

Talking points

UPN'S

BOLA IGE

Says

We Will Crush  
Capitalists

Our Goals Are  
The Same As  
Marxism-Leninism

Anti Trade Union  
Decrees Must Be  
Scrapped



Bola Ige in glasses addresses supporters

BOLA IGE is a lawyer of long standing reputation. He is a progressive thinker too.

He defended progressive trade union leaders during the 'Great Trade Union Trial' of 1975.

Mr. Ige is contesting for governorship of Oyo State on the platform of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

He is one of those aspiring governors whose constituencies are considered very safe. In other words he is one among the "sure horses" for the state house. Which means that he is one person sure to put into practice and fulfil the progressive promises of his Party the UPN.

UPN claim to be a socialist-oriented party has been talked about here and there.

He talked to Ikpe Etokudo about what will be what.

Read On:

NH: *Sir, How do you assess the stand of your party, UPN. Is it centre of left or could one term it a socialist party outright?*

IGE: The Unity Party of Nigeria cannot as yet be described as an outright socialist party. It is, however, the only party in Nigeria that has said without equivocation that its goal is socialism. Considering the ideological position of the party as of now I would say it is socialist orientated left of centre.

NH: *But there are influential elements in the party known for their spurious condemnation of socialism especially Marxist Leninist concept.*

IGE: Quite frankly, I don't know of any leading members of the Unity Party of Nigeria that have condemned socialism. I don't know of any.

NH: *What are your plans for Oyo State if you become the governor?*

IGE: When I become the governor of Oyo State, by the Grace of God, my plans will be two fold. First, to make Oyo State a model state, not only for Yorubaland but for the whole of Nigeria and a shining light for the Unity Party of Nigeria throughout the whole country.

The second is to transform the party machinery within the party and the social organisation within the state for a good take-off of a thorough-going socialist organisation.

NH: *Have you any plans for the working people?*

IGE: Yes. The Unity Party of Nigeria's manifesto says that one of its cardinal aims to provide full and gainful employment for everyone. Therefore you will agree with me that the party has a programme for the working people.

If, however, you mean the participation by the working class in the party that would be a matter that would be taken at the highest hierarchy of the party.

May I, however, say that the working class is at the moment negligible as a community within the Nigerian population. It would be far more profitable to spend time, energy and resources on the peasantry, artisans and other working people within our rural communities while not discounting the efforts which the working people in the urban areas can give towards the movement for a socialist transformation.

NH: *One of the cardinal programmes of Unity Party of Nigeria is Free Education at all levels, some critics say that it is impossible at this stage of the country's development. Do you think the Unity Party of Nigeria will succeed in achieving this noble objective?*

IGE: Yes. And there can be no body who can stop the Unity Party of Nigeria from achieving that objective. As a matter of fact we have said to the whole world

that free education at all levels will begin on 1st of October, 1978 immediately we attain power. So no one can stop it.

If you were talking about critics and what they will do to frustrate the efforts of the Unity Party of Nigeria for this programme than the masses of Nigerian people will have to deal with such critics.

NH: *You will agree that free education will, if implemented, give rise to high calibre and skilled man-power. Can you throw some light on how the party hopes to provide employment for the products of the free education scheme?*

IGE: I sincerely hope that a socialist would not ask such a question because he will know that once you have free education at all levels and the production of skilled manpower, it is incumbent on such a progressive such a progressive government to provide such institutions which would make the people who are products of such free education work. I mean we talk of free education at all levels—the man-power that will be needed to prosecute free education at all levels for the next fifteen years cannot even be produced in sufficient number—not to talk about the various things that will have to be done in industry, in commerce and in other arms of production. The first sine qua non for a socialist transformation is the large production of educated citizenry. And everybody knows that.

NH: *Unity Party of Nigeria's presidential candidate in his book The Peoples' Republic says that capitalism is untenable and in the same book he disagrees with communism—the Marxian socialist concept, because, in his view, any system which uses the state as an arbitrary and partisan instrument of*

*coercion offends his concept of dialectic and is bound to fall.*

*Now sir, can you foresee Unity Party of Nigeria crushing capitalism without seeking the cooperation of the opposing class force inside and outside the state apparatus. In other words, can Unity Party of Nigeria crush capitalism without waging a class war?*

IGE: The Unity Party of Nigeria has no position on the matter you have just raised. Chief Awolowo has stated his personal position in 'The Peoples' Republic'.

But I think one should go further and read his reappraisal of the lectures which he delivered at the University of Ghana. There, in fact, one will find that he had gone further in his thinking.

