That was how the "ten days" in October-November 1917 changed not only Russia but the whole world. For the first time in history, the worker-peasant masses took power into their own hands and started building socialism.

Lenin in this process was adopting a new path which Marx and Engels had left for their successors to find. The question before him was how exactly to use the state power when it comes into the hands of the proletariat. Lenin had to plan his own Russian path, since there were no guidelines from Marx and Engels.

#### WAR COMMUNISM — FIRST EXPERIMENT

In the first couple of years after the November Revolution, the young Soviet Russia was attacked by internal and external enemies.

The dethroned ruling classes of Russia organised a civil war against the new proletarian state power. At the same time, all the major imperialist powers launched an interventionist war to destroy the young Soviet Russian State. Lenin could not find any Marx-Engels guidelines to meet this concrete situation.

Applying the principles of dialectics to the existing Russian conditions, Lenin evolved what came to be known as "War Communism". Every aspect of social life in Russia was to be subordinated to the need of defeating the internal and external enemies. Maximum control was imposed on the social, economic, cultural and political life of the nation (just as any state does when it is plunged in a war). The first experiment undertaken by Lenin after taking power in his own hands was to beat back the enemies both internal and external and save Soviet Russia.

#### NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Having attained this objective, the question arose whether the

rigours of "War Communism" are to continue or there could be certain relaxation. Lenin found that the mass of the Russian people, the peasantry, wanted to sell their products in the market and earn a profit. Lenin realised the urge for profit in the market entertained by the mass of peasantry. The new economic policy that he formulated was thus a break from War Communism of the war days, a step towards capitalism. But, he pointed out, since political power is wielded by the proletariat which can exercise control over the way in which market forces operate, Russia can, through the new economic policy, grow into a socialist Russia.

Lenin, however, was also the first to warn that the capitalist elements that the NEP will engender and the socialist state will have to battle it out for the preservation and strengthening of socialism.

#### NEW WORLD PERSPECTIVE

Before concluding, it is necessary to point out that the way the Communist movement is being rejuvenated after the retreating from socialism in the Soviet Union and East European people's democracies is instructive: the world communist movement of the old days has become irrelevant. The Chinese Communist party has made it clear that the socialism that they are building is with China's national characteristics.

We, Indian communists, can modestly claim that, as early as 45 years ago (in 1951) the then undivided Communist Party of India had declared that it would follow neither the Soviet nor the Chinese path, but would evolve its own Indian path of socialism.

In today's world situation therefore, Marxist- Leninists in every country will have to evolve their nationally suitable path to Socialism and Communism. That is why the get-together of International Marxist- Leninists in Calcutta in 1993 was called an International Seminar, rather than an International Conference. Each national Marxist-Leninist Party has to work out its own specific path of socialist revolution and construction without depending on a centralised world leadership, but, by firmly adhering to the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

However, since all nationally-based Marxist- Leninist parties are closely tied by the bond of fraternal solidarity with their counterparts in all other countries, it is necessary to have constant

exchanges of experience and views among the various national contingents of the world communist movement. This is the lesson that we have learnt from decades of experience of Marxism of the imperialist era which took shape in the early years of this century.

# In Memory of Shapurji Saklatwala

*Harkishan Singh Surjeet*

June 16, 1996 marks the 60th death anniversary of Shapurji Saklatwala. Coming from the pioneering capitalist family in India, going to England for his family's business interests, Saklatwala played an important role in the working class and the communist movement in Great Britain. He was among the only four communists ever to be elected to the British Parliament, till date.

The old generation of the Communists know his immense contribution to the cause of working class movement in Great Britain, his uncompromising struggle against British imperialism with firm support to the national liberation movement, his undaunted fight against racism, his strenuous efforts to build the unity of British working class and Indian freedom movement, his admiration for the Great October Revolution and his contribution in developing the Indian communist movement. Many efforts were made to deflect him from the revolutionary path. He was offered important posts by the British government which he flatly refused and chose to face all types of repressive measures in order to serve the cause of struggle for Indian independence and social revolution in Great Britain.

We are publishing here extracts from an article on Saklatwala written decades ago by one of his biographers, Mike Squires. The

article throws some light on the contribution made by Saklatwala to the cause of the working class in various spheres. We are also publishing extracts from a reference to the activities of Saklatwala by Rou Narudu in his book *The Making of the Black Working Class In Britain*.

Communists of my generation who joined the movement in the early thirties knew him as a communist, as a staunch anti-imperialist and admirer of the October Revolution. But little was known about his class origin, that he came from a rich Bombay Parsee family, known as the Tatas. Jamshedji Tata, his maternal uncle, founder of the Tata house, deputed Saklatwala to lead a prospective expedition for iron and coal deposits in central India in 1902. After having failed, his team moved to the Loharu region of Northern India where they succeeded and he was amongst those responsible for the setting up of the TISCO. While in search of iron and coal Saklatwala came to know the plight of tribal people in those areas who were living a miserable life. This deeply moved him — the vast gap between rich and poor — the poor living even without drinking water and other minimum human necessities. Among the experts who accompanied him was a Russian Social Democrat. A biography written by his daughter, Sahri Saklatwala, exhaustively describes as to how his views were being moulded during this period.

In 1905 Saklatwala was sent to England to manage the Tatas office at Manchester. After a short stay he moved to London where he came in touch with liberals like Lord Morley, secretary of state for India. The experience in London became a turning point in his life and he rejected liberalism and decided to enter working class politics. In 1906 when he was staying in Mallock, a suburb of Derbyshire, he met a working class girl, Sarah Marsh from the village of Tausley who he married in August 1907. After they moved to London by the end of the same year, Saklatwala joined the Social Democratic Federation, a Marxist group, founded in 1884. Later this was renamed as British Socialist Party. He also became a member of Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1909 and automatically became a member of the Labour Party.

During the First World War, he came out against the war taking firm anti-imperialist positions alongwith a section of the ILP. He carried a big campaign against the war and this activity brought him to national prominence.

The Russian revolution inspired him tremendously and he fought the wrong attitude of the ILP against the Communist International alongwith Rajni Palme Dutt who was also a member of the ILP. When he failed in rallying the majority, he alongwith Rajni Palme Dutt and some others joined the Communist Party of Great Britain and devoted his life to the cause of the working class, national independence, and for socialism till he breathed his last on June 16, 1936.

Between 1905 and 1936 till his death, he was able to visit India thrice — in 1912, 1913 and in 1927. Ironically his entry to India was banned even when he was a member of parliament and the Labour Party was ruling. In May 1912, he alongwith his wife and children had come to India to permanently stay here but he had to leave as the British considered him a danger to the British empire. He left for England in 1913 to permanently stay there. Later he visited India in 1927 after getting elected as a Communist MP.

When the League Against Imperialism was formed in 1927 in Brussels, he was elected to its executive committee alongwith Jawaharlal Nehru.

In understanding the importance of united front against imperialism, his understanding arose out of concrete experience of development of freedom struggle in colonies particularly in India. When the sixth congress of Communist International wanted to dissolve the League Against Imperialism, he firmly opposed it and emphasised the need of a broad front in the struggle against imperialism. He also made an immense contribution on the colonial question when he fought against the erroneous views of M.N. Roy that Gandhi and the bourgeois leadership has no potential in this struggle.

The purpose of this introduction is not to write in detail the contribution Saklatvala made in developing the Communist movement in India and Great Britain. While this is also necessary, here the intention is to highlight the fact that though Marxism is the ideology of the working class and it is class struggle which is the motive force of history, but once these ideas grip the mind even a person coming from the Tata family becomes a staunch revolutionary and dedicates his whole life to the cause of putting an end to exploitation of man by man and nation by nation. It is the scientific outlook which determines the course of action of a man not merely his class origin. In the struggle for social liberation many intellec-

tuals from well to do sections have joined the communist movement, some vacillated at crucial stages of class struggle, but those who have fully grasped the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and integrated it with practice have upheld the revolutionary banner. The example of Shapurji Saklatvala stands out sharply as he comes from the biggest industrial house of India, marries a working class girl coming from a very poor family and involves himself in the working class movement, in the struggle against capitalism and lives a life of a staunch revolutionary till the end of his life.

These brief extracts give glimpses of his immense contributions to the communist movement.

## **Shapurji Saklatvala and the Fight Against Racism and Imperialism 1921-28**

Shapurji Saklatvala was elected the Labour MP for Battersea North in the General Elections in 1922. He lost his seat a year later, but was re-elected, this time as a communist, at the December 1923 election. He represented the South London constituency for five years until defeated by a Labour candidate in 1929. Saklatvala was one of only four communists ever to be elected to the House of Commons. He was also distinctive in being Labour's first non white MP.

The period of his active political life, stretching from 1916 to 1936, covers a momentous era in socialist politics. Inspired by the Russian revolution, like so many others in the Labour movement, he moved sharply to the left. Although not a foundation member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, he joined the party from the Independent Labour Party in 1921. This was a few months after the ILP's Annual Conference had rejected a move to affiliate to the Communist International. He remained a loyal and active member of the CPGB until his death in 1936.

His activity in the party as both a grass roots activist, an MP, and also as a member of the Central Committee, covered the first formative years of British communism. Saklatvala's life, covering as it does a testing period for revolutionary socialists, can give an insight into how communists, over half a century ago, tackled the

still hotly contested issues of race, and the struggle against imperialism.

Saklatvala's conversion to socialism came about as a direct result of his opposition to colonialism. He settled in Britain from India in 1905 at the age of 30. He had already experienced at first hand the injustices of the colonial system, and the racism that was its necessary bedfellow. He left India, in part, because of his brushes with the British authorities. But when he arrived in England he was far from being a socialist. The wealthy Tata family, to which he was related, like many others in the Indian upper class, were Gladstonian liberals. On his arrival in London he stayed at the National Liberal Club, where his family had enrolled him as a life long member. It was Saklatvala's contact, over the next few years, with British socialists, that led to his conversion. In 1909, at Manchester, where he was working as a departmental manager for Tata's, he joined the Independent Labour Party. From then onwards Saklatvala was to spend much of his time in pursuit of his two main concerns — socialism and anti colonialism. Although his socialist ideas, under the impact of the Russian Revolution, underwent a radical transformation, his approach to colonial freedom remained consistent. That is he constantly sought to build a united front between the workers of Britain and the forces for liberation in the colonies.

This approach can be seen in one of the first Labour movement organisations to concern itself with anti-imperialism, the Workers Welfare League of India. The league was established by Saklatvala in 1917. The aim of the League was to "enlist the sympathy and help of British workers on behalf of labour in India independently of all political movements". The need for a united front of British and Indian workers was expressed in a statement of principles, issued by the League in 1919. The statement was signed by Saklatvala and a number of Trade Union leaders, including Arthur Pugh from the Iron and Steel Trades Federation. It stressed that, "the Indian labour problem is to be recognised as an English problem, seriously affecting the question of maintenance of standards of life among the workers working competitively in the same industries within the Empire".

The League's united front perspective also effected its organisation. Its objective was, "to bring together representatives of the working classes in Great Britain and India in order that they may be of mutual aid to each other".

To this end the League had separate British and Indian Committees. However, no proposal was considered final until passed by the General Committee which was composed of members from both Britain and India. The idea of this was that, "measures of reform may be proposed and adopted free from prejudice and one sidedness". Saklatvala was the first secretary of the League's Indian Committee, while Arthur Field, who lived in Battersea, was the General Secretary. Another Battersea man, Duncan Carmichael, later to be both a Battersea Labour councillor, and the Secretary of the London Trades Council, was also strongly associated with the League. Along with Saklatvala he submitted a number of proposals on behalf of the League to a House of Commons Select Committee on Indian Reforms in 1919. In the preamble to the report, entitled 'the Empire Labour' the League claimed to be, "the only body that combines in it the actual knowledge of Indian economic conditions with practical experience of the working of the British Labour organisations in this country".

The League, from its earliest days established a base in the British Labour movement. A number of national trade unions were affiliated to it, as were numerous trade union branches. For many years, until 1928, the League was the All India Trade Union Congress' representative in Britain. Saklatvala on the League's behalf, spoke at a number of TUC Congresses. Something of the grassroots support enjoyed by the League can be gauged by a report of a conference held by the League in Wales in 1928. There were 148 delegates present, of which 33 were from miners lodges, 25 from womens co-op guilds, and 20 from Trades Councils and Labour Party's.

At a time when support for colonialism was strong, even amongst organised sections of the working class, the Workers Welfare League of India, strongly influenced by Saklatvala's united front approach, made some headway in breaking down barriers between the British and Indian Labour movements.

It was this same strategy of uniting the working class movements in the imperialist countries, with the national liberation movements in the colonies, that was to inspire the formation of the League Against Imperialism. Although the League was not only solely with British colonialism Saklatvala was to play a prominent role. Formed in 1927, the League drew together many of the national liberation movements in the colonial and semi-colonial

countries. At its founding Congress in Brussels in February 1927, there were 175 delegates from 37 countries. The organisations represented included, the National Revolutionary Army of China, the Chinese Trade Union Congress, the Kuomintang, the Indian National Congress, the Egyptian Nationalist Party, the South African Trade Union Congress, the Nationalist Movement of Indonesia, and the African Committee for the defence of the Negro race. In addition, there were delegates from the Labour movements of the imperialist countries. Britain was represented by a delegation consisting of Labour and Communist Party stalwarts. These included Harry Pollitt, Arthur McManus, Helen Crawford, Fenner Brockway, S.O.Davies, and George Lansbury. Saklatvala, who was visiting India at the time of the Congress, was not present, but he was elected to the League's Executive Committee later in the year.

Like the Workers Welfare League before it, the League Against Imperialism attempted to raise the issue of colonialism within the Labour movement. Although the onset of the new line by 1929, made Labour Communist unity within the League difficult, particularly at the national level, this did not deny that in the early days the League made a serious attempt to influence the thinking of Britain's organised working class.

At the League's first National Conference in Britain in July 1928, there were 343 delegates representing over 50 trade unions and 12 co-operative guilds. Later in the year the League, in a gesture of international solidarity, decided to support the boycott of the Simon Commission by the Indian National Congress. The Simon Commission was a committee of enquiry which was to go to India to investigate conditions. The League organised a number of public events exposing the Commission, and arguing the Congress's case. A very successful meeting took place in Limehouse in east London. Limehouse was the Labour leader Clement Atlee's constituency. Atlee had been appointed to the commission and despite protests had declined to withdraw. Saklatvala spoke at the meeting, and so did representatives of the Indian National Congress. It was a practical example of the kind of joint activity and mutual assistance between Britain and India, that Saklatvala had spent his life in trying to build.

Saklatvala was a committed supporter of the League. His commitment led to his arrest and brief interment at Ostend, while journeying to the League's Cologne Conference in 1929. He, along

with the Labour MP James Maxton and Reginald Bridgeman, were apprehended on the grounds that their papers were not in order. After protests they were later released and allowed to continue their journey. The incident illustrates the inadequacies of the intelligence services operating at the time. Not only did the Belgium authorities, presumably acting at the behest of their British counterparts, think that the League Conference was taking place in Belgium, they also thought that both Maxton and Bridgeman were also Communist MPs. Even the 'Daily Chronicle' could not resist the headline. 'Someone blunders in Belgium'. The paper pointed out that Bridgeman was in fact not a Communist MP, but the Labour candidate for Uxbridge.

At the 6th Congress of the Communist International in July 1928 there was an attempt to wind up the League which was defeated. Some months before, Saklatvala had reiterated his own support for the organisation. Addressing the League's Executive Committee he said, "The League was something definite in the minds of the coloured peoples. Their hopes in it had been aroused and it would be wrong to disappoint them." Even during the height of the class against class period Saklatvala still maintained his commitment to a united anti-colonial alliance. He wanted the League to be, "a broad organisation in which there is and must be room for all sincere anti-imperialist fighters without regard to their party affiliation, but that it is an indispensable condition of membership that the struggle against imperialism shall really be carried on actively and uncompromisingly".

In the field of national and international politics Saklatvala was committed to the forging of links between the organised Labour movement in Britain and the forces of national liberation in the colonies. He was also concerned with the exposure of colonialism to a wider audience. As an MP he was in an ideal position to achieve both these objectives. He made a widely publicised visit to India in 1927 which succeeded in satisfying these twin aims. His stay in India lasted three months and was so successful that on his return the British Government denied him any future access to the country of his birth. It was a decision that was upheld even by the 1929-31 Labour Government. During the visit he was given the freedom of a number of Indian cities, and granted an official welcome by the Madras and Calcutta City authorities. He met and entered into a dialogue with Gandhi, about the future direction of the national movement in India. In addition, in the cities and towns

that he visited he made contact with the nascent communist groups that had recently been established. The Communist Party considered the tour a great success and it was referred to at the CPGB's 9th Congress in October 1927.

"Saklatvala toured India on behalf of the party during the first months of 1927 getting a magnificent reception everywhere, and advocating in particular that the national movement should adopt a programme of demands for the workers and peasants. His controversy with M.K.Gandhi over the question of an independent class organisation for the workers received wide publicity. His visit undoubtedly did much to stimulate the movement for an All India Workers and Peasants Party, a highly important field of activity for Indian Communists. No doubt it was owing to this that the Indian government has now cancelled comrade Saklatvala's right to return to his native land".

While in India Saklatvala met Phil Spratt and George Allison, both members of the CPGB who had been sent by the party to work under cover, and to help organise the Indian Trade Union movement. Soon after Saklatvala's visit Allison was deported back to England. In 1928 he was replaced by Ben Bradley, who continued with the organising work within the Indian labour movement. Two years after the visit, Bradley, Spratt and thirty one other active trade unionists were arrested. They were tried at Meerut in front of an English civil servant, and after four years deliberation, the prisoners were given sentences of between three years, and transportation for life. The Meerut Conspiracy Trial received wide publicity, and because of the indignation it aroused, the sentences were later reduced, and some of the prisoners released. When Ben Bradley, whose ten year sentence was commuted, returned to England in 1933, he was met at Victoria Station by Saklatvala on behalf of the CPGB. That the trial was necessary at all is in part due to the work of Saklatvala, and the CPGB, in helping develop the Indian Labour movement.

Saklatvala's anti-imperialist activity also highlights the difference in approach between the Communist International and the Communist Party of Great Britain, towards the forces for national liberation. Under the influence of M.N.Roy, the Communist International adopted a far less conciliatory approach to the national bourgeoisie in the colonies than the British party. There was a profound animosity between Roy and Saklatvala. They fundamen-

tally disagreed over anti-imperialist strategy, and in this struggle Roy was supported by the CI, and Saklatvala by the CPGB. These differences between Roy and his wife Evelyn, and Saklatvala, were particularly marked over their respective assessments of Gandhi. Roy in his 'Memoirs' makes clear his early opposition to Gandhi as a reactionary. It was a view shared by Evelyn Roy, who was a powerful influence in the CI in her own right. Writing for 'Labour Monthly' in 1923, she declared that in the struggle for national liberation, "Mr Gandhi definitely allied himself on the side of the bourgeoisie ..... in the development of the Indian Revolutionary Movement. Mr Gandhi must be counted among the counter revolutionaries".

It was not a view shared by Saklatvala and the CPGB. In a message to the founding congress of the Communist Party of India in 1925, Saklatvala made clear his own, and his party's commitment, to the building of a broad anti-colonial alliance, as the way to win self determination, "I must ask you to remember that although the economic independence of the workers and peasants of India is your main task, that you still remain friendly to the National organisations of the Indian peoples, as National independence is the birthright of all peoples".

While the Roys may have believed that Gandhi was firmly in the camp of counter revolution, Saklatvala looked upon him as an important national figure who was well worth cultivating. So much so, that on his visit to India, he made clear that an important part of his trip was to make contact with Gandhi. He was even prepared to reorganise his schedule in order to meet and discuss with the Congress leader. His dialogue with Gandhi was reported in full in the Indian press, and later published as a pamphlet by the CPGB, entitled, 'Is India Different?'

Saklatvala's antagonism towards Roy and his policies first became apparent in 1923. The Communist International had decided to establish an Indian Labour bureau. After an initial meeting in Berlin with representatives of the British party, it was decided to try and elicit Saklatvala's support for the project. However, Saklatvala was reluctant to associate himself with the scheme because of Roy's involvement. According to reports this was because of his mistrust of Roy.

Further evidence of this suspicion is revealed two years later at a Colonial Conference in Amsterdam, called by the Communist

International. Saklatvala, who although absent from the conference, made it known that he was totally opposed to working with some of Roy's associates. Roy in turn accused Saklatvala of 'spy mania'. The Conference further revealed that these differences also affected those working inside the Indian Labour movement. Roy's wife Evelyn had attempted to contact Chaman Lal, the Indian labour leader in Paris, but had been told that he was a friend of Saklatvala and that Lal and Saklatvala were opposed to her, or having anything to do with her.

Saklatvala's work in the anti-imperialist movement reveals the tremendous commitment by communists to colonial freedom. It should be remembered that in Britain, during the period of Saklatvala's activity, the overwhelming consensus was in favour of colonialism. The two Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 made no attempt to upset the colonial balance, and nothing was done to grant India its independence. The Meerut Conspiracy Trial, begun in 1930, continued during the period of the second Labour Government, with no attempt by that Government to bring it to a halt. Although the parties of the left were committed to an ending of colonial rule, many, even activists within the organised labour movement, supported the ideas of white superiority which underpinned the colonial system.

Saklatvala's activities, particularly at international level, also cast doubts on the accepted wisdom that the world communist movement had a uniform strategy towards colonial freedom, and who should be supported in that fight. This may have been the case after the Communist International's 6th Congress in 1928, but until that time there were certainly major differences between Saklatvala and the CI's leading spokesperson in India, M N Roy.

Saklatvala's approach towards the anti colonial fight was to try and unite the Labour movement in Britain, with the forces for national liberation in the colonies. His assessment of who those forces were may have altered, which it did between 1928 and 1935. During that period Saklatvala and the CPGB looked upon Gandhi and the Indian National Congress as allies of imperialism. But even during the class against class years Saklatvala's strategy was still to try to build a united front between British and colonial workers. The same kind of perspective, of international working class unity, was adopted by Saklatvala in relation to the fight against racism in Britain.

After its poor start, the CPGB, by the time of its Seventh Congress in 1925, recognised that racism did exist, and was affecting even sections of the organised labour movement. The Congress Resolution called on every party member to, "actively take up the fight against the imperialist prejudices still existing amongst large sections of the working class in Britain". Saklatvala had suffered racism at first hand during his years in India. During a debate in the House of Commons in 1923, he gives a vivid description of an unforgettable experience he had at the hands of the British authorities at the turn of the century.

"If I may be permitted just to give something from my memory of a personal character in this matter. In 1902 a plague was having devastating effect all over India. It was to be taken in hand not merely as a grave problem, but as something to save human lives. There was a Professor Haffkin in those days who was the first man who with some measure of success gave out an anti-plague serum for inoculation. His experiments were being conducted on a large scale. I was then associated as secretary with an important committee of welfare work. The Governor of Bombay, who was then himself staying out of Bombay, immediately sent a telegram to Professor Haffkin to go to him with certain facts and figures because the matter was becoming of vital importance. Professor Haffkin asked me to go and assist him. I gave up my work in the office and went to the place where he was staying, and that was his European club. People talk about untouchability! Although I had facts and figures at my disposal, I was prevented from entering the white man's club. Ultimately, when it could not be helped, the messenger of the club after telephoning to various government officials took me to the back yard of the club, led me through the kitchen, and an underground passage to a basement room, where the Professor was asked to see me because I was not a white man. That happened twenty five years ago."

Saklatvala spent the first thirty years of his life in India. He knew what colonialism meant and the racism that it involved. It was why he was so attracted by the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks not only proclaimed their allegiance to socialism, they also demanded the rights of nations to self determination. For Saklatvala the Russian Revolution not only succeeded in overthrowing capitalism, it also smashed the Russian empire. It personified the two beliefs he had by now come to cherish.

The success of the Bolsheviks had been welcomed by many in the British labour movement and not just by the left. In the South London borough of Battersea support for the revolution was particularly strong. Many activists joined the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain, including a number of Labour councillors. Saklatvala was adopted as the parliamentary candidate for Battersea North by the Battersea Labour Party and Trades Council, in June 1921. He had just resigned from the Independent Labour Party, and had joined the Communist Party. At that time it was possible to be both a member of the Communist Party and the Labour Party at the same time. There were no bans on joint membership until 1925.

Given the record of the Battersea Labour Movement since the formation of the Trades Council in 1894, Saklatvala was not an unsurprising choice as their candidate. Organised Labour in Battersea was both militantly socialist and anti-imperialist. Saklatvala was known to a number of activists on the Battersea Trades Council. He was also friendly with the previous Labour candidate, Charlotte Despard, who had just retired to Ireland. Like Saklatvala, Despard was a determined anti-imperialist. Her main concern was Ireland, which was looked upon by the Labour movement as a colonial possession. The demands for colonial liberation usually coupled Ireland and India together.

Over the years the Battersea Labour movement had established for itself quite a reputation for international solidarity. At the time of the Boer War, the Battersea Borough Council, which was controlled by the Trades Council in alliance with the Liberals, had proclaimed its opposition to the conflict. Along with the Trades Council it had helped establish a Stop the War committee which organised demonstrations and meetings in support of the Boers. One of the roads in the borough was named after a Boer General. Collections were made on behalf of the Boers and on one occasion Boer speakers addressed a crowd of over 1400 at Battersea Town Hall. Yet it was an internationalism that was itself tainted with racism. At a Council meeting in February 1903 the Council were asked to support a scheme for the establishment of a General Military Hospital for 20,000 sick soldiers. The scheme was condemned by one councillor as, 'militarism gone mad', and the Council refused to cooperate. In the discussion one of the pro-Boer councillors said, "the Council would not help the Government to

fight Boers or anyone else for the sake of the Jews of Park Lane". Anti semitism, which gave rise to the Aliens Act in 1905, was widespread and influenced even those who were anti-imperialist.

A decade after the ending of the Boer War, Battersea again showed its opposition to colonialism, by electing T. Brogan as its Mayor. Brogan was an Irish nationalist, and the President of the Battersea branch of the United Irish League of Great Britain. He had been a progressive councillor for a number of years. He was described as, "London's first Irish Catholic nationalist Mayor".

The Mayoralty election of the following year 1913, caused an even bigger sensation. In that year John Archer, a Labour councillor, was elected the Mayor of the Borough. Archer, who was of mixed parentage, described himself as a 'man of colour'. He was born in Liverpool. His father was from Trinidad, and his mother was Irish. There was a good deal of speculation in the press preceding his election as to whether he would be elected, but he was supported by the ruling Progressive Alliance who were in the majority on the Council. He was their nominee, and he was the Mayor of the Borough when the First World War broke out. One Progressive councillor in reply to a reporter who suggested that Archer may not be elected because of his colour responded, "we do not recognise any colour prejudices in Battersea". It was a response that was largely true. Even a decade later despite a massive press campaign, Saklatvala's support amongst the Battersea Labour movement remained solid. It was not until the implementation of the notorious 1924 Labour Party Conference resolution, banning communists from membership, that support began to wane. For its continued support for Saklatvala, the Battersea Labour Party and Trades Council was disaffiliated in 1926, and a few months later an official Labour party and Trades Council was established. There was rivalry between the two organisations for a period, but by the time of the 1929 General Election the old Trades Council existed in name only. In 1927 Stephen Sanders, a long time activist in the Battersea Labour movement, was adopted as the official Labour candidate, and this effectively spelt the death knell of Saklatvala's reign. He lost the seat in 1929, and his vote declined even further in the election of 1931. By the time of the next General Election in 1935, in line with the Communist Party's new strategy he urged his supporters in the constituency to vote Labour.

What is significant is that for five years, from Saklatvala's

initial adoption until 1926, there was no challenge to his candidacy from within the local Labour movement. When a challenge did come, it was in response to national influences, and not local politics, and had nothing whatsoever to do with Saklatvala's racial origin.

At his original adoption meeting, in June 1921, according to the Secretary of the Battersea Labour Party, he was selected by an overwhelming majority. At the following two elections of 1923 and 1924, before which he was re-selected, there was no challenge to his candidature from within the local party. It could be argued that Saklatvala presented himself to the Labour movement in Battersea as just another radical socialist — but that was not the case. He never denied his racial origins, and consistent with his view of building unity between British and Indian workers he never forewent an opportunity of trying to cement that unity. Soon after his adoption as Labour candidate, he addressed a meeting of Indians at Caxton Hall at which his main theme was the common interests of Indian and British workers. The meeting expressed its confidence in Saklatvala, and congratulated the Battersea Labour Party on its, "broadminded policy of adopting him as its prospective parliamentary candidate". The meeting further requested that a delegation of Indians attend a meeting of the local Labour Party in order that, "the sentiments of the Indian people can be expressed to the rank and file of the Battersea electors". It was just the kind of initiative that Saklatvala welcomed. While Saklatvala enjoyed widespread support amongst the activists in the Battersea Labour movement, what would be their response to the attacks that would undoubtedly be made on him during the campaigns? The evidence suggests that the claim of the progressive councillor made some ten years before was indeed true, 'Battersea recognises no colour prejudices'.

Throughout all three of Saklatvala's election campaigns, when he was the candidate of the Battersea Trades Council, the press concentrated their attack, not on his Indian origins, but on his revolutionary politics. The 'Daily Telegraph' epitomised this consensus in a report on the 1924 election. "The contest in North Battersea promises to be one of the stiffest fights in the campaign, resolving itself in fact into a grim struggle, as at the last election, between Constitutional Government and Communism." Battersea was referred to as, "one of the four red boroughs in the Metropolis.

To call it the nerve centre of Communism would be no exaggeration". When racism was used by the opponents of Saklatvala, it was to reinforce the view that revolutionaries were somehow alien to Britain. During the 1923 campaign, Hogbin, Saklatvala's opponent, fed information to the press that there were 'foreign gangs' operating in the constituency. These gangs' sole aim was to break up Hogbin's meetings. Initially there was just one gang, referred to by Hogbin as, 'Irish rebels' and which included, 'twenty gunmen'. The next day the newspapers reported that the gang had been joined by another, and Hogbin claimed to have positive knowledge, "that there are two gangs operating in the division, one of Irish Republican gunmen and the another of continental and Russian communists". This view that socialism was somehow foreign was often alluded to in the press. At the start of the 1924 election in Battersea, the Daily Mail set the tone by stating that, "attempts are being made to make free speech impossible. Mr Hogbin is denied the right of speaking at open air meetings by bands of disrupters, in which a foreign element is distinctly noticeable".

The national press in its hostility to Saklatvala concentrated on his politics, rather than his colour. When racism was used, it was used to denigrate socialism as of Russian origin, or alternatively, that its anti-democratic supporters were linked to Republican gunmen from across the Irish sea. The picture the media tried to portray was that socialism was all due to foreign influences.

During the campaigns in Battersea, Saklatvala's opponent made little use of racism. When there was an attempt to attack Saklatvala because of his racial origins, it brought a swift response from Saklatvala's supporters. The occasion was during the height of the 1923 campaign. There had been allegations in nearly all the national newspapers that Saklatvala's supporters were disrupting his opponent's meetings. In response, Saklatvala issued an appeal calling for restraint, and condemning rowdiness. He also made clear that he was committed to democratic participation. The 'Daily Herald' reported, "North Battersea's Labour champion considers it wrong to hold at such times as these, party meetings to be addressed by representatives of one side only. He therefore invites Conservatives and Liberals to attend his meetings, and address his rallies. He also asks for a similar privilege in return". As good as his word, Saklatvala, at one of his election rallies at Latchmere Baths, invited along Liberal and Tory speakers. His

Liberal opponent, Hogbin, declined to attend in person but sent along his representative, a Captain Godfrey. Godfrey used the opportunity to make an attack on Saklatvala that was racist. After first praising Saklatvala's 'splendid sportsmanship' for inviting him to the meeting, Godfrey then went on to proclaim that, "as a representative he had, a distinctive preference for an Englishman". The response from Saklatvala supporters, according to the 'Daily Herald', was, "sharp and noisy". They were on their feet in protest and for a while the whole meeting was in uproar. Undeterred Godfrey continued in a similar tone, and alluded to Saklatvala's, "eastern mentality". It was only Saklatvala's intervention and appeal for calm that allowed Godfrey to be heard. Incidents of this kind do show that Saklatvala's active supporters, those that would attend his meetings, were not prepared to see their candidate subjected to racist slurs. Saklatvala for his part used the meeting to further denounce nationalism and called for the unity of all workers. Saklatvala's appeals for unity, however, stretched only as far as India, Ireland or Egypt. In his election address of that year, his anti-colonialism was restricted to those three countries. He told the voters of Battersea that he stood for, "an immediate transformation of the imperial relations of England with Ireland, Egypt and India". No mention was made of Britain's other colonies. Either consciously or unconsciously Saklatvala, like many on the left at that time, seemed to neglect the aspirations of the African liberation movements. Did he too subscribe to the view that those countries were not yet ready for independence? If he did, then it would reinforce the view expressed by the Communist Party that many living in Britain were prone to imperialist prejudices. Because Saklatvala was Indian it did not follow that he was immune from such attitudes. There is compelling evidence that his contemporary in Battersea, the mixed race John Archer, was undoubtedly influenced by chauvinism. Archer had been subjected to racist slurs when elected mayor in 1913. He had fought back against these attacks, and in this he had been supported by Battersea's Labour movement. Towards the end of his reign as Mayor came the outbreak of the First World War. This was to prove a testing time for all those opposed to nationalism, and Archer, like so many others when the drums rolled and the flags flew, rallied to the supposed patriotic cause. At a Towns Meeting in Battersea, called soon after the war began, he called it, "a just war". He accused the Germans of being 'savages' and demanded their suppression. He

told the audience, "members of the German nation had already descended to a lower level than the savages of bygone days ..... and this country would not stop until the German sway was for ever removed from the civilised world." He went on to applaud the Empire and Britain's greatness. "All people in the Empire were coming forth to fight under the British flag and when they did the Germans would know something about it". He concluded with an appeal for all those present to join the army, and sat down to a rapturous applause from a largely pro-war audience. John Archer, non white and Pan Africanist was certainly no paragon of anti-racism.

Although initially Archer and Saklatvala worked together in the Battersea Labour Party and Trades Council, when the split came over the admissibility of communists, they were on different sides. Archer supported the communists expulsion, and when an official Trades and Labour Council was established in July 1926, Archer became the first secretary of the North Battersea Divisional Labour Party. He campaigned against the old Trades Council which still included communists, and championed Stephen Sanders, Saklatvala's Labour rival at the 1929 General Election. Although Saklatvala and Archer were non whites operating in an overwhelmingly white Labour movement, their careers in the 1920s illustrate that politics and not race was the determining factor when it came to allegiances.

Saklatvala's anti-colonial activity between 1921 and 1928 was concerned with three issues. The exposure of the cruelty of colonial rule, particularly in India, to the workers of Britain. The development of a Communist movement in India, and the creating of links between the Labour movement in Britain and the Indian National Congress. He used his position as an MP to continually raise conditions in the subcontinent in the House of Commons. So much so that he was referred to in the press as the MP for India. It was Saklatvala who suggested that the Congress leader, Nehru, be invited to address Parliament.

In his work in the Communist Party, Saklatvala was used as a link person between India's developing Communist movement and the British Party. He was held in high esteem both in the CPGB and the Communist International for his knowledge both of India and its national liberation movement. That did not prevent him from having a critical attitude towards the Communist

International's anti-colonial strategy, or from being sceptical of the CIs leading spokesperson on India, M N Roy. His heretical views almost led to his expulsion from the Party in 1928. It was only because of the CPGB's resilience to Communist International pressure that he maintained his membership.

Saklatvala also faced other pressures during this period. They were described by his secretary, Reg Bishop, in an obituary in the Daily Worker. "For the first year or two after his election as the MP for Battersea North, there were many who tried to get him to break from the Communist Party. The Undersecretaryship of State for India was the smallest of inducements held out if he would only be more orthodox in his politics". But Saklatvala refused to conform and was to remain a thorn in the side of the establishment long after his parliamentary career had finished. His activities both as a communist and as an anti-imperialist have left their mark, and the strategies he pursued are still argued about sixty years later.

# Shapurji Saklatvala : From Capitalism to Communism

Extract from *The Making of the  
Black Working Class in Britain*

Saklatvala played a glorious role as one of the pioneers of the international working class movement. If, as Lenin said, 'Capital is an international force. Its defeat requires an international brotherhood', then Saklatvala symbolised such an international brotherhood of workers. R. Palme Dutt recognised him as a heroic figure who fought on many fronts: for international communism, for Indian national liberation and for the causes of the British working class movement. Indeed, he became the first Indian to be accepted and loved by British workers.

His development from capitalism to Communism reflects a spiritual odyssey. From a wealthy family background, he was able to make a passionate commitment towards finding a means to end the poverty and misery of the masses in India. As he told Palme Dutt, there were four stages in this spiritual odyssey. First he sought in religion the key that would unlock the door to a new awakening and advance of the nation. He realised, however, that instead of providing a solution, religion led only to passivity and a sanctifying of the existing unacceptable order of society. Second, he turned to science as a means of helping the Indian people. After years of scientific studies (and having been an active welfare

worker in the plague hospitals and slums of Bombay) he found that science alone offered no solution unless it was applied in practice to the economy. Third, he felt that in order to end Indian poverty, industrial development was necessary. This led to the establishment of the Tata iron and steel industry in India. Soon, however, his open advocacy of Indian national liberation ran afoul of the authorities. Consequently, the Tata firm sent him to Britain as their departmental manager. Finally, to climax his spiritual pilgrimage, he entered the world of the National Liberal Club, but quickly found among its members a narrow outlook and snobbish hypocrisy. After confrontation with Morley, then Secretary of State for India, he gravitated towards British working class politics.

Saklatvala was born on 28 March 1874 in Bombay. Since the 1830s the Saklatvala family was a well-known Parsee family in Bombay. He was intensely sensitive to human suffering. Thus, in spite of being born with 'a silver spoon in his mouth' he moved inevitably towards the working masses and a radical ideology. After leaving college, he was devoted to industry and was instrumental in setting up the Tata Iron and Steel works under the guidance of his maternal uncle, J.N. Tata. During this time, there was rising national consciousness in India. The Indian National Congress, already established in 1855, sought British goodwill in order to redress Indian grievances. Saklatvala's interest in politics which brought him in conflict with the British authorities, embarrassed the Tatas. To forestall growing militant nationalism in Bengal and elsewhere in India, British force became more repressive. After this transitional period in Indian politics, Saklatvala began his political life in England.

He interestingly moved from being a Liberal (believing in British goodwill) to an 'arch-enemy' of British imperialism. Indeed, he bravely held on to this uncompromising commitment and attacked imperialism 'in the heart of its stronghold'. After a brief spell of work in the Tata's Manchester office, he came to London where his especially concerned family made him a life-member of the National Liberal Club. This concern was essentially that Saklatvala would become 'respectable' by meeting 'friends' of Indian freedom. Among those whom he met was Lord Morley of the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 (which arrived 'to rally the moderates' in the face of militant nationalism) that contributed towards the division of Indian nationalism along communal lines

through the introduction of separate Hindu and Muslim electorates.

Saklatvala saw this division and its implications clearly and did not deviate from his argument, which was further strengthened by his familiarity with Liberal bankruptcy and hypocrisy concerning the true interests of the Indians. An argument with 'Honest Jack' Morley, resulted in Saklatvala's resignation and his departure from the liberal 'mausoleum'. In 1910 he entered British working class politics through the Independent Labour Party.

Involvement in the ILP proved an unsatisfactory experience. Saklatvala was disappointed by the Party's gradual shift from being Marxist to anti-Marxist. He was in fact in search of a group of true internationalists. Narrow nationalism was redundant; he sought support for the national liberation movement in India. Thus, the ILP was found wanting in that (though championing the cause of British workers) it did not attack the cause of capitalist exploitation and failed to link the British working class with the international working-class movement. To Saklatvala, India's oppression was clearly linked to British capitalists and their exploitation through British imperialism. This belief received a filip in 1917 when the Russian Revolution stirred his imagination and pointed to the possibilities. According to one biographer, he saw this as the precursor to 'a new civilisation — a new social order' which would, in the end, bring liberation to the exploited millions living under the heels of capitalism and imperialism. Alerted to the dangers of the Russian Revolution and its effect on working class and colonial national liberation movements, predictably the British imperialists used every means to discredit it. But in the wave of anti-Soviet propaganda, Saklatvala and others tried to present the other side of the story before the British public. He consolidated his position in 1918 by joining the People's Russian Information Bureau, which spread the message of the Russian Revolution.

At the war's end, the Russian Revolution had the beneficial effect of engendering hope in British and colonial liberation movements. Indeed, colonial working-class movements became more assertive, leading to widespread disturbances in 1919. These colonial developments were not lost on Lenin who formed the Third International in 1919. Saklatvala's response was that the ILP should be affiliated to the Third International to work towards the unity of the workers of the world. This proposal was not accepted

by the ILP. Frustrated, Saklatvala moved irrevocably towards the ideals of the Communist Party, which he joined in 1921. To his lasting credit, he remained a Party member to his death.

Three years after the Russian Revolution, the Communist Party of Great Britain was founded at a time of growing militant activities in the trade union movement. The central political struggle during this new era of militant working class struggle in Britain was support for the new Russian Republic. Thus, the Hands Off Russia Committee established in Britain in the spring of 1919 inaugurated a campaign against British intervention. Moreover, in April 1919, the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party at a joint conference called for the withdrawal of British troops from Russia. Further, the British government's ultimatum to the Soviet Union resulted in radical elements in the British working class threatening a general strike.

Both the Amritsar Massacre and suppression of the Egyptian national liberation movement drew protest from the young Communist Party and from the Labour Left. In the CP Saklatvala found what he was looking for: an organisation which took a strong stand on international solidarity on national liberation and for ending exploitation.

According to one observer, it is no exaggeration to claim that Saklatvala was a product of the British working-class movement. Indeed, his devotion to this movement was undoubted. Historically, this international aspect of working-class unity was a continuing theme of the British working class movement. In the struggle for the reform of Parliament, the London Workingmen's Association was formed 'to secure political rights for the workers after the failure to win working-class representation in 1832'. In fact, it was this organisation which in 1838 produced the People's Charter, which in turn became the rallying point for a revolutionary movement which, at the outset, recognised the working-class struggle as an international one.

Soon after Saklatvala came to England, he took an interest in the trade union movement. After joining the CP he became a keen and active trade union member. This involvement was noted by the Daily Worker: 'Night after night, year after year, in all parts of Britain he carried out his task of working class agitation, education and organisation. No comrade ever did more of his work so uncomplainingly as comrade Saklatvala ..... No call was ever made

upon (him) to which he did not respond. In spite of bad health, a 'dicky' heart, he displayed unusual vitality. This unselfish commitment was observed by both organisers and workers. He cared about reaching the workers, travelling widely on speaking tours and sleeping rough 'even on the floor of the corridor in a crowded train — certainly never in a first class sleeper'. Soon this dedication brought him deserved recognition from British workers. This was evident when Saklatvala was able to draw a crowd of 1500 people, while one of the Blackshirt 'stars' spoke to a 'small audience'. In fact, as soon as Saklatvala began speaking, the small crowd deserted the Fascist and turned to listen to the Communist.

Saklatvala's involvement in the trade union movement had deepened over the years, forming the essential base of his politics. Indeed, he was not only an active member of the Central Workers' Union, he also joined the Clerks' Union and the Co-operative Union. Moreover, he was elected as a delegate by the Trades Union Congress of India to represent them at various trade union congresses in England. His popularity among rank and file workers had grown enormously.

In the General Election of October 1922 he contested the seat of Battersea North. His candidature aroused much debate and discussion. Eventually, however, he received the support of the Battersea Trades and Labour Council, and the endorsement of the Labour Party NEC. It was agreed that Saklatvala should run as a Labour candidate. Indeed, he pledged himself publicly to support the Labour Party's Constitution and policy. In his election address, he wrote:

In spite of desperate and ludicrous efforts on the part of Liberals and Tories alike to split the Working Class Movement into hostile fragments, THE LABOUR PARTY IS TODAY THE ONLY PARTY IN GREAT BRITAIN THAT STANDS SOLIDLY TOGETHER. The scare-cry of 'Communist' which is sure to be raised by eleventh-hour leaflets will fortunately not frighten the electors of North Battersea.....

This statement is understandable, given the fact that those were the years when the CP was trying to obtain affiliation to the Labour Party. In fact, at this time, Saklatvala's statements and general attitude towards the Labour Party were fundamentally in line with Communist Party policy. During this campaign he found in Mrs Charlotte Despard a most active supporter. Saklatvala won

the seat by a clear majority of 2000 votes but lost it in the November 1923 Election, by a narrow margin. In the interval between the 1923 election and that of 1924, which brought the first minority Labour Government to an end, the Labour Conference of October 1924 banned Communists from standing as Labour candidates, and excluded individual Communists from Labour Party membership. Saklatvala, who had attended this conference as the St Pancras Labour Party delegate was, in effect, forced to contest the Battersea North seat as a Communist candidate in 1924. With the overwhelming support of the Battersea North LP, he narrowly defeated his Liberal opponent to win the seat in the Zinoviev Letter election.

During both terms as an MP, Saklatvala worked closely with the left-wing Scottish ILP members. With his broad outlook, he emphasised the connection between the workers' struggle in different parts of the Empire. Naturally, he was concerned with the problems of colonial workers and peasants, particularly those in India. There were two organisations in Britain which provided connections between the British Labour movement and India. There was, of course, Annie Besant's Home Rule League. Towards the close of the First World War, the League had aroused support for its aims among ILP branches and trades councils in Yorkshire, South Wales and in some of the larger industrial towns.