It is true that at the moment Chief Awolowo would not subscribe to Marxism-Leninism but I have no doubt that he is the only foremost Nigerian politician who has accepted socialism. I think we socialists should glad for that and we should move on from there and we should not worry very much about his personal views about Marxism-Leninism.

The point is that the goal he seeks to achieve is the same goal as Marxism-Leninism in Nigeria. When we get to the point, the party will take a decision.

As of now, the party has not taken a decision as to that we will do with capitalists.

We will definitely crush capitalists, but whether you mean annihilation physically or annihilation economically will be a matter of tactics.

The Bolsheviks had to liquidate the Kulaks but it was unnecessary for Fidel Castro to kill any capitalists. He didn't have to. Mao did not have to kill any capitalists. Some of them went revision or orientation courses. In some other parts of world you don't need to physically liquidate people before you achieve socialism. The world is changing

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**THE POINT IS THAT THE GOAL HE SEEKS TO ACHIEVE IS THE SAME AS MARXISM-LENINISM IN NIGERIA..... WE WILL DEFINITELY CRUSH CAPITALISM.**

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and infact we socialists should be happy about that.

The movement of socialism is such that the capitalists are in disarray or at least in retreat. Why then must we think of physically liquidating them before we achieve socialism? In any case how many capitalists are there in Nigeria to liquidate? How many?

**NH:** *Actually no socialist thinks of physical annihilation but capitalists are not known to meekly surrender their capital without a struggle.*

**IGE:** If it is economic annihilation then that is a foregone conclusion. What Chief Awolowo was saying in The Peoples' Republic is physical annihilation. This is the same in which he looks at class struggle and class war. But if we describe a class war as, shall we say, a mental and political battle between the haves and have not, then we are going on the same road. But I assure you that there are quite a few so-called socialists who think of class war in terms of physical liquidation of one class of the other.

**NH:** *If you are elected, you will be in position to considerably change the present socio-economic order in this country. Can you tell me what your priorities are?*

**IGE:** As I said earlier, I can only do it within the confines of Oyo State when I become the governor. I cannot expatiate further. I want to make Oyo State a model state in Nigeria within the UPN banner and also to make Oyo State the launching pad for a socialist transformation of Nigeria. I don't think you expect me to give details here.

**NH:** *Sir, as a leading member of Unity Party of Nigeria, what rights do you think your party should accord the trade unions if it comes to power?*

**IGE:** Highest priority. Highest priority and we should have full and constant consultation with all the progressive trade union leaders.

Personally I think the Trade Unions Decree must be scrapped and we



UPN Campaign Team  
Bola Ige in embroidered buba listens to a supporter's speech

must fashion a new set up for the trade union movement in this country where the trade unions will not in the pockets of any governmental organisation—whether it is bureaucratic or institution. We must create firstly avenues of communication and cooperation between us the leaders of the Unity Party of Nigeria and the leaders of the trade union, movement so that our goals can be the same.

We must see the trade union movement as comrade in arms for the prosecution of the ideals of the Unity Party of Nigeria and vice versa. The Unity Party of Nigeria must recognise that the complementary role of the trade union movement is a sine qua non to success [of its programmes] and socialist transformation.

**NH:** *Chief Awolowo was reported as saying that, if elected, he would pardon Yakubu Gowon and Odumegwu Ojukwu.*

*Now some trade union leaders, after the Adebisi Tribunal, were barred from trade union activities without being found guilty of any offence. What attitude do you think a Unity Party of Nigeria government should take on this matter?*

**IGE:** I have no opinion on that because that would be a matter within the competence

of Chief Obafemi Awolowo as president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I would only be an ordinary governor of Oyo State.

**NH:** *Productivity and public morale is seen to be falling. Nigerians are abandoning jobs in the public service, universities and even established firms for private business and those who remain do not show enterprise and initiative because they feel that those who establish private business fair better. For example a university teacher the other day was quoted as saying that his ex-student who managed to get an honours degree in business administration but went into cement business was earning thrice his pay.*

*What will your party do to bring back and retain efficient hands in the public service and raise public morale as well as productivity?*

**IGE:** First of all pay everybody reasonable wages. And when I say everybody the emphasis is on the lowest paid people. When you do that and they are able to have greater purchasing power, then you can expect that they would be motivated to improve their productivity. Certainly with our four cardinal programmes—free education at all levels, free medical services for all, full and gainful employment for all, integrated rural

were essentially in the days of steam engines, but since the introduction of push-button automated diesel locomotives, the arduous work of refuelling the engines with coal, removing ashes and watering the boiler en route has disappeared. But the Fireman still remains as a figurehead "Assistant Driver".