Although Saklatvala was a member of the Home Rule League, he sought to fill another need by forming the Workers' Welfare League in 1916. Its original aim, to work with Indian seamen in London, was broadened to include matters affecting the working conditions of all groups of Indian workers. Moreover, when the All-India Trades Union Congress (AITUC) was established in 1921, the Workers' Welfare League became its agent in Britain. Apart from Saklatvala, among the WWL's leading members during its early years, were Arthur Pugh (until about 1924) J. Potter Wilson and George Lansbury. Predictably, given Saklatvala's political perspective, by the mid- 1920s the WWL was identified with the Communists and the Left generally. After the political rupture of the 1926 General Strike, the League's shift to the left was viewed with considerable hostility by both the Labour Party leadership and the TUC General Council. If Saklatvala's activities in Britain were monitored, thereafter, he was closely watched.

Apart from being a black Communist MP in Britain, his political career had always been controversial. However, he re-

mained undeterred in his passion to end oppression. During this turbulent period, he played a full part in the many industrial and political disputes. As an outsider, he was the perfect scapegoat. In October 1921, his home was searched; in 1925, although appointed a member of the British delegation to the Inter-parliamentary Union Congress in Washington, the American Secretary of State revoked his visa; and on the first day of the General Strike (4 May 1926) he was arrested and charged with sedition for a speech he made on May Day urging the Army not to fire on the people. Forty years later, a *Sunday Times* writer described Saklatvala as one of the instigators of the General Strike. In the face of this onslaught, he remained unbowed. He refused to be bound over and was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, which was served in Wormwood Scrubs. Moreover, during the period of his arrest and trial, his home (and those of other well-known Communists) was again raided. These experiences seemed to have strengthened Saklatvala's resolve. After his release he continued to be active by addressing meetings on behalf of the locked-out miners. His imprisonment in Britain served only to heighten the struggle of workers elsewhere in the Empire.

Since he settled in England, he had been back to India three times: in 1912-13 (a family visit), in 1913-14 by himself; and finally (after some difficulty in getting permission to enter the country) he arrived in Bombay on 14 January 1927. On his third visit, he received a hero's welcome from most sections of the Indian nationalists. Like Gandhi, he supported organised labour in South Africa and directed attention to the need for trade union and peasant organisations. Moreover, he attended the AITUC Conference as a fraternal delegate, was officially welcomed by several large municipal corporations, and addressed huge audiences. Whilst the official authorities tried to divide the people, he appealed for communal unity in the essential struggle for an independent India. In this, he urged the left to work within the Congress Party. His experience and involvement with British working-class politics made his appeal to the Indian people more passionate and memorable. He was fully aware of Gandhi's presence and influence. Before he left India, he published an Open Letter to Gandhi whose policies he severely criticised. In the correspondence between them, Gandhi's reply was published on 17 March 1927 in the *Bombay Daily Mail*. More letters passed between them, all of which were published in 1970. During this last visit, Saklatvala spent

three months in India.

When he returned to Britain, India became a no-go area — it was excluded from the list of countries for which his passport was valid. He became so dangerous that he was refused entry to Egypt on his way to India. As he found out, his real enemies, ironically, were Labour members such as Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India and Arthur Henderson, Foreign Secretary, who upheld the ban on his entry into India when the Labour Party was returned to office in 1929. He was also refused admission into Belgium in 1929, while on his way to attend a League Against Imperialism meeting. The League had an important bearing on Saklatvala's politics. Earlier in February 1926, the League was founded after meetings in Berlin and Brussels. Thereafter the organisation became the League Against Imperialism, with George Lansbury as Chairman. After his resignation, two months later, James Maxton replaced him. Willi Munzenburg became one of the two international secretaries, and Jawaharlal Nehru, Saklatvala and Diego Riviera of Mexico were members of the Executive Committee. Reginald Bridgeman, the former British Foreign Office diplomat, was secretary of the British section. Clearly, the LAI was not popular with the world's press or the Indian government which banned all its literature. More witch-hunting was to come. In January 1929, Saklatvala, Maxton, Bridgeman, A.J. Cook and Alex Gossip, on their way to attend a meeting of the League in Cologne, arrived in Ostend where Cook and Gossip were allowed to continue their journey, while the other three were arrested and sent back to Britain. Saklatvala, with no illusions, was right about the international conspiracy of capital.

Unfortunately at this time, the political divisions on the left had hit a new low. Before the Communist International had taken a hard line against reformism Saklatvala had already been critical of the Labour Party. He argued that since the Party had turned itself into a liberal reformist group, the CP, given that it was the only anti-capitalist party, should seek trade union affiliations. Moreover, at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International in the summer of 1928, Saklatvala, with R. Palme Dutt and Harry Pollitt, demanded a radical change in policy. This was achieved at the eleventh Congress held between November and December 1929 at Leeds. Earlier, in the General Election of 1929, Saklatvala lost his seat to the Labour candidate, who polled twice as many votes. The

following year, Saklatvala stood again in a by-election in Shuttleston, Glasgow, but lost. In 1931, he again contested a Battersea seat, but failed miserably, polling only half the number of votes he had received in 1929. It was a sound victory for the Conservative candidate, and a reflection that the political tide had turned their way.

During the remaining years of his life, Saklatvala kept up a gruelling schedule, speaking at meetings across the country. Among others he was particularly concerned with unemployment, the central issue at the time. Together with Reg Bishop, his friend and secretary, he visited the Soviet Union for the third time. He was impressed by the changes he had seen among the non-Russian peoples in central Asia. A year later, he was again active in electioneering. This time, he campaigned for Harry Pollitt in the Rhondda, and Willie Gallacher in West Fife. Indeed, he continued to address meetings until two weeks before his death from a heart attack on 16 June 1936.

*On The Occassion of Its' 60th Anniversary*

## **Importance of Dutt Bradley Document**

*Harkishan Singh Surjeet*

We are reproducing here "The Anti-Imperialist People's Front In India" written by Rajni Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley, popularly known as the Dutt-Bradley thesis. Both of them were leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain. In this document, while giving an analysis of the situation prevailing in India at that time, they also project the strategic alliance that would be required in the struggle against imperialism as well as the tactical approach that will have to be worked out in different stages. The role of the various classes in this struggle against imperialism and the varied forms to be adopted, the role of the working class in the struggle as well as the necessity of its intervention enabling it to acquire the leadership of the struggle in the process, has been pointed out.

Though addressed to all the anti-imperialist forces and particularly to the Left inside the national liberation movement, in the form of fraternal advice, it was meant to make necessary correction to put the Communist Party of India on right rails.

The Communist Party of Great Britain had been playing an important role in the development of the working class movement and the Communist Party in our country since the days of its formation in 1920, vehemently supporting the cause of complete independence from British imperialism. It sent many comrades to work in the trade union movement and three of them were also implicated in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, which was aimed at

suppressing the communist movement in the country. The role of both Rajni Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley was very significant in this context. In fact Rajni Palme Dutt had undertaken a deep study of the economic structure in India prevailing at that time and gave a detailed analysis of the classes that are interested in maintaining British imperialist rule as well as the conditions and role of the overwhelming majority of the Indian population — working class, peasantry, intelligentsia, other sections of the middle class, which though vacillating plays its role at different stages. His book "India Today" has been a classical text not only for the communists but for all progressive forces in India.

To understand the significance of the document being published here, one has to take a look at the background in which it was written.

The Communist Party of India was formed in Tashkent in 1920. It began addressing appeals to the Indian National Congress emphasising on the objective of complete independence from British rule. This was a big contribution the communists had made, as until the Lahore session of the Congress, the Congress had always demanded dominion status. While raising the demand for complete independence, however, the Communist Party, rather than taking note of the growing upsurge among the people, which the Congress Party was trying to channelise, was remaining aloof from the national movement headed by the Congress and was emphasising on demarcating itself from the bourgeoisie which perhaps to an extent was necessary in the initial stages but with the masses coming into action it was not correct to take a negative attitude. However, in the absence of a centralised leadership, communist groups in Bombay and Punjab continued to participate in the Congress led national movement. With the rise of fascist tendencies in the background of developing capitalist crisis, communist parties in various countries had started raising the question of united front of the working class, making direct appeal to the workers and social democratic forces. But this was mainly confined to West European countries. Even in the colonial and semi-colonial countries initial efforts were made to unite with the national bourgeoisie fighting against imperialism as happened in China in the form of the cooperation between the Communists and the Kuomintang. In the background of the betrayal of Chiang-ke-shek forces and certain other developments in various other countries,

the 6th Congress of the Communist International met in 1928 and adopted the Colonial Thesis.

With regard to India, the Colonial Thesis state :

"In India the policy of British imperialism, which used to retard the development of native industry, evoked great dissatisfaction among the Indian bourgeoisie. The class consolidation of the latter which replaced its former division into religious sects and castes, and which was expressed in the fusion of the Indian National Congress (organisation of the bourgeoisie) with the Muslim League effected in 1916, confronted British imperialists with a national united front in the country. Fear of the revolutionary movement during the war compelled British imperialism to make concessions to the native bourgeoisie which found expression in the economic sphere, in insignificant parliamentary reforms introduced in 1919". It points out that the first great anti-imperialist movement in India was the first non-cooperation movement of 1919-22, which it states "ended in the betrayal of the cause of the national revolution by the Indian bourgeoisie".

Further, the Colonial Thesis points out that the attitude of the national bourgeoisie towards imperialism is not the same everywhere. "They do not adopt a uniform attitude in relation to imperialism". While there are comprador bourgeoisie that directly serve the interests of imperialist capital, the "remaining portions of the native bourgeoisie, especially the portions reflecting the interests of native industry, support the national movement and represent a special vacillating compromising tendency which may be designated as National Reformism". It further states that "In India and Egypt we still observe, for the time being, the typical bourgeois-nationalist movement — an opportunist movement subject to great vacillations, balancing between imperialism and revolution."

Analysing thus, it concludes that to emancipate the working class and the toiling people from the influence of bourgeois parties, "it is necessary to reject the formation of any kind of bloc between the Communist Party and the national reformist opposition", though subsequently it was realised that this understanding of the 6th Congress of the Comintern, as was stated later "bore a definite shade of sectarianism". Subsequently, 11th plenum of the Economic Commission of the Communist International (ECCI) in 1931 nailed down the policy of right reformist leaders of the social democracy during the world economic crisis. It also showed that

social democracy did everything in its power to counter the development of the workers revolutionary struggle. It was for this very reason that discontent began growing amongst the rank and file against the line which the leaders pursued, the Left groups alone demanding a more acute struggle against fascism. The 11th Plenum of the E.C.C.I stated that the entire development of social democracy "is an uninterrupted process of evolution towards fascism" and that this line was an obstacle in the way of rallying all the anti-fascist forces. At the same time, the experience of the Communist parties was asserting itself in different forms.

Communist Party of India, in those days was not able to organise any centre. The main leadership was behind bars accused in the Meerut conspiracy case. The bold statements made by them before the court, popularized the ideas of socialism and communism. In fact until 1933 the communist movement was virtually deprived of an all India Centre. In 1933, a new central committee was elected which took over the leadership of the Party on a national plane. The Party also joined the Comintern in 1933.

Under the impact of these policies, the Communist parties in the countries of the East, while carrying on their struggle came forward with radical programmes. Basing themselves on exaggerated evaluations of the readiness of the masses for a democratic revolution, they gave the slogan of workers and peasants government, which was considered to be the beginning of the development of socialist revolution. The draft platform of the Communist Party of India demanded the "establishment of a Soviet government", the "creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic", while rejecting the possibility of the participation of the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist struggle.

This was a period when faced with the rise of fascist forces in Germany and other countries the demand was being raised for the formation of popular front against fascism and appeals were made to the working class and other forces of social democracy to join hands. The French and German Communist parties had taken initiative in this direction. In India, though the platform of action contained the sectarian approach, practically after the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement discontent was growing among the Left inside the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party came into existence in 1935 and in many places communists in tune with the mass mood started working inside the Congress.

It was during this period that the All India Kisan Sabha, the All India Trade Union Congress and the All India Students Federation were formed. Communists and socialists had gained considerable influence and they were also working inside the Congress, though they were yet to come forward with a clear cut analysis of the political situation prevailing then and the class alliance to be built for achieving the goal of complete independence and the importance of various means to mobilise the people. It was against this background that this thesis came.

The thesis emphasised on the role of the Congress party in the national liberation struggle though it had given up for the time being the attempt to direct the struggle. This document, highlights the need for unity in the struggle against imperialism. It correctly analysed the two wings working inside the Congress at that time — Babu Rajendra Prasad advocates unity with the moderate who are outside the Congress, with "the friends and allies of the British rulers, whose programme is one of cooperation with imperialism and entry into office in order to assist the slave constitution to function successfully." The document states that unity in the struggle against imperialism cannot be an abstract one involving the entire Indian population. It points out that certain "sections have their interest bound up with imperialism, e.g. the princes, landlords, moneylenders, reactionary religious and political elements which live on exploiting communal differences, elements among the merchants and wealthy classes who favour cooperation with imperialism etc." It calls for taking into account these realities the class structure and for uniting the overwhelming majority of the population against imperialism. Keeping this in view, it advanced the common platform for such unity :

i) "a line of consistent struggle against imperialism, and against the existing slave constitution, for the complete independence of India;"

ii) "active struggle for the vital needs of the toiling masses."

This was characterised as United Anti-Imperialist Front for the struggle against imperialism. It details the role of the Indian National Congress and states that the Indian National Congress can play a great part and a "foremost part in the work of realising the Anti-Imperialist People's Front", while at the same time pointing out that "as it exists at present, is not yet the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle" as its constitution

leaves out the broadest sections of the masses. It points out that the programme of the Congress does not clearly express the programme of the national struggle and that "It does not at present draw out and guide mass activity, but rather acts as a brake upon it."

To make the anti-imperialist front effective and broad based drawing in the overwhelming majority of the people, it calls for combining the struggles of the mass organisations of the workers, peasants and other such organisations and the Congress. While stating that a clear cut programme of complete independence has to be there, it criticises the tactics of "non-violence" as a dogma being at variance with ground realities. It also points out to the ideological struggle that has to be carried on simultaneously and for the consolidation of the unity of Left in the Congress, while at the same time not forgetting the leading role to be achieved by the Communist Party in the struggle for the united front.

This document played a very important part in the working out of the strategy and tactics of the struggle for independence at that stage. The Communist Party working on the basis of this document came to the forefront of the national struggle, influencing it. The resolutions adopted at the subsequent Congress sessions vindicates this position. Many Congress committees came into the hands of the communists, contributing to radicalising the whole movement. This document had played a big role in giving a correct orientation to the Communist movement in India enabling it to radicalise the Congress led movement as well as in developing independent class organisations of the peasantry and other sections of the toiling masses.

# The Anti-Imperialist People's Front in India

*R. Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley*

The Indian national struggle is to-day at a critical point. British Imperialism has succeeded in imposing its constitution of open subjection in the face of the opposition of the entire Indian nation. The first stage of the struggle against it has met with defeat. For the moment there is confusion in the national camp as to the path forward. At the same time the continuously worsening situation and sharpening struggle of the masses of workers and peasants calls ever more loudly for organisation and leadership.

If we look at the world situation we see that all over the world the anti-imperialist struggle is gathering strength and advancing. In Egypt the united mass struggle is exercising powerful pressure on British Imperialism. In China the popular forces of resistance to partition and for national unity and liberation are gathering around the central core of Soviet China, consisting of at least sixty millions who have already thrown off the imperialist yoke. In Abyssinia the entire people is fighting for their freedom with arms in hand and driving back the foreign invader, and the popular forces in all countries are supporting their struggle. In South America the People's Anti-Imperialist Front is making great advances.

What of the situation in India? Since the abandonment of mass civil disobedience we see confusion of forces and no powerful

united movement of resistance to British Imperialism, which rules with more triumphant reaction than ever. Some voices are raised to advocate co-operation in working the new constitution. Others advocate retreat from the political field to concentrate on village industries or on the removal of caste disabilities. Gandhi has proclaimed his retirement from politics. The National Congress, apart from the electoral field, has given up for the time the attempt to direct the struggle, and even in the electoral field is sharply divided on the future policy, to accept office or not to accept office.

The peasants and workers, suffering under ever heavier economic distress, find themselves without united and centralised leadership in their sporadic struggles. Over the past ten years we have witnessed tremendous strike waves and economic unrest, hundreds of thousands of textile workers, railwaymen, jute workers and dockers carrying on insistent strike struggles with heroic determination against wage cuts and worsened conditions. Among the peasantry, the hardest hit section of the population, their inability to meet the demands of the landlord, money lender and collector, results in evictions strikes and clashes with the armed forces of the government. Alongside this there is terrible mass unemployment seriously affecting not only the workers and peasants, but also the middle class.

How can we transform this situation? How can we unite and mobilise a powerful movement of resistance to British Imperialism and for the needs of the masses? This is the key problem of the Indian situation.

The Indian National Congress will shortly be meeting in Lucknow. The representatives of the main body of the Indian national struggle will have to consider the problems of the path forward. What shall be the programme at the coming elections? What shall be the policy of the national representatives who are elected? What shall be the future line of direction of the national struggle to defeat imperialism? The left wing elements are pressing for a line of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism, for an advance of the programme to reflect the growing influence of socialist ideas, and for the organisation of the workers and peasants as the decisive practical task. The right wing elements are making gestures for unity with the Liberals and other elements outside the congress, who have abstained from participation in the common struggle and stand for co-operation with imperialism. The discussion will be sharp. The decisions will be of far-reaching signifi-

cance.

It is at this stage that the present proposals are put forward for the consideration of all who, whether inside or outside the Congress, are concerned for the advance of Indian national liberation.

### THE FIRST NEED-UNITY

Every Indian patriot will recognise that the first need for the successful advance of the Indian national struggle, the key need of the present situation, is unity of all the anti-imperialist forces in the common struggle. This is the indispensable condition for the successful fight against the existing and ever-sharpening reaction and oppression.

But what is Unity? Talk of Unity, of the United Front, is to-day on the lips of all. But many different proposals are put forward in its name.

Thus some, as in the recent speeches of Babu Rajendra Prasad, late President of Congress, urge unity with moderate or right wing elements at present outside the Congress, such as the Liberals, the friends and allies of the British rulers, whose programme is one of co-operation with imperialism and entry into office in order to assist the slave constitution to function successfully. Naturally, the Liberals from their point of view, as shown in the recent speech of V.S. Srinivasa Sastri at Madras, heartily welcome such proposals of unity, provided they may maintain their programme of service to imperialism since they have no mass following themselves and only so may hope to win a basis to enter office and carry out their programme.

But will this strengthen the anti-imperialist forces? While it is evident that all elements, including from among the Liberals, who are prepared to break with co-operation with imperialism and accept the programme of the national struggle, are welcome to the common front, this can only be on condition of acceptance of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism for complete independence (as already laid down in the Congress programme by the Lahore decisions). It is obvious that a so-called "unity" with the friends of the British, achieved by surrendering the struggle against imperialism, could only weaken the united front against imperialism and not strengthen it.

### THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST PEOPLE'S FRONT

From this it follows that Unity cannot be regarded as something

abstract, but can only be unity on the basis on the anti-imperialist struggle.

Much as we may desire to see unity of the whole Indian people in the struggle against foreign rule, we have to recognise that there cannot be an abstract "unity" of the entire Indian population, 100 percent, all sections and classes, against British Imperialism. Some sections have their interest bound up with imperialism, e.g., the princes, landlords, moneylenders, reactionary religious and political elements which live on exploiting communal differences, elements among the merchants and wealthy classes who favour co-operation with imperialism, etc. The cunning British rulers have known how to follow the old maxim "Divide and rule" and build up their dominion on elements of support within the population; and in consequence, in estimating the forces of the national struggle, we have to take into account the realities of the class-structure of the population under the conditions of imperialism.

But there can be unity of the overwhelming majority of the population against imperialism, i.e., of all the popular masses who suffer under imperialist rule, and of all the elements from other classes who are prepared to join in the common struggle for national liberation.

What is the necessary basis for such unity of all the anti-imperialist forces, such as can unite all the forces of the National Congress, the trade unions, the peasants' organisations, the youth organisations, etc., on a common platform in a mighty common front?

It is clear that the essential minimum basis for such a grouping is (1) a line of consistent struggle against imperialism, and against the existing salve constitution, for the complete independence of India; (2) active struggle for the vital needs of the toiling masses.

This is the unity of the Indian people we want, the United Anti-Imperialist People's Front for the struggle against imperialism.

### THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN REALISING UNITY

At this point the question will be asked: what is the relation of the National Congress to the Anti-Imperialist People's Front? Is not the National Congress, as many of its leaders claim, already the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle?

The National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of the Indian people for the national

struggle, and remains to-day the principle existing mass organisation of many diverse elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed to weaken the degree of unity that has been achieved though the National Congress, and the proposals that are here put forward are only intended to endeavour to find means to assist and extend that unity to a still wider front.

We on the left have many times criticised sharply the existing leadership and tactics of the National Congress. We have found many decisions and policies, such as the calling-off of mass civil disobedience in 1922, at the moment when it was ready to enter on its greatest strength, the uncertain voice on the aim of independence, the wavering in the relations to imperialism, the siding with the landlords against the peasants, the Delhi Pact, the co-operation in the Round Table Conference, the Poona calling-off of the struggle in 1934, disastrous to the true interests of the national struggle and equivalent to surrender to imperialism. We have traced these decisions and policies to the existing dominant bourgeois leadership, whose interests often conflict with the interests of the masses and with the interests of the national struggle. These issues, of the utmost importance for the future, need to be discussed and fought out. But this criticism against particular policies is in no sense intended as a criticism against the masses in the Congress. Our opposition to a particular leadership or to particular policies is only intended to assist the mass army of the national struggle represented by the Congress and to assist and strengthen the national struggle.

The National Congress can play a great part and a foremost part in the work of realising the Anti-Imperialist People's Front. It is even possible that the National Congress by the further transformation of its organisation and programme, may become the form of realisation of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front; for it is the reality that matters, not the name.

But it is necessary to recognise that the National Congress, as it exists at present, is not yet the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle. Its constitution still leaves out the broadest sections of the masses. Its programme does not yet express with full clearness the programme of the national struggle. Its leadership cannot yet be recognised as the leadership of the national struggle. It does not at present draw out and guide mass activity, but rather acts as a brake upon it.

What is needed, without impairing the degree of unity that has

been achieved through the National Congress, is to strengthen and extend this unity to a broader front and to develop to a new stage the organisation and leadership of the mass struggle against imperialism.

### **DRAW IN THE MASSES**

The National Congress is at present based, not on the union of all elements supporting the national struggle, but on a restrictive individual membership, with certain limitations of franchise and of a special ideology or "creed," which prevents it from embracing the broadest front of all who support the national struggle.

The mass organisations of the workers and peasants, the trade unions and peasants' unions and all similar collective mass organisations, constituting the most important forces of the national struggle are at present outside the National Congress. Only when all these forces are combined, the mass organisations of the workers and peasants together with the National Congress, whether in a united front agreement or by the collective affiliation of these organisations to the Congress, will we have achieved a broad united national front capable of developing as a real Anti-Imperialist People's Front and drawing behind it the overwhelming majority of the population, the workers, the peasants and the middle classes in a single army of the national struggle. Within such a bloc the working class can increasingly realise its role of vanguard, to lead to victory the Indian revolution.

The first aim should therefore be to establish a united front of the National Congress with all the existing mass organisations of the trade unions, peasants' unions, youth associations or other anti-imperialist mass organisations, in a broad Anti-Imperialist People's Front on the basis of the struggle against imperialism and its constitution and for organising the struggle of the masses for their immediate demands.

At the same time we should seek to amend the constitution of the National Congress in such a way as to permit of the collective affiliation with delegate representation, of the trade unions, peasants' unions, youth organisations, etc. This collective affiliation should be carried out not only on an All-India scale (All-India Trade Union Congress to the National Congress), but equally in the provinces and on a district and local scale the whole way through, thus bringing the National Congress into direct and continuous association with the masses. This collective affiliation is important,

not only for the immediately existing mass organisations, but for the whole network of trade unions and peasants' unions gradually embracing wider and wider sections of the masses, which Congress should devote its most active efforts to assist in building up as the strongest pillars of the national struggle.

The possibility of such collective affiliation is illustrated, not only by the examples of the European Labour Parties, but still more closely by the example of the old national-revolutionary Kuomintang (before the betrayal by Chiang Kai Shek) at the height of its strength when it grouped, along with individual political members, trade unions, peasants' organisations and the Communist Party, and on this basis swept forward from strength to strength, proving the most powerful and victorious weapon up to then devised for the colonial struggle against imperialism.

While it may take a necessary process of time to carry through the campaign and introduce collective affiliation into the constitution of the Congress, no time should be lost in already setting up on a local, district, provincial, and if possible All-India scale, joint bodies of the Congress Committees, Trade Unions, peasant unions, youth associations, Congress socialist groups and other groups and anti-imperialist organisations, uniting for the purposes of combining the campaign against imperialism in the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

Actually united front bodies have been already set up in localities- not permanent but temporary bodies, which show the possibilities- in places like Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere. United front demonstrations and meetings were held in Bombay in February last year against the new slave constitution; these and similar actions were supported by Trade Unionists, Congress Socialists, Congress-men, Communists, etc. These actions of course were only the very first signs, but they show the urge for, and possibilities of, the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

## DEMOCRATISE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CONGRESS

In order that the Congress shall really become based on the masses, it is not sufficient merely in a formal fashion to draw the mass organisations into its structure; it is necessary to elicit the initiative and responsibility of the masses in the direction and policy of the Congress, so that the policy shall really become governed from below.

The existing working of the Congress machinery cannot be regarded as democratic. In practice a very small handful of leaders hold absolute control. In particular, the Working Committee, which has the greatest power and takes the most important executive decisions, is not an elected body, and cannot be regarded as representative of the sections of opinion in the rank and file of the Congress. Similarly, in the provinces and localities the degree of control from below is very weak.

An exhaustive overhauling of the constitution is necessary in order to bring it into accord with modern democratic conceptions of a popular party, and to ensure, not only the forms of democracy, but that these shall be realised in the practical working- i.e., widening of facilities for raising issue and putting forward resolutions from the membership, prior circulation of agenda with opportunities for discussion, mandating of delegates, etc., active political life and discussion in all the local organisations, electing from below of all committees and officers, etc.

#### A CLEAR PROGRAMME OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE

Then again much requires to be done to establish and ensure universal acceptance of a clear and unambiguous programme of anti-imperialist struggle both in the National Congress and for the whole Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

At present, despite the decisions of the Lahore Congress on the aim of independence, there is still much confusion even on the central aim. Definitions of the meaning of "Purna Swaraj" are as thick as black-berries on a bush, and cover the most contradictory notions. The latest definition by the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee in September, 1934 ("includes unfettered control over the army and other defence forces, external affairs, fiscal and commercial matters, and financial and economic policy") goes back on the goal of independence and returns to the pre-Lahore aim of Dominion Status.

It is essential to establish in unmistakable terms the aim of complete independence of India as the unchangeable aim of the Indian national struggle, and therewith the rejection of all compromise and negotiation with imperialism for half measures, co-operation in working the constitution, etc.

Further, it is essential to link up the programme of the fight for

independence with the immediate political demands of the struggle against imperialism and with the immediate demands of the workers and peasants for their vital needs.

The details of such a programme could be worked out in common by representatives of all the organisations concerned. Thus for example, such a programme might include :

(1) The aim of complete independence for India.  
 (2) Freedom of speech, press, organisation, assembly, strikes and picketing.

(3) Repeal of all exceptional and repressive laws, ordinances and anti-labour laws (Criminal Amendment Act, Press Act, etc.).

(4) Release of all political prisoners, detenus and internees.

(5) Against reductions of wages and dismissals of workers; for an adequate minimum wage and 8-hour day; for 50 per cent, reduction in rents and against the seizure of peasant land for debt by imperialists, native princes, zemindars and moneylenders.

The particular immediate demands of the struggle could be worked out and varied according to the locality and the particular conditions and stage.

A central rallying slogan for the whole movement could be provided by the demand for a Constituent Assembly; the conditions under which this demand could be usefully taken up and made the centre of agitation and propaganda are considered later in the present article. A platform of this type requires to be established as the common platform of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

Similarly, the constitution and platform of the Congress requires to be worked out anew in the light of this, laying down in simple and clear form the aim of complete independence, the line of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism and the fight for the needs of the workers and peasants. Such a platform can unite all sincere elements of the national struggle, while excluding only those elements which seek to co-operate with imperialism.

A similar clearing is necessary with regard to the basic tactics of the Congress and of the national struggle.

The existing ideology of "non-violence," which is still made a compulsory part of the Congress creed, is to-day a survival which is more and more visibly at variance with the realities of the struggle and less and less corresponds to the outlook of large sections of the national movement. Many prominent members of the Congress, who have formally to subscribe to this dogma as the

conditions of their participation in its mass activities, to-day privately declare their disbelief in it. This is not a healthy situation. While many sections may still be under the influence of the theories of "non-violence," to make this a dogma compulsory on all sections is to place an obstacle in the way of the unity of the national front. In fact the experience of the nearly two decades since the war has abundantly shown that the conception of "non-violence" has been used, not merely in opposition to the fruitless policies of individual terrorism or sporadic outbreaks of a minority, but to shackle and hold in all effective mass activity and the development along the lines of the class struggle of the most powerful weapons against imperialism or mass resistance to imperialist violence, and thus leaving free play for the violence of imperialism, has been a dangerous and paralysing influence on the advance of the national struggle and the principal cause of the relative stagnation and failure of advance in India, despite the enormous sacrifices made, compared with other colonial countries. China and Abyssinia have shown how a people fights for its freedom against the imperialist enemy. In Egypt to-day, the higher degree of aggressive mass activity is reflected in the far greater readiness of British Imperialism to offer concessions. It is essential that the Indian national movement should free itself from the paralysing conceptions of passive "non-violence" if it is to defeat its enemy. A sharp, ideological struggle needs to be conducted on this question, but a struggle in the ideological field by way of ceaseless explaining and wining over. This issue should not be allowed to split the national front.

The Congress creed in consequence needs revision in accordance with the real conditions of the struggle. The dogma of "non-violence" should be omitted. The entire emphasis should be placed on the development of the mass struggle, on the work of organisation of the workers and peasants as the primary task in the field of organisation, on the active taking up to the immediate demands of the workers and peasants for their vital needs, and the linking of this struggle with the political anti-imperialist struggle.

### CONSOLIDATION OF THE LEFT WING

In order to realise the Anti-Imperialist People's Front and to carry through these urgently necessary changes in the constitution, organisation, policy and work of the National Congress, it is essential that all left wing elements in the Congress should fight in

unison on a common platform for these vital needs.

In the past there has been much dispersion of effort, division and mutual sniping between the left wing forces, thus playing into the hands of the domination of the right wing leadership. While it is necessary and desirable that the differences of political outlook and conception which exist between the different groupings should be thoroughly discussed and cleared in comradely discussion, this should not stand in the way of the fullest co-operation and common working on all the issues on which agreement can be reached, both within the Congress and in the immediate daily struggle.

Congress Socialists, Trade Unionists, Communists and Left Congressmen should all be able to unite on the essentials of a minimum programme of anti-imperialist struggle for complete independence of organisation of the masses and development of mass struggle, and of the fight for changes in the Congress constitution, policy, organisation and leadership to forward these aims. The Congress Socialist Party can play an especially important part in this as the grouping of all the radical elements in the existing Congress. It is of the greatest importance that every effort should be made to clarify questions of programme and tactics in the Congress Socialist Party.

It is in this way that the first stage of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front could be built up already in the common fight, stressing particularly the local, district and provincial basis.

At the same time it is essential to recognise that the task of consolidation of the left wing forces renders more necessary and responsible than ever the role and the activity of the Communists in this process, since they have the most responsible role to play in ensuring the political clearness of the fight, in pressing forward the drive to unity in action, and guiding the aim of the movement towards the goal of political and social liberation.

Through the consolidation of the left wing forces the first stage of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front can be built up already in the common fight, particular stress being laid in the early stages upon its development on a local and district basis.

## THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT IN THE ELECTIONS

The question of the elections is of cardinal importance for the anti-imperialist front.

On the one hand, it is essential that the clear line of the anti-imperialist front, the line of consistent struggle for complete independence, against all co-operation with imperialism and its constitution, and for the demands of the masses, should be challengingly voiced at the elections, and that the outlook of these vast sections of the national movement must not be stifled.

On the other hand, it is essential that unity of the national front should be maintained against the imperialists and their allies, and there should be no splitting of the vote for the benefit of the reaction with imperialism.

The best means to realise this requires the most earnest consideration of all supporters of the national struggle.

We would suggest that the anti-imperialist bloc, constituted on its programme of complete independence, no co-operation with imperialism, and active struggle for the demands of the masses, should seek agreement with the existing leadership of the Congress (within which the Congress Socialist, grouping the radical elements, represent already a substantial minority of roughly one-third of the forces and a potential majority), to run its candidates directly on this programme in a certain number of seats (or to be able to include them as a group with their specific programme within the Congress panel), as recognised candidates of the united national front, co-operating with the Congress candidates in other constituencies who run on the official programme. The details of this arrangement will need careful working out; but with goodwill on both sides, such an arrangement should be possible.

Every effort requires to be made to prevent a splitting of the national front in the elections; but such unity should not be utilised to stifle the left wing forces of the anti-imperialist bloc.

### THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AS THE CENTRAL SLOGAN OF THE STRUGGLE

In order to concentrate the struggle against the slave constitution imposed by the British Government, we cannot rest satisfied with the negative programme of rejection of the constitution and refusal of co-operation, but must counterpose our positive slogan.

Corresponding to the existing stages of the movement, the time is now undoubtedly favourable to launch as our central slogan the demand for the convening of a constituent Assembly based upon a universal and equal franchise and direct and secret ballot. In the past there has been much discussion on the slogan of a

Constituent Assembly. On the one hand, it has been presented in such a form as if the existing National Congress were to be regarded as already the Constituent Assembly of the Indian people. On the other hand, it has been presented as if it were to be regarded as an alternative to the aim of Soviets, as the political aim of the Indian Revolution. Both these outlooks are incorrect and require to be combated. But this necessary criticism of misleading conceptions has given rise to the alternative danger of the conception that the slogan of a Constituent Assembly is as such and at all times inadmissible and in inevitable opposition to the aim of Soviets. This would be a serious misunderstanding; the example of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution has shown how, in a given situation, the slogan of a Constituent Assembly can be a most powerful mobilising force which can be combined with the propaganda of Soviet Power as the ultimate aim.

Is the situation now in India such that this slogan of a Constituent Assembly would be a correct slogan of action for the coming stage? Yes. At a time when the British Government is imposing its new constitution of slavery upon the Indian nation, and preparing its mockery of elections from which the voice of nine-tenths of the people is excluded, and the remainder barred from effective representation with any power to their representatives it is essential to spread broadcast, in opposition to the line of imperialism, the demand for a Constituent Assembly freely elected upon a basis of universal suffrage. In putting this forward the Communists will in no wise weaken their propaganda for the aim of Soviet Power. The Constituent Assembly is a slogan for mobilising the masses at the present stage of the struggle.

But at the same time it is necessary to explain on every occasion on which the issue of a Constituent Assembly is raised, both within the National Congress, and in mass propaganda, that a real Constituent Assembly can only be realised as a result of a broad movement of the masses of the people in active struggle. The significance of the slogan of a Constituent Assembly is as a mobilising slogan of the mass struggle at the present stage. As such it should become the central slogan of action of the present stage of the national struggle and of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front, uniting all the partial and immediate struggles in this central political fight.

The need for the speedy realisation of the broadest Anti-Imperialist People's Front in India is the more urgent, not only for

the reasons of the situation now existing within, but in view of the whole international situation as it is developing and affecting India. The war question is now of burning urgency. The Italian war on Abyssinia, alongside the ever-extending Japanese aggression in China, is the signal of the advance of imperialism to a new world war. The sympathies of the India people are warmly united with the Abyssinian people in their resistance to the Italian war of aggression, and with the Chinese national struggle against Japanese, and all other, imperialists. But at the same time it is necessary to sharpen the struggle against the war preparations of British Imperialism, which fall with merciless heaviness on the Indian masses. The imminence of a new world war makes more than ever necessary the unity and readiness of the national front in India.

In conclusion, it should be stated that these proposals are put forward for the consideration of all supporters of the struggle for national liberation in India as an attempt to trace the main outline of the path of advance in the present immediate situation and with the given relations of forces. The realisation of this next stage of advance, the realisation of a broadbased, all-embracing and powerful Anti-Imperialist People's Front, should rapidly open the way to new perspectives for the Indian national movement.

# Communist Party of Greece Central Committee

*Thoughts about the factors that determined the reversal of the socialist system in Europe  
The timeliness and necessity of socialism*

## Prologue

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, developments and changes were taking place that shook the world. In the political system of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries of Europe, political conditions were created which opened the road to the restoration of capitalist relations in these countries. The main events in this dramatic story were the annexation of the German Democratic Republic, the dissolution of both the Warsaw Treaty and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

These developments placed a number of serious, crucial questions before the international communist and progressive movement, and obliged it to study and search for their causes and to arrive at the necessary assessments and conclusions. This was a duty which objectively presupposed the substantial and responsible contribution of each party, as well as the all-round collective effort of the international revolutionary and progressive movement. Such an effort can and must be constantly enriched as time

and scientific research bring to light new historical facts and aspects of these dramatic developments.

The political resolution of the 14th Congress of the CPG emphasized the need for a profound and comprehensive study of the course of building socialism, and for our party to draw conclusions and experience, in cooperation with other communist and workers' parties. Within this framework, the Central Committee decided to produce a text containing thoughts on these topics, to organise the essential inner-party and public dialogue on the subject and to convene a national party conference. The C.C. believes that this text can constitute a starting point for reflections, dialogue and multi-form discussions both inside and outside the party, with left and progressive working people, with every person of good will who thinks and worries about the social regression which has occurred in the socialist countries with dramatic international repercussions.

For reasons of economy, the subject matter in the text has been focused on the following, most serious issues:

- \* The appearance of socialism on the European continent and the assessment of its contribution, its construction, its construction under conditions of ceaseless, tough confrontation with imperialism, and its enormous contribution to humanity and the peoples' struggle for social emancipation, progress and peace.

- \* The conditions and circumstances that shaped the political developments in Europe and the world more generally following the adverse changes of 1989-91.

- \* The counter-revolutionary policy of "perestroika" which began with the slogans "restructuring and renewal" of socialism, but proved to constitute the vehicle by which the socialist political system was overthrown and the means for creating the conditions leading to the restoration of capitalism.

- \* The search for and identification of the various factors and deeper causes of this adverse development, and the extraction of the necessary assessments and conclusions.

- \* The critical evaluation of our party's stance throughout this period.

- \* And the necessity and timeliness of socialism, in contrast with capitalist barbarism and the "new order". In examining all these subjects, we focused our attention on certain issues which we

believe to be particularly serious and crucial. They are:

- The interweaving and interdependence of the external and internal, of subjective and objective factors which, along the way, created the conditions for the overthrow of the regimes in the socialist countries of Europe.

- Within this framework, we are trying to investigate the role of imperialism as a serious external factor which exerted a significant and multiple influence. This is obvious from its systematic and intense aggressiveness, from its continuous and permanent effort to take revenge, from its multiform and systematic exploitation of the internal difficulties and mistakes which appeared along the road to the socialist construction, and from the large number of facts and data that prove the long-standing anti-socialist operation planned and focused on the target of regaining lost ground.

- The effect of the subjective factor and the extent to which it was able to respond to the complex demands of the struggle, from the appearance of socialism until the events of 1989-91. This is an issue with obvious special significance, especially since we consider that the capitalist regression was not inevitable. "Perestroika" appeared at a time when problems had accumulated due to mistakes, inadequacies and difficulties stemming from the complexity of situations and from unprecedented problems, but also to backing down and deviations of an ideological nature in face of the hurdles which appeared in the confrontation with imperialism and its aggressiveness.

- The foregoing has obliged us objectively to focus our attention also on examining the system of contradictions in socialism, on taking advantage of the scientific and technological revolution, on developing theory and science, on examining the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism in the political system and the economy, on the strategy and tactics of confronting imperialism, and on the role of the international communist movement.

The major adverse developments of recent years have not in the least altered our unwavering conviction and faith in the socialist and communist prospect as a historic necessity and potentiality. The overthrow of a series of socialist regimes cannot constitute the overthrow of the Marxist-Leninist theory of social evolution and even less so can it invalidate this theory. Human history is a process of constant progress which takes place by means of endless and unforeseeable regressions and set-backs. The four great social

formations which preceded socialism were successively replaced. The transition from the lower to the higher form of society, "from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom" is an immutable law.

Today it is not possible to predetermine the amount of time that will be required for the victory of socialism and the appearance of communism on a world scale. It will be a long process. It will not be one "action" which will immediately wipe out all the historically inevitable limitations that prevent humans from acting freely and consciously in all senses of the word. But through a variety of difficulties and possible set-backs, history will lean in that direction, toward the full elimination of every means of subjugation and restriction of human activity, toward the basic communist principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

## PART ONE

### THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM

1. The dramatic upheavals which have taken place during recent years were the starting point for an unprecedented anti-socialist offensive on the part of the various imperialist propaganda machines. Exploiting existing weaknesses and problems, but mainly launching a well-orchestrated propaganda smear campaign unprecedented in scope, they have always wanted to take ideological and political revenge, to vitiate and nullify the enormous role and great contribution of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries to the working people and to all mankind in their struggle for peace, progress and social emancipation. The historical truth, however, cannot be falsified. Despite the problems which may have existed in the socialist countries, the socialist system created in the 20th century attempted one of the greatest achievements of civilisation, to abolish the exploitation of man by man. It has proved its superiority to capitalism and offers great benefits to the working people's work and lives.

Socialism and capitalism cannot be compared on the basis of precisely the same criteria or outside the specific historic reality

within which each one appeared and developed.

The capitalist system was nurtured in the bosom of feudalism, since the two systems were based on private ownership of the means of production, on the system of exploitation of man by man. The revolutionary forces, on the contrary, were forced to build a radically different social system as a break from the previous regime on the fundamental issues of ownership, and under conditions of capitalist encirclement. The Classics did not, could not, provide details of the building of the socialist society.

The source of accumulation for the capitalist system is capital, the exploitation of hundreds of million of people in colonies and beyond, the cruel exploitation of their own people, the unequal treatment of migrants as well. For socialism, the basic source of accumulation is human productive force and its productivity. The criteria for comparing the two systems on the basis of consumer prototypes are also not the same. Capitalism distorts consumer criteria of quality of life, in contrast to socialism which has different priorities with respect to human needs in the modern age.

2. With the appearance and consolidation of the Soviet Union and the world socialist system, the picture of the world changed radically. The socialist system, in cooperation with other sections of the world revolutionary movement, constituted the only real counterweight to the absolutist tendencies of capitalism. No substantial solutions to any of the world's serious problems could have been provided without the participation of the world socialist system. The socialist system exerted a significant influence on the appearance and strength of the communist labour movement in the capitalist countries and of the national liberation movement in the Third World.

Socialism contributed decisively, and on a world scale, to combating fascism, with the historic participation of the Soviet Union in World War II. It made an unmatched contribution to creating a world-wide resistance movement, in which communists fought in the vanguard. It exercised a catalytic influence on the collapse of the colonial system.

The socialist system provided enormously important historic contributions to eliminating hot spots of tension and war in favour of the peoples, such as: The end of the war in Korea. Full support for Egypt, assistance in the Aswan Dam project, support for that country against the danger from the triple invasion in 1956. Help

for Syria in 1957 against NATO conspiracies. Prevention of the US-UK offensive against Iraq in 1958. Assistance to Lebanon and Jordan to help deliver them from US-UK troops. Support for the peoples of Asia against the imperialist and colonialist activities of the US, Britain and France. Contribution to ending the war in Indochina and subsequently its historic assistance to the people of Vietnam. Defence of the Arab states against Israeli war, support for the struggle of the Palestinian and Cypriot peoples. Great assistance in the Cuba crisis, as also to the peoples of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola and Chile.

3. The gains of socialism and the more general activities of the socialist system and the multiform solidarity of the socialist countries exerted a positive effect on the anti-dictatorial struggle of the Greek, Portuguese and Spanish peoples.

The successive proposals, the systematic initiatives and the specific actions for peace and disarmament which were made by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty constituted one of the most manifest and undeniable criteria of the difference between the two social systems, and evidence of the humanitarian and peace-loving character of socialism. Characteristic examples are the following: Proposals for a Europe-wide agreement on peace and security in Europe (1954 and 1955). For the peaceful solution to the German problem. The new proposals by the USSR, that all the great powers adopt gradual disarmament measures, rejected by the US, even when in 1955 the Soviet Union proceeded to take unilateral reduction measures to its own detriment. Repeated proposals and initiatives for the normalisation of bilateral relations with the US, which inspired the struggles of peace-loving peoples and progressive movements and were ultimately adopted by the UN. On the contrary, throughout this period, imperialism never ceased to undermine efforts for disarmament and peace, in order to subvert the defence capability of the socialist system.