In other spheres of the N.R.C., however, the problem is the reverse: there is a grave shortage of staff, particularly engineers and maintenance technicians. This has been aggravated by the brain-drain.

**Derailments:** These are largely due to poor maintenance or unbalanced loading of the train.

**Unpredictable time tables:** This is due partly to overloading of trains with goods and passengers, unauthorised stoppages, mechanical defects and even excessive scheduled stops. An example of the latter is the fact that the Kano to Lagos train is scheduled on the timetable to stop in Zaria for 52 minutes.

**Declining revenues:** For some years now, the N.R.C. has recorded a financial deficit. In 1975/6 it was N37 million and in 1976/7 it was about N51 million.

In order to know the cause the N.R.C.'s problem, we will try to put them into a politico-economic perspective, casting our mind back about eighty years.

By 1909, the original Lagos-Ibadan track had been extended to Jebba. It reached Kano in 1911, Port Harcourt and Enugu in 1916, Makurdi in 1924, Kafanchan and Jos in 1927 and Maidugiri in 1964. The British built the railways in order to transport cash crops and other raw materials to the coast, to carry imported manufactured products inland and to transport labour for the colonial enterprises.

The objective of the railways was thus to assist the development of British industry, and this objective was achieved with notable success.

But by the late 1960's the boom in regional cash crops, as the major foreign exchange earner, was over. And by the early 1970's, crude petroleum was beginning to assume that role; but crude petroleum export required a quite different type of transportation from regional cash crops. Road, sea and air have now totally eclipsed rail as the major mode of transport. The objective for which the railways were originally built has now disappeared. Rail has now ceased

to serve its original purpose. Lacking a new direction, it staggers, moribund, from crisis to crisis. However, it does provide a means of livelihood for some 35,000 hungry people and it cannot therefore simply be disbanded. "The question which government has to ask itself is whether the objectives of an efficient public service can be in fact combined with a concept of public employment as a form of social welfare...."

It must be borne in mind that Nigeria has always been an export economy, dependent on foreign companies which buy its raw material and, in turn, supply manufactured products. The country's transportation pattern can therefore best be understood as changing in response to the demands of, first, the small British enterprises around 1900, and later of the multinational corporations from the mid 1960's onward. Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy point out in their essay that "The giant corporation of today is an engine for maximising profits and accumulating capital to at least as great an extent as the individual enterprise of an earlier period".

The corporations involved in the petroleum, the motor vehicle and the aeroplane businesses are all closely inter-linked. A major advantage of cars and planes to their profit-seeking manufacturers and distributors is their short life and high obsolescence resulting in continual replacements and repairs. In this way, a steady demand for new vehicles and spares is always being generated and maintained.

In view of the oil-rich Nigerian elite's high propensity to consume, the motor and aeroplane companies quickly found in Nigeria a paradise of profitability. As E.A. Tarabrin says, "The 'car war' in Africa will clearly become more intense, since markets in the developed capitalist countries are diminishing and the car monopolies are jockeying for positions in the Third World. Moreover, the profits accruing from the Third World are twice as high as in Europe or the U.S.A."

Now it could be argued that it is, after all, the Nigerian public who have benefited from this structural change in the national mode of transportation.

But I would suggest that it is rather the vehicle manufacturers who have benefited. It is not in the interests of these manufacturers to make durable and lasting vehicles. And moreover it is not in

their interests that Nigeria should have durable and lasting highways because these would prolong the life of vehicles and consequently cut the companies' profits.

It is surely not a coincidence that Germany, Italy and France both build the roads and make the cars.

All this points to the fact that it was not really the Federal Government or the management of the Nigerian Railways Corporation that are killing the railways.

It would be wrong to blame the death of the Corporation on the inefficiency of its management.

"It would be more correct to say that the EuroAmerican companies (who de facto direct Nigerian economic policy) were able to get quicker, bigger returns from their capital outlay on road and air transport than on rail.

Is there any hope for the railways in the future? The Udoji-style suggestion is often made that the N.R.C. should be allowed by Government to become a completely autonomous, commercial, profit-making corporation. It is argued that if Nigerian Airways and the road transporters can make a profit, so can the N.R.C., if Government gives it a free hand.

But road and air transport are profitable because they charge high prices, and only those who can afford to pay those high prices are able to travel by road and air.

Moreover, efficiency and profit-making are not synonymous. Nigeria Airways is notoriously inefficient but it still makes a profit.