Socialism also had a significant and multiform effect on all aspects of the capitalist system: in the economic, political and social fields. The achievements of the socialist countries forced the capitalist system to readjust and cede gains to the labour and trade union movement in the capitalist countries. These gains exerted a significant and varied positive, attracting force on working people and mass movements.

The appearance of socialism, initially in one country and then

in a group of countries, and the socialisation of the basic means of production, at the same time meant securing the political and social rights and freedoms unprecedented for that item, as well as the satisfaction on a mass scale of many fundamental human rights such as the right to work, to free medical care and education, to the provision of inexpensive state services, housing and access to intellectual and cultural values.

The radical uprooting of the terrible legacy of illiteracy and the elimination of unemployment constitute two characteristic examples.<sup>(1)</sup> In the Soviet Union, more than 3/4 of the working people had acquired either post-secondary or full secondary education when in the US there are still, to this day, 23 million people who are officially recognised as illiterate.

The USSR, even in the 24 years of its history prior to World War II, took giant steps forward in its industrial and economic development.

Care of the protection of cultural values and the monuments of culture and the historic past were the responsibility of the Soviet State and the people's power. An even of historic significance was the fact that the socialist revolution made the achievements of human culture the property of the working people. After the Louvre and the Vatican, the Hermitage was the foremost art collection in the world, accessible to the people immediately after the revolution, when they were still hungry, cold, barefoot and illiterate. The cultural revolution constitutes an integral element in the socialist construction.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the Soviet Union, from 1956 on, the 7- and 6-hour day were implemented together with the five-day work week. All working people were guaranteed time off every week and paid annual leave. The work week in the Soviet Union was one of the shortest in the world. But the content of leisure time also changed. To utilise their leisure time, the people's power had created the appropriate institutions, such as rest-homes and the network of cultural, informative and health facilities. Social security of the working people was a top priority concern of the socialist state. The universal pension system was created, an important feature of which was the low retirement age (55 for women, 60 for men). Financing for these funds was ensured through the state budget and through insurance contributions by the enterprises and institutions. Similar conditions prevailed in the other European social-

ist countries as well.

4. Socialist rule laid the foundations for abolishing the oppression of women, overcoming the enormous objective difficulties that existed. It ensured women equal rights in the economic, political and cultural realms; this does not imply that it was possible at that time to eliminate every form of inequality in relations with the opposite sex that had become entrenched over so many years of history.

The working person in the socialist countries did not suffer the anxieties and problems so familiar to the working people in the capitalist countries, both then and now, such as unemployment, the high cost of living, insecurity, employers' oppression, underestimation and contempt, and social criminality.<sup>(3)</sup>

5. The October Revolution inaugurated fraternal equality between nations and nationalities within the framework of an enormous multinational state and provided solutions to the national problem by eliminating national oppression in all its forms and manifestations. Responsibility, courage and political farsightedness were needed to deal with one of the most difficult and complex problems of our century, based on the principle of the self-determination of nations up to and including the right to establish independent states.<sup>(4)</sup>

At the same time, the course of bringing together nationalities and minorities into a single state created the conditions necessary for every people to become conscious of their specific national identity and cultural particularity within the framework of the united socialist state, which was a natural phenomenon. Consequently, respect for these particularities has to go hand in hand with the course of unification. Otherwise, the ground is cleared for loosening or even dulling the sense of unity, particularly at moments when accumulated problems are not dealt with promptly and correctly, as was the case in the former socialist countries. At the critical moment, under conditions of general regression, ethnic features and particularities, with the proper handling by the imperialist and domestic anti-revolutionary forces, were easily converted into nationalistic and chauvinistic views, and old hostilities and discords cultivated during the pre-revolutionary years were revived, leading people and nationalities, who for the first time in their history had lived together peacefully and creatively for the previous seven decades, to civil strife and bloodshed.

6. The socialist countries made a serious effort to respond to the need for the internationalisation of life and to utilise its advantages based on the principle of proletarian internationalism in economic relations.

With the establishment in 1949 of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), a new type of international relations appeared, unknown until then, which was based on the principles of equality, reciprocal advantage and fraternal mutual assistance. Had it not been for CMEA, bilateral relations between the socialist countries would not have been able to contribute to their development. They would have been more vulnerable to the policies and economic pressures of the EEC and other imperialist countries.

CMEA paved the way for the establishment of international, sectorial economic organisations and joint ventures between the socialist countries. The more general contribution of CMEA to the development of relations between the socialist countries and the socialist system was considerable. Its member states started out at a low level of development, without the accumulated resources of the capitalist countries which had been acquired over their long histories on the basis of capitalist exploitation.

The indisputable achievements made by the socialist countries in comparison with their point of departure, but also in comparison with the lives of the working people in the capitalist world prove that socialism has the inherent potentialities to bring about a constant improvement in people's lives and in the development of their personalities. As events have proved, these achievements are not accomplished automatically and mechanistically, but with the correct policy, at each phase and level of evolution, adopted by the communist parties and the organs of socialist rule, with the prerequisite that the people take an active part in building this new system. Mistakes and deviations, violations of principle, but also enormous difficulties due to the tough confrontation with the capitalist system, constitute factors which can slow down these processes and lead to stagnation.

Apart from and irrespective of the problems and weaknesses which appeared, objective but mainly subjective in nature, the 20th century will go down in history as the century which was marked by the first, great historic attempt by human society to throw off the bonds of capitalist exploitation of man by man and to acquire un

paralleled, valuable experience so as to make the enormous leap to socialism on the way to a communist society.

## THE RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM AND ITS INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS "PERESTROIKA"

7. The policy of "perestroika" initially appeared in the slogans proclaiming the "renewal and restructuring" of socialism and as a policy which would lead the way out of the economic and social problems that existed at that period in the building of socialism. Certain of the initial slogans were borrowings from previous efforts by the CPSU during the Andropov period or earlier. But quite soon, it began to reveal its true counterrevolutionary face, as the specification and practical application of the initial slogans took on the content of "reforms" and measures which affected and tended to reverse crucial and fundamental sectors of the socialist society, at the level of both the political system and the economy.

The essence of these "reforms" was the transitional transfer of the means of production to private ownership starting with the agrarian economy and with the clear intention of extending it to all sectors. Their purpose was to eliminate social ownership of the means of production, to abolish socialist planning, to dismantle the system of delivery and distribution of consumer goods and services. It has been revealed as a policy for exporting the counter-revolution through measures and options which abolish proletarian internationalism as well as fraternal, equal relationships within the framework of the socialist division of labour.

8. The great question, which justly concerns those who occupy themselves with these developments, is why the counter-revolution did not meet with any resistance from the people, and why the people did not defend socialism and its gains.

Some people are of the opinion that the policy of 'perestroika' started out with good intentions and somewhere along the way "went wrong", and became a vehicle for the counter-revolution. We do not agree with this assessment. Not only because a policy must be judged as a whole and not fragmentarily, but also because it must chiefly be judged on the field of its concrete and practical application and not on the field of pronouncements and slogans.

This particular policy drew the support or tolerance of the popular masses because of the combined occurrence of a number of

basic preconditions:

a. It was promoted by the party and government organs and relied on their authority and on the confidence of the masses in them.

b. It used the slogans known to all such as "more socialism-more democracy".

c. The problems existing at that time were exploited and above all the common belief that some changes and reforms were needed within the framework of socialism, which would deal with distortions and delays in basic sectors of economic and social life.

In particular with respect to the party and state leadership at that period, the reality and the study of developments show that one section of the leadership consciously adopted the policy of restoring capitalism. Another section followed, under the influence of the revisionist and opportunist views which had gradually infiltrated the communist party. The picture of the party and state leadership in other European socialist countries was certainly similar, if we take into consideration the decisive influence exerted by the policies and prestige of the CPSU leadership.

Sections of the people who, for various reasons, were strongly dissatisfied with or affected by the restrictive measures of the past, sided with the policy of "perestroika". It was likewise supported by significant sections of the intelligentsia who had been influenced by the delay in solving serious problems or because of the relatively low salaries in the health sector and in the social services more generally.

Other sections were influenced by difficulties and restrictions on travel abroad; yet others by the growing and unsatisfied modern needs for consumer goods, the influence of the shopwindows in the surrounding capitalist countries and the distortion of the consumer models which this environment cultivated. Sections of the youth, such as students, with their potentially radical and progressive elements, were initially influenced in favour of "perestroika", and then trapped by it, since there was no reliable information and they were not called upon to curb it.

A part was played, particularly in the other Warsaw Treaty countries, by the descendants of capitalists and landowners who had lost privileges and power and continued to retain a minor foothold; they were strengthened by the counterrevolutionary

process.

This situation, in conjunction with the ideological influence of imperialism's open intervention, acquired dynamism under conditions of general apathy and alienation.

From then on, events took their own course. The stratum of profiteers came into being, along with the neo-capitalists with their political and social associations, who played an active role in restoring capitalism.<sup>(5)</sup>

9. The "new thinking" in foreign policy was based on the mistaken, anti-scientific position that the fundamental contradiction of our times is the cross-class, i.e. classless, contradiction war and peace, in which all states may supposedly be interested, irrespective of their social system. Utopian views were put forward which denied some basic features and attributes of imperialism, e.g. that the latter would accept a world system of security when the Warsaw Treaty was dissolved. In essence, the imperialist position of "curbing Soviet aggressiveness" was adopted.

An attempt was made to de-ideologize international interstate relations and to dull their political content. The Leninist policy of peaceful co-existence was transformed into a policy of class and ideological conciliation.

The policy of the "market economy" was linked with the "acceleration of socio-economic evolution", a goal which had also been set by previous CPSU congresses. The "socialist market economy" was promoted, with a view to "increasing the productivity of labour, strengthening incentives for the application of scientific and technological advances in production, allowing enterprises to be self-sustained". The aim of "correcting" mistakes and weaknesses in the economic mechanism and in the management of central planning was put forward. Discussions were deliberately held on the correlation of socialism and the market, in order to abolish socialism and to impose the capitalist market economy.

The next step, which revealed the true nature of the "perestroika" economic programme, came a little later, in 1987, when the law providing for and protecting private ownership and the commodification of the labour force was passed. Lenin's New Political Economy (NPE) was used as an example in the psychological and ideological preparation of the Soviet people, even though

it had been applied at a different phase in the building of the socialist society and was in the nature of a temporary measure.

The slogan "transparency in social and political life" was initially based on criteria and values identical to those of bourgeois democracy, while the slogan of struggle against "bureaucracy" took on a demagogic character. The nucleus of the ideological and political views which were put forward from one point on were clearly targeted upon the party's leading role and the country's political system as a whole. The famous "glasnost", a slogan which accompanied "perestroika", proved to be the chief means of falsifying and nullifying the history of the communist movement and the Soviet people. At the same time, M. Gorbachev was keeping his "consultations" and agreements with the leaders of the imperialist countries out of the headlines.

The counter-revolution was pushed forward decisively by the general involvement of the imperialist countries, their governments and their secret services which obviously had the data and human instruments to carry out their plans.

The tactics and methodology of "perestroika" relied on magnifying the existing problems of the Society, on falsifying history, and on nullifying and slurring the 70-plus years in the building of the new society, such as: magnifying and making absolute the problems of central planning and bureaucracy, and weakening the centre on the pretext of strengthening initiative by enterprises and the Union's republics.

Thus began the process of undermining the united character of the Soviet state. The way was paved for stirring up national chauvinist differences and conflicts which led to the early secession of the Baltic republics from the Union. Localism and chauvinism were reinforced, particularly through the programmes of "economic aid and reform" generously promised by the developed capitalist countries in order to strike at the Soviet regime, to exploit and widen the first cracks in its foundation. The leading core of the CPSU, which was consciously promoting the restoration of capitalism, took artful advantage of the disagreements and differentiations arising after the first stages of "perestroika". A characteristic example was the full reversal and distortion of the nature and content of the terms "renovator" and "conservative", "Left and Right". As a result of this, greater confusion and disorientation were created, which affected a large number of communists. New

parties and groups appeared which were openly propagandising the rapid return to capitalism. Also, the real nature of "perestroika" was obscured as were the dividing lines between the two social systems. Nihilism, talk of mistakes and the ahistorical approach to the past, outside place and time and remote from a concrete analysis of the specific historic reality, replaced the need for a creative utilisation of the positive and negative historical experience.

With the help of the mass media and imperialist propaganda, the heroic story of the socialist construction, and the international contribution of socialism to the achievements of humanity were slandered.

The phenomena of disorientation, confusion and apathy on the part of broad masses of the people accelerated under the influence of "anti-Stalinism" and "de-Stalinisation" which served as the pretext to justify anti-communism, anti-socialism and the tearing down of more than seventy years of heroic efforts on the part of the Soviet people. The "support" of imperialism was used to 'restructure' the socialist system. The high-sounding words about the independent responsibility of the socialist countries and rejecting the "imitation" of the Soviet model concealed a systematic effort to "export" "perestroika" to the Warsaw Treaty countries and to the parties in the capitalist countries. For the first time since 1917, the Soviet Union, with the responsibility of the party and state leadership, abandoned its internationalist policy. All the evidence which has seen the light of day, and which is now being provided officially by US agencies, proves that, when Gorbachev and Bush met in Malta, they agreed to the annexation of the GDR and the creation of a united, capitalist Germany, as though it were the "democratic" solution to the German problem and a means of ending the cold war. The annexation of the GDR accelerated the dissolution of the socialist system.

## THE WORLD AND EUROPE AFTER 1989-91

10. The dramatic developments of 1989-91 do not concern communists and the international communist movement alone. The adverse effects have marked humanity as a whole. The peoples have been deprived temporarily of their major support, their true ally in the struggle for progress, development, democracy, freedom and socialism. The sacrifices of the dead and the victims of the

imperialist intervention and war continue. There have been millions of victims, dead, disabled and refugees in the turbulent Balkans. The peoples of Rwanda, Haiti, Somalia and the Indians of Mexico are some of the most characteristic victims of the new adverse global correlation of forces after 1989-91. Capitalism is revealing its most savage and repulsive face at a time when it feels its hands have been freed from the restrictions and hurdles raised during the preceding period by the socialist system. It is attempting to make international organisations, including the UN, subservient to its anti-popular targets and pursuits.

On "the morning after" without the Soviet Union, the European socialist countries and the Warsaw Treaty, the world is full of the deep wounds made by the unbridled imperialist intervention, by multinational competition in the redistribution of markets and by the subjugation and annexation of countries, of entire regions even, through the bonds of a savage "modern" colonialism in the heart of Europe and all over the planet.

An increasingly large number of countries have been passing under grim imperialist dependence and subservience. This happens in various ways, by handing key sectors of the economy over to transnational capital, through privatisations, through the abolition of the last elementary or rudimentary barriers to the free movement of capital and goods, through the reinforcement of technological dependence and the concentration of up-to-date knowledge and technology in the hands of the transnationals.

National chauvinism, social racism, religious and cultural differences, anti-socialism and anti-communism are becoming weapons in the hands of the imperialists to foment discord among the peoples and to fragment states into small, weak and subservient nations. In Europe symptoms of degradation and poverty have begun to appear on a massive scale. The gap between the developed capitalist countries and the others is becoming ever wider. There are still large numbers of nuclear weapons deployed, the number of local wars and civil conflicts is increasing, and there are now more than 100 hot spots of local and civil conflict all over the world. The ethical and cultural crisis, the scourge of narcotics and social criminality are growing at rapid and extremely dangerous rates. The working class and the working people in all countries are paying heavily for the new adverse correlations and the new situation, as modern capitalist barbarism is mounting a crazed

attack against everything that has been won through hard struggles during the previous decades.

11. The reversals of the 1989-91 period created an extremely negative international environment in the non-European socialist countries of Cuba, Mongolia, China, Vietnam and North Korea. The new problems and contradictions existing in the transition from capitalism to socialism, due to the international balance of forces and the difficulties sustained by the international workers' and communist movement, are increasing and becoming more intense.

Under the current conditions, party and state leaderships in these countries are pushing through reforms, mainly in the realm of the economy, which allow the inflow and utilization of foreign investment capital in sectors of production and tourism. These reforms, because of the more general conditions and their nature, are leading to the creation of a capitalist sector which acts competitively with respect to socialist ownership. The imperialist powers are seeking through the action of their capital, to exert an ideological and political influence on the internal affairs of these countries.

Confronting and averting the hardships and dangers entailed in this particular phase depend on specific factors such as: the level of the people's social and political awareness, the correctness of the communist parties policy, and their endurance and militancy in face of the enormous objective difficulties. The successful outcome of these efforts will depend also on international developments, the increased activity by the workers' and communist movement, the improvement and change in the international balance of forces to the benefit of the anti-imperialist forces, which are fighting for the victory of socialism. Communists, progressive people, anti-imperialist and peace movements have the obligation to show solidarity with and active support for the peoples who are resisting the restoration of capitalism. The issued is defending the right of every country and people to choose their own road to social development without external intervention and coercion.

12. Cuba is fighting for survival under the conditions of an imperialist blockade. The bonds of the party with the people and its experience—since, from the first moment of its independence, its suffered from imperialist intervention—constitute significant factors helping the country to resist the implacable embargo raised by imperialism, particularly after having lost the advantages of the

socialist division of labour. The hurdles and hardships are enormous. And new problems have also come along such as the fact that Cuba is obliged to seek relations with capitalist countries whose aim is to change its political system and return the country to its pre-revolutionary situation.

In China, the change in the international balance of force aggravated the existing problems stemming from its relative backwardness and large population. The Communist Party of China has opted for the policy of "reforms and opening to the outside world" in order to spur its economic and technological development, assessing that the country is at a primary stage of socialist construction. The action of foreign capital in this great country and specifically in the zones of its activity, are inevitably leading to the appearance of a capitalist relations sector, resulting in the development of social differentiation and stratification. Objective conditions are being created for the sharpening of the class struggle. The difficulties and dangers which hinder the course of building socialism in China have become more visible.

Similar problems and trials are being faced by Vietnam and Mongolia, while North Korea is witnessing the consequences of direct imperialist interference and the brutal pressure exerted on the pretext of arms control.

13. The picture shown today by the former socialist countries, despite the differences and gradations between them, is more or less the same in the basic fields:

The "dismantling" of the gains won by the people in the course of socialist construction has begun. "Shock-treatment" is being applied broadly, as sectors of strategic importance are being handed over to foreign capital, enterprises are being privatised, the land is being returned to the old capitalist owners, free services are being abolished. As the number of capitalist owners with fabulous fortunes is increasing, so is the incidence of poverty, deprivation and unemployment - phenomena unheard of for years. Persecutions of communist parties and communists have become daily events. Well-orchestrated trials continue alleging squandering and embezzlement of public funds. The activity of communist parties is hindered. The smear campaign against socialism, the lies and slanders continues, become stronger and will become even stronger as the people are clearly beginning to look back with nostalgia on the socialist past and to make comparisons between today and

yesterday.

The organisation of the resistance, for the time being, is encountering difficulties, as party and trade union organisations have been dissolved and others have suffered overwhelming damage. The shock of unexpected changes has kept significant popular forces temporarily in a state of disappointment and inertia.

Pockets of protest and resistance are appearing in most countries, particularly where communist parties and political forces which, irrespective of their ideological orientations, show a disposition to defend the gains and rights of the working people, are active. A characteristic example of the mood of the peoples can be seen in the results of several election battles in which the parties and politicians who led the counter-revolution and the restoration of capitalism have been voted out. On the contrary, communist parties or parties which, irrespective of their present orientation, are associated in the minds of the working people with the previous social system, are beginning to gather positive electoral percentages.

14. The advocates of the capitalist system in Greece and abroad who hastened to predict that the reversal of socialism would "mean the end of the cold war", and that we are entering a period of great "democratic changes", at the end of which the forces of "freedom, democracy and human prosperity" will triumph are being proved wrong.

Today the coincidence of the neo-liberal, social democratic and 'new left' parties which abandoned the ranks of the communist movement in the name of "renewal" has become more obvious.

The slandering of socialism, the nihilism and the talk of mistakes have spread widely, particularly during the first years, when leading cadres of the communist parties in both socialist and capitalist countries joined the anti-communist campaign and hysteria. Their "revelations" were utilised by the advocates of the capitalist system as being allegedly reliable assessments and testimonies from "within".

People of good will, objective and impartial judges, can understand that such theories are nothing but a pretext to justify the harsh intervention and aggressiveness of imperialism, to show "forgiveness" for the sins and crimes committed by capitalism throughout its history.

## PART TWO

### THE BUILDING AND COURSE OF SOCIALISM UNDER CONDITIONS OF CONFRONTATION WITH CAPITALISM

15. Socialism was built under conditions of confrontation and conflict with the capitalist system and especially with its most aggressive section, the imperialist powers and international organisations, under conditions of increasing internationalisation of all aspects of economic, social and cultural life.

From the earliest victory of the October Revolution, imperialism set the overthrow of the new Soviet state as its paramount task, initially by means of armed intervention and force and then using the tactics of imperialist encirclement and isolation which caused the civil war. The imperialist powers encouraged Nazi Germany to turn against the Soviet Union in the hope that the latter would be defeated by the disasters and devastation of war.

Following World War II and after eleven countries, i.e. 26% of the world's territory, had broken away from capitalism, imperialism tried, using all available means, to prevent socialism from spreading and at the same time to regain lost territory, applying the tactics of the "cold war" and proclaiming the slogans of the "communist threat" and "communist chaos" in all tones. They violated post-war agreements in order to strengthen Germany and to make it an offensive bridgehead against the socialist countries and the Soviet Union.

Imperialism has been responsible for more than 150 military operations, conflicts and coups d'état, by means of which dictatorial, terrorist regimes were installed. From the 1980s until the present, more than 1.5 million children were victims in the wars caused by imperialism.

Early in the 1970s, the cold war policy reached a dead end. New ways were then sought to undermine the socialist system and the communist movement throughout the world. The deeper causes of the new tactic can be found in the fact that the imperialist positions had been weakened militarily and politically by the economic, military and political rise of socialism, the achievements of the national liberation struggle and the fight of the peoples in

capitalist countries.<sup>(6)</sup>

16. The Helsinki Conference, which was held under persistent pressure from the socialist countries and the world peace movement, resulted in a form of compromise between the socialist and capitalist countries.

But imperialism was not prepared to respect the agreements. Right after the conference, it readjusted its tactics in regard to the socialist system, in order to derive unilateral benefits from the agreements. It used ideological subversion as a counterweight; it took advantage of internal difficulties and weaknesses that appeared in the socialist countries owing to objective but also subjective factors. It launched the policy of "bridges", the tactics of the so-called "convergence of the two systems" and acknowledged "some" successes on the part of socialism, always with the same goal, to strike a decisive blow against the socialist system.

17. New readjustment of imperialist tactics was observed late in the 1970s, with the policy of "counterdetente". On the pretext of the alleged change in the military-strategic balance of forces in favour of the Soviet Union, imperialism developed a systematic revanchist effort. Headed by the USA, a new arms race was launched not only on earth but in outer space as well.

The powerful capitalist countries organised systematic and multiform "provocations" and anti-communist campaigns under the banner of defending "human rights". They used the most sophisticated ideological weapons to manipulate the peoples, to create a climate hostile to the socialist countries and to the communist movement more generally. They openly supported various anti-socialist and anti-communist elements and groups, as shown by the events in Czechoslovakia and Poland. They took advantage of the ideological and political differences between the communist parties. They provided economic, political and moral support to the least manifestation of dissatisfaction or diargreement with the CPSU and the Soviet Union. They made available billions of dollars through their countries' budgets for these purposes.

They used an inexhaustible list of methods, diversions and sabotage, according to the circumstances and the specificities of each country.<sup>(7)</sup> Alongside the old-time anti-communism whose banner bore the words "Better dead than Red", the modern version appeared, always aiming at the gradual restoration of the capitalist system.<sup>(8)</sup>

It has become plain that imperialist aggressiveness and the particular flexible tactics used on each occasion constituted a significant and serious factor affecting the socialist countries and international relations. Underestimating it and, even worse, cultivating illusions about the nature of imperialism, could not but have adverse, disastrous results for the labour and popular movement. But the consequences of the unified strategy and tactics of capitalism toward socialism did not encounter analogous action on the part of the international communist movement, under conditions which demanded not only a unified strategic response but also jointly elaborated tactics.

## THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY, THE SOVIET UNION, UPTO WORLD WAR II

18. The basic, primary problem during this period was the emanation of capitalist ownership and the planned combating of the social and economic problems left by capitalism and aggravated by imperialist encirclement and intervention.

From the October Revolution to the outbreak of World War II, the USSR made enormous progress unprecedented in the history of social evolution. In a very short period of time it covered the greater part of the distance that separated it from the developed capitalist countries.

The USSR had to secure productive self-sufficiency in order to deal with international isolation. It had to address the problem of energy sources, to develop its steel and armaments industries, because of the international situation, with neither a chemicals industry nor significant metal works. Under harsh, disparate climatic and terrain conditions, heavy industry had to be developed and the agrarian economy mechanised.

It was necessary to establish strong central planning and centralised leadership for a relatively long period of time. Central planning contributed decisively to helping the USSR to stand on its own two feet, to cover the distance that would normally have required centuries of socio-political and cultural development, and to combat Hitler's fascist offensive thus making a decisive contribution to the international victory against fascism.

The Soviet power had to put into practice the principle of socialisation of the basic means production, at the same time developing the alliance between the working class and the peasants, under conditions of a sharpening class struggle.

19. The new system, from the very beginning, chose to address the lack of a distribution and supply mechanism, and the prevalence of scattered, backward and small production units, with measures of an economic nature. It chose to act within the spirit of the New Economic Policy. This choice was necessary during the transitional period, where the new power had to build the foundations of socialism on the grounds of capitalist relations. Intervention and isolation, however, obliged it to abandon this choice early and led it to apply the policy of "wartime communism" without which it would not have been possible to defend the socialist revolution.

The CPSU did not want, nor was it in its interest, that the class struggle which had intensified during that period take on the form of a civil war. But it was necessary because the supporters of the class society did not back down easily nor, above all, quietly.

The policy of "wartime communism" was succeeded by the "New Economic Policy" (NEP) and later by the policy of "the socialist offensive against capitalism" and the "all-out cooperative organisation of the agrarian economy".<sup>(9)</sup>

Generally, Soviet power addressed successfully the problems associated with the recovery of industry, agricultural production and transport. It laid the foundations for socialist production with spectacular rates of growth and under conditions of the sharpening of the confrontation between the socialist and capitalist forces (kulaks and the section of the intelligentsia which stemmed from the ruling class).<sup>(10)</sup>

The specific conditions (encirclement and the threat of war in conjunction with a high degree of backwardness) necessitated a very rapid pace of collectivization, which in certain regions caused social friction and difficulties in the alliance between the working class and the middle peasantry against capitalism.<sup>(11)</sup> In party decisions and the speeches by Joseph Stalin, reference was made to the problems and mistakes in assessing each region's diversity. In some cases, preliminary preparatory work was replaced by a bureaucratic enforcement of the movement, with decisions on paper to develop collective farms in places which

did not in fact exist.

The problems which appeared in the course of collectivization aggravated the contradiction between the working class and the petty and middle peasantry. Despite the corrective decisions in the application of collectivization, problems remained.

20. The adverse phenomena were used to publicise different viewpoints and dissensions, which went beyond disagreements over the pace of collectivization. They touched upon the very necessity to continue the class struggle against the kulaks, who were opposing and hindering the building of socialist relations in the village. The inner-party struggle constituted a barrier to progress in building socialism (Bukharin group and Trotsky-Zinoviev).

The primary phase in the building of socialism is a field for further study. It offers experience of the relationship between the economy and politics during the period in which the new power was trying to lay the foundations for socialist construction by consolidating and cementing the alliance between the working class and the middle strata in towns and villages.

21. Early in the 1930s, Soviet power came up against new problems in the building of socialism, such as the contradictions between the elimination of unemployment and the delay in the effort for extensive mechanisation of production which was manifested by a shortage of skilled labour and a leveling viewpoint on wages policy. The party perceived the need to determine "new tasks for building the economy in the new situation". It became aware of the need to step up the rate of development in comparison with the corresponding rates of development under capitalism.

Symptoms can be seen in party documents of some laxity in its characteristics, such as bureaucracy, complacency, and abuse of power. This fact led to the decision to "purge its ranks". The distortions which arose can be attributed mainly to the problems of the promotion of cadres. In the place of cadres who had fallen victim to anti-socialist forces during the civil war in the early years of Soviet power, replacements were elected who had no experience, nor the required ideological and political background. <sup>(12)</sup>

The new situation demanded a new way of dealing with party work, and within this framework, the party emphasized the need to expand inner-party democracy and to address phenomena associated with the administrative way of solving problems, and

with violation of the principle of the electibility of party cadres, as the constitutional procedures provided for conferences were, unjustifiably, not being observed.

The study of this period and the relevant documents bears witness to the fact that there was some departure and deviation from decisions. Despite the measures taken to develop inner-party democracy and collectivity, phenomena appeared of abuse of power and of arbitrary actions.

The criticism levelled at this period by the 20th Congress of the CPSU (1956) did not constitute an all-round and objective examination of the course of building socialism under those particular historical conditions. The discussion was focused on the question of the personality cult, an issue which by itself could not provide comprehensive explanations for the problems of that time, nor for negative phenomena in the functioning and activity of the party.

The most serious event was that the 20th Congress condemned the correct position - for that particular historical period - i.e. that the class struggle was sharpening.<sup>(14)</sup> During the pre-war period (building of socialism in a country under conditions of encirclement), crushing the activity of the exploiting classes, their supports and vestiges was not an easy task. Vigilance was required with regard to the machinations of capitalism that had found a response and support in the interior of the country among forces which had vested interests in preventing the foundations of socialism from being built. At that particular period, the centralised means of managing the economy was necessary, and up to a point its repercussions in the political superstructure.

The criticism levelled by the 20th Congress was used to launch a destructive and slanderous attack against socialism by people who were certainly not interested in studying mistakes and deploring them, but who, in the name of such mistakes, preferred to strike at the root of communist theory and the socialist construction. In its talk of Stalin, imperialism showed all its class hatred for the creation of the socialist system after World War II.

One conclusion is that the party, at most complex and difficult moments in the building of socialism, should not have underestimated the fact that, apart from the major, basic fact which was the counter-revolutionary threat, there was also the danger of abuse of power and high-handed actions by cadres and organs. There is a

danger that anti-socialist criticism and activity may be confused with the criticism of real mistakes and deviations.

The last word on the real problems, the total experience and the negative aspects of this period has not yet been pronounced. Deeper study of the period is required so that the historic conclusions drawn will be comprehensive and objective with regard to the primary phase of socialist construction, and that the positive as well as the negative aspects are put forward in their true dimensions.

## THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM IN EUROPE DURING THE POST-WAR PERIOD

22. The building of socialism after World War II must be judged on the basis of broader criteria. The new situation and in particular the creation of the world socialist system raised the fight between capitalism and socialism to higher levels in all fields, economic, military, political and ideological.

At the end of World War II the international balance of forces had changed considerably in favour of the forces of socialism, while at the same time the international situation was becoming ever more intricate and the demands on the newly-constituted socialist system much greater and more complex. The victory of socialism in eight countries of Europe constituted the foundation for the creation of the post-war socialist system. Up until that time, the overwhelming majority of these countries lagged behind in their productive development, and did not even have the experience of developed capitalism. Apart from this, they were devastated by the war so that rebuilding them under the new circumstances required enormous amounts and aid which the USSR had to give within the framework of proletarian internationalism.

The varying conditions under which the new regimes came into being and then evolved into the political power of the working class, also generated particular features in the eight countries which passed over to socialism: in their political system, their social and political consciousness, in the conditions and forms of gaining power in their states formations and political systems, in the pace and duration of each transitional period, in the role of religion and the church.

In these eight European countries, the new society was born out of the developments and specificities of their anti-fascist struggle. The national liberation struggle merged with the people's revolution. In some of these countries the old administrative mechanism was dismantled immediately and in others gradually, while at the same time through the antifascist resistance new organs of power and administration were created, both central and local.(15)

The fundamental contradiction between capital and labour was expressed in this particular instance through the popular classes' opposition to foreign fascists and their collaborators. At this point the antagonistic contradictions of the societies came together.

23. In practice the communist parties had won the leading position on the political fronts that had been created, which were not uniform from one country to another. Bourgeois politicians who wanted to support capitalism in the new post-war conditions also participated in the first phase. This is why, along the way, the conflict became sharper when the victory was won by the forces who wanted to establish people's republics and the socialist transformation. The Red Army helped to support and defend these revolutions, preventing the export of the counter-revolution and foreign intervention.

In some of these countries, the representatives of former exploiting classes constituted a relatively significant percentage. During the difficult, critical times that followed, they rallied together with former petty bourgeois strata to support imperialism in its various schemes. To the degree that the communist parties failed to observe these specificities in time, they likewise contributed to the appearance of adverse phenomena which hindered the development of socialist consciousness.

24. In all post-war congresses of the CPSU and the other parties, targets were set to accelerate the creation of the material and technical basis for communism by applying scientific and technological advances to production and renewing the material and technical base. A strategic goal was to raise social prosperity, to prove the superiority of the socialist system over that of capitalism, and broadly to satisfy people's material and intellectual needs. All congresses point out the need to eliminate the disparity between the development of industry and that of the agrarian economy as regards the earnings of the workers and their con-

sumption capacity.

Although an upward course was noted in the economies of the socialist countries, their main feature was that numerical targets were being promoted, while the objective of the broad utilisation of scientific and technological advances was not being met according to plan. Nor were objectives being met with regard to the elimination of the disparities. Toward the end of the 1970s, some set-backs and a reduction in rates of development were noted. Problems were building up regarding social relations as a whole.

The ways and means selected for achieving goals — which were more or less the same for all congresses— differed significantly.<sup>(16)</sup>

Early in the 1980s, significant discussions were taking place in the CPSU in an attempt to raise the question of reforms in the socialist economy, as well as considerations regarding the attitude of the working person to his/her job. These associated with the opening out of the ideological front in defence of the principles of socialist construction, the explicit defence of social ownership and democratic centralism.<sup>(17)</sup>

The eight socialist countries used the experience of the Soviet Union under their own conditions. Many of its features, particularly during the period of laying the foundations for socialism, were carried over mechanistically. Along the way, different viewpoints and practices appeared which diverged significantly from the Soviet "model". In the cases of Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Czechoslovakia (in the period of the well-known "Prague spring"), Hungary (1980s), Poland (1980), different methods and policies also reflected ideological disagreements on matters related to the building of socialism, on international questions and on issues affecting relations between communist parties.

The study of CP documents and discussions shows that, during this period, there were debates and disagreements about the problems of socialism, in the form of an ideological controversy. At that time, acute theoretical deviations and doubts were hatched which prepared the way for the appearance and impact of perestroika.<sup>(18)</sup>

The examination today of the post-war building of socialism, and in particular of the most recent decades, shows the gradual accumulation of problems and primarily the inability of party and

state leaderships and communist parties to provide effective and substantial solutions based on the principles of the scientific theory of socialism and the deeper study of the new problems and contradictions which were coming to the fore during the building of socialism.

## PART THREE

### CONCLUSIONS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CAUSES OF THE RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM

25. The reversal of socialism does not confirm the classic theories about the inevitability of the restoration of capitalism. This became possible because some of the fundamental elements of socialism were weakened, altered and hit, i.e. those regarding the vanguard role of the party and its relationship with the popular masses, elements which constitute the safety valve in defending socialism against any mistakes and schemes either from within or without. Discussions of the underlying causes led to the study of a network of factors which influenced developments and created prerequisites for the social and political capitalist regression in the socialist countries. Another starting point was that the socialist society is not one that stands on its own, but is a transitional one between capitalism and communism.

The operation to restore capitalism to the socialist countries began from within and from the top, without being preceded by any military imperialist intervention to restore capitalism or any popular uprising or internal clash. The history of the revolutionary labour movement has known defeats, but at different historical moments, when the outcome of the struggle had not been already determined. Under such circumstances, the clash developed in a straightforward way between the decisive action of the revolutionary popular masses on the one hand, and the forces of the local and international bourgeois class on the other.

The conditions, methods and means used to restore capitalism make it compulsory to study the problem with the subjective factor as starting point, i.e. the party and the state socialist system, as well as the total of primarily internal contradictions reported in the

realm of social and economic relations. At that particular point in time when capitalism was restored, the other group of contradictions, concerning the relations between socialism and capitalism, while exerting a considerable influence on the sequence and interdependence of the internal events that led to the counter-revolution, was not however decisive.

26. The vanguard, leading role of the party as a ruling party and the nucleus of the political system, was gradually lost. It became lax and the party's principles and operating rules and policy for promoting cadres had become blunted.

The fact alone that the threat of counter-revolution was not suspected demonstrates the alteration in the identity and character of the communist parties in the socialist countries.

There were also specific events, and especially in Europe, which should have been recognised as "warning signs" (Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the problems of Yugoslavia, Romania and Albania, as well as the revisionist attack using Eurocommunism as the spearhead to strike the communist movement in capitalist Europe). Phenomena of splits in communist parties in capitalist Europe also constituted a strong warning of the ideological pressure exerted by capitalism and its ideology on the ranks of the workers' and communist movements in the capitalist countries.

The communist parties, as shown more clearly by recent developments, regarded their leading, vanguard role in the society as being given and incontestable. The successes in building socialism and in the international field cultivated a spirit of smugness and complacency. Unity with the people and democratic relations with the working people and with social organisations—all that was most precious and necessary for socialism—ceased to be of interest and to be kept up and renewed continuously.

From one point on, they became detached from reality, they lost their ability to grasp the people's mood, problems, needs and concerns. The party organs and organisations were transformed into bureaucratic-type services which resulted in weakening the creativity and initiative of the popular masses and their active participation in building socialism.

Control over the party, its organisations and cadres by the broad popular masses weakened gradually until it finally disappeared. The leading bodies of the communist parties were respon-

sible for undermining the process of criticism and self-criticism from above and below, resulting in the formal and schematic implementation of decisions, in a tendency to conceal embellish true situations, in the lack of concern for the quality of work and results, and in a spirit where everybody covered for everybody else. A climate of tolerance was cultivated toward distortions of policy, violations of state discipline, and the quality of production.

Inner-party democracy was violated, the way was cleared for careerism among cadres, for the exploitation of party and government positions, for subjectivism in the selection of cadres. The principle of equality among communists was violated, and during recent years phenomena of contempt for party comradeship appeared and became stronger.

As a result of such developments, the doors were left wide open to cadres who had selfish motives, who suffered from a lack of political ability and far-sightedness, or who were unable to understand and search out the suggestions and remarks of the working people, or to distinguish dissenting viewpoints from anti-socialist propaganda. The ability of the communist parties to base their decisions on scientific data was reduced, with results of more general significance to the building of socialism and dealing with complex and intricate phenomena.

These phenomena, incompatible with the nature of the communist party, opened the way to undermining the party's prestige among the people.

27. Theoretical viewpoints were cultivated or options preferred which constituted deviations from our theory, violations of building principles. The front of struggle with imperialism and revisionism was weakened.

In some cases, erroneous theories were adopted, which either did not correspond to reality or simplified theoretical issues regarding the building of socialism, e.g. theories which put forward the rapid transition to developed socialism and communism, underestimating the complex and long-term character of the transitional period (see 20th congress), theories about the "all-people state", "all-people party" and "all-people democracy".<sup>(19)</sup>

The directions of the 20th congress toward "a variety of forms of transition of various countries to socialism, under certain conditions" was utilised by the leaderships of communist parties

as a theoretical foundations for an offensive against the scientific theory of socialism. In the name of national specificities and particularities, the immutable laws of the socialist revolution were revised. Views were put forward that through structural reforms and "the policy of democracy" it would possible for the capitalist system to be transformed into a socialist one, without a revolutionary leap.

Such views underestimate and underrate the fact that the exploiting classes, supported by militarism and the reactionary bureaucratic machinery, offer resistance, that any form of transition is subject to general laws, and is the result of a comprehensive parliamentary and non-parliamentary struggle.

During the period that followed, influenced by the experience from Chile and Portugal and by imperialism's change of tactics, some of the viewpoints and ideas of the 20th congress were set aside. Any changes in orientation relative to the 20th congress took place silently in the sense that they were not accompanied by a more general theoretical, open, collective discussion in the countries and within the ranks of the communist movement.

The strategy of ideological subversion—as can be seen in retrospect today in the light of experience—did not encounter the corresponding aggressive and united response from the communist movement, from the parties and government leaderships in the socialist countries. Although in the parties documents, especially those of the CPSU, reference is made to the dangerous nature of imperialism's new tactics, in practice insufficient efforts were made to sound the alarm and put the communist movement on the alert in order to confront the new situation aggressively and convincingly.

The bourgeois class, with the rich historic experience it already had from the first moment the independent labour movement appeared, skilfully shifted the focus of the ideological struggle from outside to inside the communist movement and the socialist system. In its strategy and tactics, it utilised the rich historic experience in adapting and readapting which was acquired from its confrontation and cooperation with various classes, strata and political forces (absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, parliamentary republic, fascist dictatorship, military coups). It utilised the mistakes, weaknesses and ambitions of leading cadres, and took advantage of the social and political climate that culti-

vated deviations and discontent.

We also believe, on the basis of retrospective experience, that in documents of the communist parties of the socialist countries, the indisputable victories of socialism were overestimated, as well as the spectacular changes which took place in the world after World War II, in such a way as to underestimate the complex new problems which arose during the course of developments.

In certain cases, the phenomena of the crisis of capitalism were presented as being absolute, and a simplistic viewpoint was cultivated with respect to the disintegration of the capitalist system. The ability of capitalism to apply new scientific and technological advances to production was underestimated, despite their contradictions and adverse effects on the life and rights of the working people.

Deviation was not generated automatically, in a vacuum. There were new problems which did not find solutions, mistakes which were not revealed in good time or whose main cause was not identified, subjective and superficial assessments that evolved and slipped into deviation.

Certain erroneous or utopian views about the problems in international life and the confrontation between the two social systems expressed a tendency to back down under the ideological pressure of the bourgeois ideology, despite the fact that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries did not hesitate to confront imperialism at critical moments, in order to defend socialism and the countries who were waging national liberation wars.

Whether directly or indirectly, opportunism opened the way for the weakening of the communist parties. It constituted the ideological basis for imperialism's efforts to undermine and weaken socialism to succeed.

The problem cannot be solved by a formal exorcism of revisionist, opportunistic and liquidationist views and by denouncing their holders. The principles of the materialist-dialectical interpretation of history led to the search for objective facts in social, economic and cultural life on the basis of which the conditions may be created for the appearance of opportunistic theories and practices within the labour movement. This does not mean that the prevalence of opportunism is inevitable. When there is awareness of the objective factors which favour the phenomenon, then it is

possible for the communist movement to deal with problems, side effects and even temporary defeats.

28. Creative ideological and political work was weakened, as was multi-faceted educational activity aimed at developing socialist consciousness and at ensuring the constant growth and improvement of the new type of person required to build the socialist society.

Socialist thought could and should have constituted the steering gear to the development of this new society, which had to chart new paths under conditions of intense confrontation with bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology, with opportunism and revisionism. The building of socialism requires a relatively high educational and political-ideological level among the broad popular masses, as well as a certain level of knowledge and consciousness, so that they may be able to respond to the complex creative and initiative-oriented political and organisational process.

Under conditions of sharp ideological confrontation with capitalism, and of particular growth in the role of ideological activity within the socialist societies, this significant front of activity was neglected, and not adapted to changing conditions because it was taken for granted that the working people were convinced supporters of the system. The complexity of the process of cultivating socialist consciousness through direct, active participation in solving the problems of building socialism and managing social and political affairs was underestimated.

The discussion of ideological and political problems did not mobilise the whole party, its bodies, members and non-party supporters, and indeed the entire society. In this way, an opportunity would have been provided for a broad expression of views and orientations, and erroneous views would have been confronted using ideological means and persuasive arguments.

The evolution of ideas does not automatically keep pace with social evolution; progressive and revolutionary ideas give way in conditions under which the people's initiative and creative action is blunted, lax and reduced, allowing anachronistic remnants, individualism, subjectivism and localism to return and become stronger. Thus are conditions created which permit the conduits of infiltration and reproduction of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology, of compromise and lassitude in face of the complexity of

problems, to operate effectively. These inadequacies appear more pronounced today, under conditions of general regression.

29. There was a delay in the creative evolution, development and enrichment of revolutionary theory by the experience of socialist construction and the action of revolutionary forces. Without any intention of invalidating the scientific research and theoretical searchings in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, developments indicate that the communist parties were responsible for the theoretical delay in the creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory in conditions of socialist construction and the contemporary world. Scientific studies being conducted by special research centres, some of which belonged to the party itself, were either underestimated or overlooked.

Likewise underestimated was the need for socialism to be built through the constant development of the theory, the renewal of knowledge, which in conjunction with active participation in management and administration, prepares the ground for the development of a new type of person.

The theoretical and scientific problems were not studied in advance, so that the difficulties could be confronted promptly, and so that new trends, contradictions and conflicts which needed to be resolved in a dialectical way could be identified. The success of the October Revolution and the rise of the revolutionary movement that followed, proved that one of the basic elements of its success was the fact that for some time previously, a series of crucial theoretical issues had been studied by the Classics. Giving experience an absolute character without having recourse to theory and scientific research can be detrimental. The party, as the vanguard section of the people, must perceive new problems promptly, must be able to anticipate, and not to lose track of the overall movement, the whole, in face of the immediate, the everyday, the partial.

30. The dialectical relationship between direct and representative democracy became weak and failed to function with the quality and as required by the times and by the complex tasks of socialist construction.

It has not been possible, throughout the course of socialist construction, to combine central planning with popular initiative, to cultivate the feeling among the people that they are managing

socialist ownership. From the 1970s on, this phenomenon became more marked, and took on an acute form.

Problems appeared in the development of forms of socialist democracy and in their correct functioning, including excessive powers and such phenomena which could not all be justified by the objective nature of the problems and/or special conditions. The potentialities inherent in this particular system —whose basic criterion is the conscious participation of the people, social control over governments and administrative bodies, and the dialectical relationship and unit: “party-Soviet-people”—were either not discovered or not utilised.

The loss of experienced cadres and fighters during the civil war and World War II, and the need to utilise the strongest, most capable cadres on the front of socialist construction created gaps in the composition of the Soviets. Owing to objective circumstances, a new generation of cadres was promoted which did not have the experience required to solve problems in a democratic way and with the people’s participation and support. They were elected within a climate of laxness and careerism.

These consequences, while noted, were not dealt with effectively by the communist parties and organs of state power, and thus the problems were reproduced in a more acute way.

The main problem which must be investigated further, so as to make use of the relevant experience, has to do with the role and use of the soviets as a form of state power and the relations between local soviets and workers’ collectives.

Even though laws were passed which continuously gave new rights to the local soviets, to the working people and to workers’ groups, in fact the procedures for popular participation and control were becoming merely formal in nature.

An equally serious issue which requires deeper examination was the status and role of the trade unions and other mass organisations of the socialist society. Legally and institutionally, their role was consolidated through laws and decisions, and through participation in all social and political affairs. In practice, their role was not developed to the highest possible degree.

The loosening of the party’s links with the people and the detachment of the central organs from the working people had an adverse effect on the utilisation of the mass organisations which

should have constituted poles of attraction for non-party forces, for the people, to engage in active participation and control of state and party organs.

The primary, paramount responsibility for the above phenomena lies in the role and activity of the communist party which, by its nature and role, should have had the first concern for correlating its activity with the initiative of the people and cultivating participation by the people constantly. It should have restricted and eliminated administrative methods and created the conditions required to increase the role of the direct and representative organs of the people in the economic and organisational functions of the socialist state.

31. The negative phenomena and problems that appeared do not disprove the theoretical position that in the socialist society there is a political transitional period during which the state is expressed by the political term revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, implying a full and substantial difference between it and the dictatorship of the bourgeois class in the capitalist society.

The criticism which was levelled at the socialist political system by anti-socialist forces in the capitalist countries, reformists and revisionist, started out from a consciously—or unconsciously in some cases—mistaken hypothesis, i.e. equating the criteria of capitalism and socialism, and from a classless treatment of democracy and freedom.

One of the most characteristic views of this type is identifying democracy with the multi-party system, with the number of parties that exercise power and take part in government. Socialism does not preclude the existence and functioning of other parties. Their existence is mainly determined by objective criteria. The number, nature and role of the political parties under socialism, apart from the communist party, depends on specific national specificities and traditions, on the social stratification or on historical reasons (e.g. the Social Revolutionaries although they participated in the first Soviet government, crossed over to the counter-revolution during the civil war).

The course of socialist construction showed the need, at each phase, at each level of socialist development, to ensure the best possible combination of democracy and centralism in the economic field of society with the primary goal being to improve centralism and develop democracy.

Centralism must express the basic interests of the working people and democracy the continuing presence of the people in the exercise of power. The most harmonic possible combination of the two, their dialectical interaction, constitutes a factor showing the ability of the socialist system to defend itself from mistakes and subversive activities. The growth of centralism to the detriment of democracy caused serious side effects in economic development and in satisfying collective interests, and became a factor which weakened the defence of the socialist system.

Achieving popular participation and social control over socialist ownership proved not to be an easy matter, as the socialist system is historically separated from communist self-government. For the people to become the supreme and sole owners of the social wealth as a whole requires time and constant effort so as to secure, improve and widen the rights of control, and to ensure the all-round development of the human personality.

Although this was of intense concern at party congresses and specific relevant decision and plans were formulated, it does not appear that this issue was dealt with effectively, on the basis of targets and needs.

Apart from the objective difficulties, the mistakes, violations and deviations which can be summarised in the quality of the relations between the working people and socialist ownership, the presence of the working people in exercising the functions of power in harmonic relation with the increased significance of a central administration<sup>(20)</sup>, likewise influenced the problems that arose.

32. In the course of building socialism, the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work" was substantially violated.

The system of economic and moral incentives required constant improvements. To the extent that this failed to occur and was violated, the ground was prepared for indifference to work and to increasing productivity. These factors led to the creation of incomes which did not correspond to the quantity and quality of the work done. Despite the periodic efforts at economic reform in the socialist countries, the role of the economic methods and incentives in the popular economy did not finally become stronger, central planning became rigid and centralised. Problems remained in the transport of goods and in the prompt supply of the market.

In this regard, discussions were held and critical remarks put forward by communist parties and Marxist economists, about the way in which the law of value, commodity-money relations was used in administering and operating enterprises and the way in which workers' collectives were utilised.

Questions related in particular to commodity-money relations, the quality of consumer goods and services, economic and moral incentives, social control and participation in planning and administration require further, special discussion. There are grounds for critical remarks, but special examination and greater depth are required. Studies need to be made, in cooperation with communist parties and scientists, of the experience of certain countries in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Hungary and Poland, in which experiments and applications were conducted. Some proved to be ineffective and are to be blamed for the appearance of capitalist ownership with side-effects in the ideological and political realms.

Problems which appeared, and which constituted deviations from theory, not only failed to refute, but even confirmed the general direction of Marxism-Leninism, i.e. that socialisation (in its two main forms, state and cooperative) could not go ahead during the period of socialism in the form of separate independent communities, but as state ownership, because of the need to develop the productive forces and to secure the collective interest during the transitional period.

The problems, weaknesses and mistakes which appeared in the dialectical relationship between democracy and centralism in the field of planning, in the local soviets and the workers' collectives and their role, cannot be used as an excuse for projecting, as a counterweight to socialism, the "market economy" and "free competition" and the policy of privatisations or the utopian, in the best possible case, view of "self-administration" and "self-management" which would lead to splitting united, nationwide socialist ownership into ownership by groups of producers, to the detriment of the social whole and the collective interest. Social ownership and central planning have been subject to constant attacks and slanders by anti-socialist forces. In essence, it is the abolition of class exploitation and the political power of the working class and its allies that is being targeted.

33. The system of internal contradictions in socialism, which

constitutes the core of the materialist dialectic, was overlooked. The need to secure dialectical unity and interaction between the productive relations and productive forces at every phase and level of development was underestimated.

This may prove to be a key issue in many of the questions which concern us here with respect to the ground on which mistakes, weaknesses, deficiencies and finally deviations flourished. The problem of the contradictions in socialism did not become an object of theoretical studies and mainly of practical solutions resulting in adverse effects that were reflected in the economic, social and political field. Some of Lenin's most basic thoughts were underestimated, according to which socialism is not free of contradictions and disagreements and that these, when they are overlooked, can take on the nature of a conflict.<sup>(21)</sup>

The process of unifying the socialist society was overestimated or made absolute. Mistaken views prevailed which argued that contradictions lose their significance in socialism; the result was that inconsistencies, disharmonies and problems were not identified and dealt to the extent required by circumstances.

At times, particularly during the 1970s and more intensively after the Polish crisis, intense discussions were carried out about the dialectic of contradictions in socialism, but these discussions did not continue. While issues were brought to the fore, practical solutions to this crucial problem do not seem to have been provided beyond theoretical discussions and studies carried out by various scientific institutes.

At every phase in the development of the socialist society, under conditions where the scientific and technological revolution showed the organic link between social and technological progress, the communist parties and state organs should have been directing their attention continuously to the following problems: improving productive relations, developing the productive forces, achieving the optimum organisation of the whole mechanism of the economy, raising socialist consciousness and increasing the cultural development of the peoples in socialist countries.

Under conditions of socialist construction—as distinct from capitalism—the characteristic feature was the rapid and in some cases heady increases in people's material and intellectual needs; therefore the need for the development of the productive forces was constantly growing.

To the extent that these contradictions were not faced, conflicts arose between social production and consumption, between individual and social interests. In this instance, the contradiction could not be removed by cultivating and idealising individual consumerism nor of course by ignoring the growing trend in personal and collective needs. The course of socialist construction shows that problems were created and discontent was cultivated to the extent that there was no "yardstick" of balance on the basis of objective possibilities.

34. The stratification of the socialist society was overlooked, a fact which prepared the way for contradictions between general, partial, special and local interests.

When the foundations of socialism were laid, class distinctions were abolished; distinctions and differences of roles between the working class and the other social strata of the population, peasantry and intellectuals, which were manifested in various forms (contradictions between town and country, physical and mental labour etc.) diminished but were not abolished.

Other distinctions were associated with the level of socialist development, with forms of socialist ownership, with historic, national and local specificities. Yet others, which appeared as differences of consciousness and orientation, stemmed from the survival of anachronistic viewpoints or from the pressure of the bourgeois ideology under conditions of ideological attack by imperialism.

Contradictions in the socialist society are linked with the Marxist position on the nature of this society, which is described as a transitional period in the revolutionary transformation of capitalist into communist society. It is a period during which full social equality cannot be achieved.<sup>(22)</sup>

Historical experience has vindicated the positions of the Marxist-Leninist Classics. It has provided a lot of new data for deeper study and for the development of concept about the contradictions in socialism. It has confirmed that the socialist society retains remnants, traditions, and deep traces of the old society whose offspring it was.

The class struggle does not stop with the victory of the socialist revolution. It continues and intensifies at critical moments, particularly during the period in which efforts are being made to

socialise the main means of production, and to lay the foundations for socialism. The exploiting classes do not give up easily, despite the fact that they constitute a minority and have lost some of their most basic and political supports. The intensity, duration, sharpness and form in which the class struggle is manifested depends on the pace at which socialist relations are built, and on the international surroundings and balance of forces. During the entire period in which private capital and small commodity production exist, new elements of the bourgeois class are reproduced. The situation is also affected by the international balance of forces, and the strategy and tactics of imperialism which is constantly looking for an internal foothold to promote the overthrow of socialism from within, since external intervention is not an easy matter.

Its sharpness and forms are not the same for all countries; the national specificities, the traditions of the workers' and communist movement, the quality of the bonds between the party and the people, the quality of the alliance between the working class and the other social strata who are fighting for socialist measures and transformations in that particular country, all have a part to play.

It is obvious that, as the socialist relations of production are consolidated, active popular participation in the building and administration of political and social matters increases, the opponents of socialism will be minimized.

35. The widespread use in socialism of the advances of the scientific and technological revolution was delayed.

Congresses of communist parties in the socialist countries repeatedly identified problems in the unsatisfactory implementation and utilisation of new technologies. The scientific and technological revolution was applied and utilised unequally and selectively: in the military economy, in space, in some sectors of heavy industry and in large-scale projects; less so in the consumer goods and services industries.

Apart from objective, historical factors, the reasons for the relatively low utilisation of science and technology and the equally low return on investments should be sought in the following factors:

In the role of the economic administrative mechanism, in the forms and methods of administration and management, in the system of distribution according to the quantity and quality of the

work, in the system of material and moral incentives, in the rational use of material, financial and manpower resources, and closely related to the participation of the people in the administration, management and control of planning and administration bodies.

These factors play a significant role in taking advantage of the potentialities of socialist ownership, which cannot be put into practice by themselves, without the human factor and the support of science and technology. The passage from extensive to intensive development is linked also with the forms and quality of socialist democracy, with the participation of the masses.

Another factor which should be studied with the help of the experience of communist parties and scientists is the problem of the possibilities of socialist accumulation—in specific countries and under specific historic conditions—which acts as an objective factor, encouraging or restraining continued growth, and above all that of the comprehensive application of technological advances.

Perceiving the way in which technology has been used in socialism does not disprove the fact that the socialist relations of production provided a significant thrust to the growth of the productive forces and to the visible technological progress in countries which had started at the lowest point in comparison with the corresponding situation in the developed capitalist countries. A series of studies and statistics have proved that in the socialist countries, the productive forces developed and that a considerable effort was made to develop science and technology. Discoveries and scientific research still retain their value in many fields. The USSR in particular, periodically pulled ahead of the developed capitalist countries.

There are no grounds for the argument that is widely disseminated in the capitalist countries, namely that the delay in modernising the productive forces was the decisive cause of the overthrow of the systems in the socialist countries.

These views that see the development of the means of production, technology and science as being the exclusive criterion for progressivism and democracy have proved to be one-sided. They overlook the problem of ownership in capitalism, as well as the position and role of the working people in the productive process.

The development of productive forces, despite their creative revolutionary nature, is not the exclusive indicator of the creative

aspect of human activity and the social status of the working people. Socialism, even with lower productivity, and especially when this is due to historic, objective reasons, is in a position to offer the working people more than capitalism because of the qualitative elements it brings to working and living conditions. Abolishing the exploitation of man by man creates a new system of human values which determines the quality of life and the ranking of criteria and needs.

Undoubtedly the development of the material and technical infrastructure on the basis of scientific and technological revolution, the level of development of the means of production, and sophisticated mechanisation and automation contribute to the development of productive relations.

36. The application of the principle of proletarian internationalism was weakened owing to the loosening of and the split in the international communist movement's unity of action in the struggle against imperialism and revisionism.

At critical periods, the united strategy and tactics of the world communist movement was not marshalled against the united strategy and tactics of imperialism. A particularly heavy blow against the unity of the international communist movement was the breach between the CPSU and the Communist Party of China, with repercussions in the international balance of forces and in the unity of action against imperialism. It had an adverse chain reaction on many communist parties all over the world. It was exploited to step up anti-communism and anti-socialism. The unity of the communist movement was then further tried by the wave of Eurocommunism, which signaled the infiltration of revisionist, defeatist, compromising attitudes within the ranks of the communist movement in capitalist Europe.

The adverse effects and repercussions from the dissolution of the Communist International as a united centre offering a forum for the exchange of views with other communist parties need to be studied and understood. The new form of coordination that was established, with the help of international conferences, contributed up to a certain point in time to the common elaboration of strategy and tactics, to joint action. Along the way, this too was substantially abandoned due to ideological disagreements and breaches in the ranks of the communist movement. The bilateral and multilateral regional meetings mainly on international issues that replaced it

were insufficient to deal with matters related to joint action or ideological and theoretical problems. The discussion and confrontation was of a more or less formal nature, a long way from lively, creative discussion about the essence of problems.

There were periods when the discussion which was focused on ideological differences took on the form of an open breach and severance of relations of all kinds, resulting in widening the gap and divisions. In other cases, in the name of independent responsibility and non-intervention in parties' internal affairs, all discussion and criticism ceased, with the result that relations took on a strictly formal character in the exchange of views and opinions. Both tactics ultimately led to the same result: to the loosening of unity or the facile alignment behind one or another view. The main thing was that the discussion of theoretical problems and the reasons for one or the other view or deviation was reduced or weakened.

There must be continuing efforts, through the exchange of views with other communist parties on the basis of long-term positive as well as negative experience, to deepen our understanding of the ways and means of conducting discussions about ideological matters and differences between the communist parties, and about the type of relations that developed between them on an international and regional level.

When the discussion of the different viewpoints is conducted on the basis of communist principles, not only is exploitation by the forces of imperialism precluded, but on the contrary, the result constitutes a serious factor in confronting these forces.

37. Mistakes were made in the strategy and tactics of socialism in its confrontation with imperialism.

On the part of imperialism, the confrontation between the two systems was not just an ideological struggle, but a form of subversive activity against socialism.

The line of peaceful co-existence as it was developed during the early post-war years, and to some extent at the 19th and mainly 20th Congress, permitted the cultivation of utopian views, i.e. that it was possible for imperialism to abandon war and military means and to accept a new world order which would be based on the principles of mutual benefit and cooperation on an equal footing; and that it would be possible for imperialism to accept a peace-time

economy and the utilisation of the resources saved through disarmament by countries with development problems.

The radical change in the balance of forces, the constant progress of the international revolutionary process, and united, world action by the anti-imperialist forces can effectively prevent aggressiveness and military interventions and raids by imperialism.

At that particular phase in history, it was not noticed that the USA with its European allies were reinforcing the weaker links in capitalism, keeping them in the imperialist system with both overt and covert interventions in countries' internal affairs using political, economic and military means and with the main instrument being the constant threat of the use of atomic and then nuclear weapons.

It is one thing to fight to avert war, especially thermonuclear war, and an entirely different thing to put forward the view—under specific conditions—that it is possible to eliminate war in general.

38. A negative influence was likewise exerted by the assessment of the possibilities and role of social democracy during the post-war period.

A main element in the communist strategy was to seek joint action and alliance with social democracy in the cause of detente and peace, but also more generally in the anti-imperialist struggle. The social democracy of Western Europe, irrespective of its verbal proclamations and periodic superficial manoeuvres, was in fact on the side of the imperialist forces in the anti-socialist, anti-communist "human rights" campaign. The European social democrats were responsible for breaking up the cooperation with the communist parties, following U.S. pressures (through the Marshall plan) which required the expulsion of communist from post-war governments.

At critical moments, when the anti-imperialist, anti-militarist movement should have been strengthened and broadened, the policy of imperialism was condoned by attributing equal blame to the USSR and the USA for the arms race. The defensive Warsaw Treaty was identified with the cold-war, aggressive NATO. And indeed, certain social democracy parties, such as the SPD led by Willi Brandt, played an active part in the so called "bridge" policy

(ostpolitik), clearly aiming at the annexation of the GDR, and the encouragement of anti-socialist activities from within. The rise of social democratic parties to government power offered many proofs of the nature of these parties, and of the services they offered in support of the capitalist system and the management of its crisis.

The capitalist system could not retain and mainly it could not reproduce its power without the support of the ideology and policy of social democracy, which apart from supporting capitalism, proved to be a major factor in undermining the power and unity of the labour movement.

Today it can be seen clearly that there was a need for a strong, convincing and militant ideological front against the theories of social democracy which, at that time cultivated illusions that there is a so-called third road to socialism.

## PART FOUR

### THE CPG AND THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM

39. Our party, from the first moment it was established and throughout its more than seventy years of history, has defended the cause of socialism and the socialist countries with the lives of its thousands of members and cadres.

We recognised the incontrovertible gains in the countries of socialism which exerted a great influence all over the world, and became a propelling force for the working people in the capitalist countries to achieve gains.

We appreciated the enormous help generously provided by the socialist countries to the national liberation movements and to the cause of peace and disarmament.

Our militancy in defence of the major fact, i.e. the socialist gains, was dictated by the needs and the special features of the struggle in our country. It was our own distinct response to the persecutions of communists, to anti-communist propaganda. The defence of socialism and communism was a conscious choice by our party both in the past and today, when adverse, dramatic developments have taken place.

40. The developments which occurred during recent years have shown our responsibility for the fact that we, too, like the other communist parties, did not avoid the idealisation and embellishment of socialism, as it was built in the former socialist countries. Our party, in a number of party bodies and documents, spoke of problems and weaknesses which appeared in the course of the socialist construction. Also, in our bilateral contacts and relations with parties, criticism was expressed with respect to certain problems related to international issues or erroneous assessments of the situation in Greece, without briefing—in most cases—our party members. In cases when criticism was levelled, we confined ourselves to general references, descriptive without being accompanied by an effort to discuss the deeper causes, to the extent permitted by conditions.

We attributed the problems which we had noticed as being due mainly to objective factors. We justified them as being problems related to the development of socialism, which proved not to correspond to the reality in all cases.

The causes were partly due to objective reasons and partly to serious subjective reasons. The many years during which our party was underground, the long years of persecutions prevented the development of systematic theoretical work and a contribution to utilising the experience of socialist construction. Our party, however, had the capability, mainly from its own experience in confronting deviations in the course of its history, of acquiring certain reflexes which would have helped it confront viewpoints, which we now judge not to have been correct or objective, in a critical spirit. It has been proved that our party too failed to pay sufficient attention to the need to acquire an adequate theoretical background, to promote the creative study and assimilation of our theory, to utilise the rich experience of the class, revolutionary struggle, i.e. to contribute with its own forces to the creative development of ideological and political positions in the light of changing conditions. We became reconciled to the formality which appeared in the relations between the communist parties, and in their joint action on matters of theory and ideology. We did not manage to combine respect for the experience of other parties with an objective judgement of their policy and practice, and with comradely criticism of deviations, which once again proved to have had more general adverse effects on the communist move-

ment, since the repercussions could not be limited to the national or local level.

Our party welcomed "perestroika", perceiving it to be a reform to the benefit of socialism, and taking into consideration its unanimous acceptance by the leadership of the CPSU, in whose ideological firmness and long years of experience we had unlimited confidence. But there were opportunities to discuss the signs of the adverse course being taken at least as early as 1987, when the co-existence of capitalist and socialist ownership was openly adopted by law in the Soviet Union.

At the plenum of January 1990 and later, at our 13th Congress, an effort was made to interpret the events in the socialist countries and the changes which were taking place. These estimations were not correct. The theses of 1990 were governed by illusions about the "new thinking" and about "perestroika" itself. They contained a distorted approach to the events in Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, which were perceived as an "outburst by the masses", while in reality it was an "outburst" by the counter-revolution in order to reverse the system. And most serious of all, the "collapse of the regimes in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe" was considered to be "to some extent... inevitable" (23)

Events of the last few years have shown that the uncritical acceptance of "perestroika" and the failure to perceive its nature in time, exerted a negative influence on our party, as well as on the ranks of the communist movement more generally. Ideological vigilance was relaxed with the result that revisionist and even anti-communist views developed in the Central Committee, and among a fairly large number of the party cadres, who had recently been elected to various organs, leading to the inner-party crisis of the 1990-91 period.

41. Our party must pay careful attention to the lessons to be drawn here, from even a quick glance, regarding: the policy of promoting cadres, the social composition, collectivity and internal democracy, the steadfast struggle against opportunism and reformism, as well as the study, assimilation and development of our theory in the changing social and political reality.

The recent tragic experience showed that it is not enough for a party to adopt Marxist-Leninist theory in order to function in

practice on the basis of its theory and functioning principles. There must be a permanent concern for respect of principles, for the creative application of theory and for its development and enrichment in practice on the basis of objective developments. The main responsibility rests with the CC, and with the party cadres who must create the prerequisites and conditions for knowledge and experience of the struggle to be acquired by all party members and more broadly by the circle of the party's influence and activity. Complacency and relaxation lessen the party's capacity to develop and mature continuously, to retain and broaden its ability to fight for the interests of the working people, for the cause of social change and socialism.

### THE TIMELINESS, NECESSITY AND REALISM OF SOCIALISM ON THE WAY TO THE COMMUNIST SOCIETY

42. The final victory of the the socialist and communist society is a global law. The course of humanity is not determined by the events and occurrences of one particular period alone—and indeed a short period—in comparison with the millenia that have already elapsed, during which there have been a succession of five social systems.

In human society, as in nature, there are objective laws which operate, not of course in a blind and mechanical way, but through the revolutionary struggle of the working people, with the vanguard, leading role of the working class and its party. Through this process, people acquire the ability to function as truly free persons.

43. The views propagated by some scientists and political forces that there will be another system, somewhere between capitalism and socialism, which will make people happy, are utopian, and advocate capitalism.

However, no matter how many people tried to describe this "new" system, they could only describe a variation of the capitalist system, with private ownership of the means of production and man as prey to the laws of a class society. As it has been proved that there is no "third road to socialism", the same will be proved for all those who place hope in "another" system, which will supposedly be neither capitalism nor socialism nor a communist society. Such a system does not nor will ever exist.

44. Marxist-Leninist theory, as a theory of socialist revolution, continues to be timely and vital. The working class and exploited and oppressed social strata can find answers, ideas and thought in this theory which will help them to acquire a clear awareness of the nature of the capitalist society and the immutable law of its replacement by the communist society. Its vitality and strength are such that its opponents cannot ignore it. During the recent period, scientists and thinkers who passionately defended idealism and the bourgeois ideology have been obliged to have recourse to the ideas and proposals of Marx in order to explain certain blatant phenomena in the capitalist society. The trend towards returning to the study of Marx' and Engels' works has not been dictated in all cases by disinterested motives. Bourgeois thinkers, servants of the capitalist system, in view of the fear that the theory of scientific socialism will regain new glamour and influence, have resorted to a familiar art: contrasting Marxism and Leninism, with the clear intention of removing their most dynamic and fundamental content, i.e. the necessity and timeliness of the socialist revolution and its general principles. What they are afraid of, and want by all means to prevent, is for the idea of joining the party of the working class, the communist party, to gain ground because this idea is inextricably linked with the timeliness and prospects of radical social change.

Studying the experience of socialism which was built in the 20th century offers a great deal of data about its development, enrichment and the study of developments around the world. The achievements, but also the mistakes of all kinds and origin, offer great lessons to be learned, which communists did not have when the building of the new society first started. They offer stimuli for studying and deepening the creative development of the theory in the evolving reality with its contradictions. They permit lessons to be drawn so that mistakes are avoided, thinking is sharpened and experience is offered for research in the field of science and technology.

The scientific theory of socialism with the development of all its components is a power which provides the popular forces with the ability to master the complex new problems through knowledge. The technological and cultural revolution must constitute an organic and propellent part of socialist construction.

The society of capitalism, even according to the most optimis-

tic, subjective assessments by its warmest supporters, is going through a profound crisis with no way out. The very foundations of capitalism are undermined. The working class with its social allies will prove once more to be the gravediggers of capitalism, as stressed by Marx, overthrowing it and establishing socialism. A temporary defeat not only does not preclude, but even prepares for victory, as long as its conclusions are correctly utilised.

There is a considerable difference between communists and those who do not know or do not consciously agree with the theory of scientific socialism, with the dialectical movement of history and humanity as a whole.

45. The CPG is deeply convinced that the reversal of socialism does not refute, but on the contrary offers many new proofs for the objective necessity of the socialist prospect not only in our country, but on a planet-wide scale. The great contradictions which humanity is now going through reflect the confrontation between the forces of imperialism and the forces which are fighting for socialism, and express the need for a socialist revolution.

The fundamental contradiction between capital and labour, imperialist dependence and oppression, the neocolonial patterns which have been imposed on international relations objectively constitute today the necessity and realism of the overthrow of capitalism, the revolutionary change in the building of the socialist and communist society.

The rapid rise of science and technology, the enormous development of the productive forces cannot be accommodated in the oppressively narrow exploitative capitalist relations. Internationalisation of the activity of capital, the transition from national state monopoly regulations to transnational ones, shows the lack of correspondence between productive relations and productive forces. In the global historic evolution, the productive forces have gone beyond the bounds of capitalism, and the necessity of socialism has matured objectively.

In imperialism, all its internal and external contradictions are manifested today within the framework of the world economy. Even more manifest is the uneven development of world capitalism, and its reactionary nature becomes even more pronounced.

The reversal of the socialist system has removed the smoke screen of the so-called communist danger, by which capitalism

justified armaments, interventions and the waging of local wars, including the threat of a global thermonuclear war. It caused a crisis in the communist movement, a general regression of the labour and peace movement, it opened the road for new local wars and interventions which aimed to redistribute markets, states, and entire regions of the earth.

The regression of the revolutionary movement and the crisis in the communist movement led to the retreat of the subjective factor which would have used and set in motion the process of replacing capitalism in many countries where the situation today is objectively mature.

The main problem is action to create the subjective conditions for the socialist revolution. The daily struggle to solve the immediate and pressing problems that affect our people can and must become an organic part of such a prospect, and especially since capitalism today is running into unimaginable difficulties and some prohibitive barriers for concessions to the popular movement, to the popular strata.

46. The historic experience of the socialist system in Europe obliges us to pay special attention and to study those aspects of socialist construction which affected the process of the restoration of capitalism. We should study them more deeply in the light of events and developments, the contemporary conditions and terms of the confrontation between capitalism and socialism.

One of the most valuable lessons has been that the socialist revolution—like its creative work, the building of the primary phase of the communist society, i.e the socialist society—cannot be realised “without the independent historic creativity of the majority of the population and above all by the majority of the working people.”(24) This is determined by the level of political maturity of the working class and the working people under contemporary conditions, on their understanding and awareness of their interests and on the extent of their emancipation from historical fatalism.

The policy of alliances of the party and the working class is an issue of strategic importance, because it plays a decisive role in shaping the social and political prerequisites for the passage to socialism and for solving the fundamental problem which is winning political power by the working class and its allies, without which it will not be possible for radical social and economic transformations to start being realised.

The responsibilities of the communist party do not cease with the favorable outcome of the struggle for socialism. On the contrary, they increase constantly in the the course of building the new society.

One of the party's main problems is constantly to maintain and reinforce its bonds with the working class, and with the people more generally; to rely on the experience and initiatives of the people; to cultivate through its own example a socialist, communist consciousness, and the obligation and responsibility to defend socialism from all forms of mistakes, deviations, distortions, and reversals in face of the difficulties and complexity of the new tasks.

The administration of the new society and its development will continually upgrade the role of the communist party, which certainly should not be perceived as a replacement for or identical with that of the socialist state. We must learn from the mistakes which have been made and deepen our understanding of the correct relationship between the party and state and economic agencies, and social organisations so that the creative activity of the masses in administering production, and state and social affairs can develop, become stronger and improve during the course of the socialist construction. Replacing state and social organisations in the name of the particular role played by the communist party in the socialist political system leads to tying up the inherent potentialities of socialism, to alienation and apathy, to the danger of serious mistakes which weaken socialism and limit its defence against all forms of subversion.

47. The new role of the communist party, as a ruling party under conditions of socialist construction, derives from the fact that for the first time in history, there is the possibility of objective laws and scientific forecasting being used in a conscious, planned way.

The communist party has the primary responsibility to play the leading part in ensuring that the new power responds to expectations and to its responsibilities; for it to correspond to the scientific term used by the Classics "dictatorship of the proletariat" without which the passage from capitalism to socialism is impossible.

This new power is found in the opposite of the bourgeois political system, which irrespective of its form and methods of

government, is the dictatorship of capitalist ownership which today has the form of transnational corporate giants, served by governments and parties who support and manage the capitalist system. This is a social minority which usurps the means of production and becomes rich on the surplus value of human labour.

The new political power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, must vindicate in practice its mission as the power of the working class which, together with its allies, is called upon to carry out the enormous tasks of building socialism by applying broad democracy for the working people, who for the first time will have the power to overcome the resistance of the exploiting classes and the imperialists. It will vindicate the term "proletarian power" creating the conditions for the working class to win the leading role in the society, in alliance with other social strata oppressed by capitalism, such as the peasantry, people with small and medium-sized enterprises, and the radical intelligentsia. The objective basis for the leading role of the working class will be its position in the production process of capitalism and its ability to realise the essence of the workers' power which is its alliance with all working people and other anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist forces.

Any changes in the organisation of the productive process, the rapid development of productive forces through the utilisation of scientific and technological advances does not in essence change the leading role of the working class.

The form of the new power is chiefly determined by its class essence, but it will be influenced by the action of other factors, such as the disposition of the class forces, the level of economic and political development, the balance of forces on the regional and international level, the level of political awareness of the people, and their national traits.

The democratic relations with other parties and socio-political organisations which want socialist construction, the care for the correct functioning of direct and representative democracy, and control over the activity of the party by the working class and the people more generally, are matters of fundamental significance. They constitute the basis for the dialectical relations between the political vanguard and the people.

48. Because of the unequal development of the conditions for

the victory of socialism in one country or in a broader region, it is crucially important to exercise vigilance and to defend the new system from multiform overt or covert attacks by imperialism on all fronts (economic, political, ideological, military). In the current conditions, the position of the Classics must be studied more seriously, i.e. that the ultimate victory of the socialist revolution and the socialist system is certain in the dialectical relations with the progress toward global predominance.

The course of building socialism has shown that as long as imperialism maintains power in global affairs, it has the strength, organisation and coordinated means of domination to stand in the way of the socialist construction. International relations and foreign policy are not tightly separated from the domestic situation, from developments within the socialist societies. External factors, if they are not confronted correctly, can evolve further into internal problems and internal factors which strike at the dynamism of the socialist construction.

49. Of particular significance is the study of the problems of the transitional period between capitalism and socialism. The capitalist legacy in all spheres and sectors of life will be particularly painful and heavy. Among the most basic problems will be socialist ownership of the means of production, the socialist economy and forms of social life, if we take into account the difference between socialism and communism. (25)

The experience of the socialist construction and international developments show that it is particularly important to study the problems of state planning and economic levers in administering the economy.

50. The experience of the socialist construction shows that the party, the popular vanguard and the organs of administration and management must not be possessed of a spirit of smugness and complacency. Satisfaction of a need or a cluster of needs generates new needs and demands, and human needs must never be regarded as having reached their final point. There will be contradictions between individual, local, group and general social needs. The irreplaceable supreme value of the general socialist interest does not nullify the objective contradiction between the personal and the social. The trend to individualise needs will exist and will influence the orientations of the popular masses and the extent of their participation in building and defending the socialist system.

This contradiction will be reproduced throughout the entire phase of socialism, which is a transitional and therefore imperfect society. From this point of view, it is particularly important, as the experience of socialism has shown, that production relations and their dialectical relation with the productive forces be changed to benefit the people.

51. It has been confirmed that the socialist construction shows specificities from one country to another. Underestimating and neglecting them can create serious problems in the alliance of the working class with other social strata in the evolution of the class struggle and of contradictions. The position of each country in the imperialist system plays a role, as does the course of incorporating its economy, the level of development of the productive forces, its economic situation, its surroundings, the level of internationalisation of the class struggle etc. From this point of view, our party must make constant and systematic efforts to acquire deeper knowledge of the situation in Greece in conjunction with the evolution of international relations and the situation in Europe and internationally.

The particularities which concern our country or countries with similar socio-political problems and a similar level of development do not refute the single essence of socialism. Revisionist views about the "multiplicity of socialism" in the name of the existing issue of specificity, have not been confirmed. On the contrary, they have proved to be a pretext for denying and underestimating the general laws and principles of the theory of scientific socialism.

52. The theoretical issues related to the socialist and communist society and in particular the struggle for the victory of socialism cannot be solved substantially and effectively without the corresponding cooperation among communist parties. Undoubtedly every communist party has the primary and irreplaceable role in the cause of socialism in its own country. Nevertheless the international character of the struggle against capitalism, with the prospect of socialism, proletarian internationalism, necessitates coordination, common action among the communist parties and the establishment of a powerful international communist movement. Without a strong, united international communist movement, the united front of the peoples who are suffering under the bonds of capitalism and the new aggressiveness it acquired after the dramatic developments of 1989-91 will not be able to go forward.

Millions of communists all over the world hope, demand and believe in the possibility and necessity of united action by the communist parties, anti-imperialist forces and movements. The imperialist forces and the political parties which express their interests, despite their internal quarrels and the rivalries over the division of the "pie", have a unified strategy against the working class and its movement, against the peoples and the countries they exploit and oppress. The coordination of the liberal and social democratic parties, as well as the collaboration with former communist party cadres has passed into a higher stage, toward the creation of united parties in Europe and corresponding ones internationally.

The CPG considers that one of the most basic factors in strengthening the fight for socialism is unity of action by the communist parties and common action with other left, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces. On the basis of the conclusions drawn from the adverse effects of the break in unity of the international communist movement in the fight to defend socialism, it will continue its efforts in this important field.

The CPG will cultivate the exceptional virtues of unselfishness, sacrifice and dedication to the ideals of socialism, for which thousands, millions of fighters in Greece and all over the world have given what they valued most, including their very lives.

24 March 1995

The CC of the CPG

## Footnotes

1. More than 2/3 of the population was illiterate.
2. Lenin's last letters and articles contained the basic directions and goals of the cultural revolution which he believed should take place in the Soviet Union. In his article "On Cooperation" he examined the issue of culture in the light of solving economic problems.
3. There was in this country a strong movement toward catching up with the U.S. per capita GNP (55% in 1985; up from 11.5% in 1913). Per capita income was calculated as a quantitative indicator, given that it operates in a completely different way in the two social systems,

reflecting radically different social relations.

4. Lenin showed the close connection between the national question and solving the problems of socialist construction. He attacked the erroneous views that the consistent application of self-determination would split the peoples. He proved that the national issue does not exist outside the sphere of class relations and the class struggle, and that its solution is determined by the class unity of the working people.
5. The most important of the "reforms" were: "the safeguarding of private ownership" by means of the law which recognised a "variety of forms of ownership and production, and competition between them"; the change in the political and state system with the weakening of the CPSU as the vehicle for the exercise of power and with the reinforcement of the institution of President of the Union; the weakening of the CPSU in the basic sectors of economic and social life, in the sectors of defence and security; replacement of the soviet political system of power by a type of political system which bore greater similarities to capitalist parliamentarism; the effort that was undertaken to neutralise the role of the soviets, the party committees; the gradual assumption by the President of the country of superpowers, and his retaining the title of General Secretary of the CC of the CPSU; changes in the country's foreign policy, aiming primarily at ideological and political reconciliation which capitalism in the name of the struggle for peace and the prevention of thermonuclear war; abandonment of internationalist solidarity with the socialist countries of Europe.
6. Seventy countries in Africa, Asia and Latin American acquired their national independence. Most of them relied on the economic and scientific assistance of the socialist countries in order to address their economic problems. Another decisive factor which necessitated differentiation was the shift in the military balance of forces, when the USSR arrived at the point of equilibrium of its arsenal with that of the USA. Also influential were the defeat of the USA in Vietnam and the gains of the national liberation movement which led to the collapse of colonialism.
7. The Johnson doctrine, especially after 1964, with the policy of "bridges" toward the eastern European countries. On the contrary, the balance of terror was maintained toward the USSR by means of nuclear weapons, and the policy of isolation toward the German Democratic Republic. Methods were selected which would favour the collapse of the socialist system from within. The theory of "independence from the USSR" was promoted, and propaganda developed saying that "the progress of Eastern Europe depends on extend-

- ing relations and softening the confrontation with the West".
8. Imperialism's use of ideological subversion as an ideological weapon was put forward strongly by Y. Andropov, GS of the CC of the CPSU, who called it the policy of subversion from within.
  9. A direction which was elaborated by the 15th Congress. The CPSU attached weight to increased productivity by small and medium-sized holdings and to technological equipment. The nationalisation of the land was not contrary to the right of owning land by owners of small and middle peasantry. He saw the role which could be played by small holdings, and the forms which could be used to merge scattered holdings, from the simplest forms, the "companionships", to cartels. The attitude toward small holdings and smallscale production was to provide assistance not opposition. He rejected the destruction of the lowest organisation of production in the name of the highest. At the time he put forward the advantages of kolkhozes and sovkhozes. The aim of the full-scale organisation of the economy started out with the political goal of defeating certain sections of the kulaks in the countryside and then the elimination of the kulak class as a whole.
  10. Financial year 1920-21: More than 11% increase in the national income in comparison with that of the previous year. While in the developed capitalist countries—USA, England Germany—it did not exceed 2-4%. For the same financial year, an 18% increase in production was noted in large industry in comparison to that of the previous year. Source: History of the CPSU p. 446. Synchroni Epohi Editions.
  11. Decision of the CC on 15.3.1930 and personal article by J. Stalin based on this decision, which points out mistakes which hindered the consolidation of the alliance, raises the issue of recognising the mistakes and correcting them in as many regions and cases as this is possible, where faits accomplis have not been created through deviation or a wrong course of action.
  12. J.V. Stalin: Complete Works (in Greek), Vol 12. p. 56-88. Meeting of economic cadres. The problem was stressed of the negative stance taken by economic and trade union cadres to the application of the socialist principle to earnings, the problem of delays in satisfying the workers' new material and cultural needs. The necessity of developing the socialist consciousness on the basis of satisfying new needs was pointed out. The issue was raised of applying the principle of economic self-sustenance of enterprises; that the sources of socialist accumulation should be broadened by mobilising the internal resources of industry, introducing and stabilizing the principle of economic self-sustenance in all enterprises, the substantial reduction of production of cost, the increase of inner-industrial accumulation in

all branches of industry without exception. The leadership of the party considered that the progress of socialist construction would be judged by the solutions to these problems so as to ensure the undiminished superiority of socialism as regards the rates of development of the productive forces in comparison with those of developed capitalism.

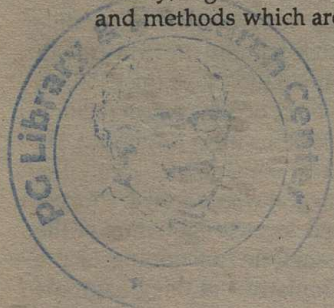
13. These problems were put forward and constituted an object of criticism in February-March 1937 during the Plenary Session of the CC of the AUCP/B which discussed the issue of preparing the party organisations for the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The CC decided to establish the closed i.e. secret ballot and to eliminate the practice of co-optation. Particular significance was attached to joint action and the alliance of communists and non-party members in electing common candidates to be deputies, thus demonstrating the progress in the unity of the socialist society in a practical way.
14. History of the CPSU (in Greek), Ed. S.E. 1980, pp. 532-535. Also, documentation from the 20th Congress of the CPSU.
15. The state forms were different from one country to another. A part from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the part of Germany which was liberated by the Red Army, in all the others formally, and in Romania substantially, a monarchical regime was retained. Czechoslovakia remained with a purely bourgeois political system consisting of the office of President and a parliamentary republic. In the GDR, the socio-political transformations and revolutionary power were developed without a central authority. The system was aimed against the external and internal enemies and their local collaborators. The expropriation of fortune and the nationalisation of basic branches of industry took place with the demand that enterprises which had been ceded to the Third Reich come under workers' control.
16. The 20th Congress continued the line of giving priority to industrial development and to extensive development, although there was an opposing view advocating abandonment of this line. At the 23rd Congress, the line in favour of scientific and technological progress was adopted, with special weight attached to development of the agrarian economy. The 25th in 1976 elaborated the line of quality and efficiency. The 26th in 1981 elaborated the theory of developed socialism and raised the issue of transitions to intensive development.
17. Here serious difficulties arose. They have different origins, but were never linked with the essence of the established, collective ownership, which proved its advantages. On the contrary, a significant number of the deficiencies which once disturbed the regular work in one or the other sector of the popular economy were due to the

divergence from the rules, and from the demands of economic life, whose definitive foundation was social ownership of the means of production. Source: Y.V. Andropov: "Leninism lights our way", selected articles and speeches, p. 310. "The tried and tested principle of organising the entire socialist society is democratic centralism, which permits a successful combination of free creation by the masses with the advantages of a unified system of scientific leadership in planning and management". Ibid. p.320.

18. In party documents and various discussions, particularly during the period when Y. Andropov was GS of the CC of the CPSU, strong references were made to the ideological controversy among the views of the ideologists of the bourgeois class, and with reformism as well, regarding divergence of the USSR "model" and that of other socialist countries from the theoretical model of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Criticism was levelled at the specific "form of socialist state organisation and democracy" with the argument that it did not correspond to the Marxist prospect of communist self-government, at the existence of "isolated" individuals who were circumventing social ownership, and at the "crisis of the theory of Marxism-Leninism, which should be 'revitalized' with the ideas of Western sociology, philosophy and political thought."
19. The 21st and 22nd Congress, where they were incorporated into the constitutions of the Soviet Union in 1977.
20. The 26th Congress of the CPSU: As real democracy is impossible without socialism, so socialism is impossible without the firm growth of democracy. In his speech to the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU in 1980, L.I. Brezhnev stressed that the problem of the correct relation between centralism and democracy is one of the most important. He emphasized that a centre was required to manage effectively the network of the national economy as an integral whole, and to address the tendencies to narrow mindedness and localist egotism. On the other hand, it was necessary for the smooth functioning of the economy to develop, as far as possible, initiatives at the grass roots level, in the workers' collectives and among the leading cadres in the society. The problem was to solve most of the practical problems precisely where this could be done quickly without unnecessary hesitations and voting.
21. Lenin (vol. 36, p. 47) stressed that socialism in life will not be smooth. It will be unimaginably complex. In his speech "The immediate tasks of soviet power" (p. 206), he was occupied with the arrangement of the links, their form and connection, with the difference between one or another in the historic chain of events, which are simple crudely-cut things, as is the usual chain made by the blacksmith.

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22. Marx, giving the total movement of history, showed the transitional character of socialism in the sense of the first phase of the communist society. Lenin, confronting the problem of the socialist revolution and the immutable laws of building the socialist society, also studied the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, with the victory of the socialist revolution and the creation of the political system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Classics, referring to the various phases in building the socialist society, do not separate it artificially from the communist one. They pointed out the single essence of socialism and communism, and the scientific differences which they saw as a difference in economic maturity. Stressing the transitional nature of the socialist society has nothing to do with the erroneous and anti-scientific views which, in the name of transitionality, deny fundamental differences between capitalism and socialism.
23. The 13th Congress of the CPG. Documents, p. 22, published by the CC of the CPG.
24. V.I. Lenin, Complete Works (in Greek), vol 36, p. 171.
25. Communism in its first phase, its first step, which is the socialist society, cannot be economically completely mature, completely free of the problems inherited from capitalism. Of course, this position has nothing to do with the revisionist, opportunist view which, in the name of the transitional and incomplete character of the socialist society, argues for the preservation and development of principles and methods which are characteristic of the capitalist society.





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