Massive, multi-billion naira investment would be necessary to bring the railways up to a standard comfort, speed and punctuality which would enable them to compete with road and air. If such investment were to be made then the railways, in order to make a profit, would have to charge fares wildly beyond the means of the common man. In effect, rail would then become an elite mode of transportation, as is the case with air at present and the poor would continue to travel in their own excrement.

It is therefore imperative that the people of a government which can tackle the injustices of a grossly unequal society.

Transportation policy is only one aspect of the struggle to eliminate what Walter Rodney calls, "a society where many starve while a few stuff themselves and throw the rest away".



Dapo Fasogun  
S.W.P.P. General Secretary



Dr. Chika Anozie  
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C.C. member of S.W.P.P.

## 1. THE PRESENT PHASE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The era of colonial slavery has left a deep imprint on the social structure of the Africa countries, on their economy and on their political and cultural life. The socio-economic and technical backwardness of the African peoples is the direct result of imperialist plunder and exploitation. The grim consequences of criminal colonial rule in Africa have not yet been overcome. International imperialism and its chief instrument the multi-national monopoly corporations remain the chief enemies of and main obstacle to the progress of the people of Africa.

The economy of most African countries is generally dependent on the imperialist monopolies. Monoprop farming, imposed by the metropolitan countries, is still predominant in agriculture, the occupation of the vast majority of the population. The peasants are brutally exploited, especially by the multi-national corporations, which control the world capitalist agricultural raw materials and food market.

As in colonial times, industry in the countries of Tropical Africa is confined to mining and primary processing of raw materials, and key sectors in it remain in the hands of the imperialist monopolies. Industrialisation on a national basis is deliberately down by neo-colonialism.

Utilising new methods such as certain kinds of "aid" and "assistance" under unjust conditions, establishment of puppet regimes and forcing unjust treaties the industrialised capitalist states seek to tie even closer Africa's economy to the world capitalist market and to orient the development of Africa countries only on the capitalist road.

By means of economic and financial levers of the world capitalist market, the almost excessive monopoly over maritime transport and freight rates, and by dictating the prices of technology international imperialism not only continues to rob substantially the people of the fruit of their labour but also increases its economic and financial pressure on them under the conditions of the present-day general crisis of the capitalist system imperialism utilizes to the utmost the means available to it to impose on the African peoples the harmful consequences of its own crisis.

After the achievement of independence capitalist development in Africa intensified. At the same time, a specific feature of capitalist development in Africa is that the imperialist monopolies remain the predominant force and that national capitalism is developing in backward and often parasitical forms and having numerous links with the modes of production that preceded. It is developing mainly in the services and circulation sphere and not in the sphere of material production. Consequently even the positive effects which could evolve objectively from capitalist development are extremely limited.

After achieving independence the economic development rates of the African countries have grown somewhat. However this limited growth is insufficient to ensure in the foreseeable future a solution to the pressing problems involved in abolishing economic backwardness. Between 1960 and 1975 the share of non-agricultural output in the gross national product of the African countries grew from approximately 20 per cent to more than 30 per cent. This growth was due mainly to the mining industry, whose annual growth rates averaged 16 per cent, and was to be observed in a small number of countries. With regard to agriculture its rather limited development takes place mainly in the production of export crops. This corresponds to the interests of foreign monopolies and not the African people who suffer from a chronic lack of food products.

### Population Changes

The changes taking place in the economic basis of the African countries have led to changes in the composition and structure of the population.

Here it is necessary to draw attention to the importance of the problem of demographic growth.

This phenomenon is different in different countries (geographic conditions, higher or lower degree of underdevelopment, etc.).

This problem should be considered with due account for each country's particular conditions. But we are convinced that only socialism can offer a suitable solution to this problem.

In Africa socio-class differentiation is deepening—17 per cent of Africa's population now receives 70 per cent of the national income.

In the period from 1960 to 1975 the number of wage and salary earners in Africa increased from

20 to 32 million, numbering more than 11 million in the countries of North Africa, about 11 million in the countries of Tropical Africa and approximately 10 million in the countries of Southern Africa.

Some of the Tropical African countries now have a working class and in others it is in the process of formation. In spite of the fact that this class is growing slowly and its development is hindered by backwardness of the productive forces it nevertheless represents a considerable political force. Today the African proletariat, especially in South Africa, is thus a formidable force. In Tropical Africa it still retains numerous links with the countryside. Highly concentrated in the main urban centres, in the ports and at the relatively few but often rather large industrial enterprises its class militancy is growing swiftly. Its political consciousness and organisational forms are developing. The working class has built its own trade unions and in some countries its own Party. It is essential that the political role of these Parties should be developed and strengthened.

The working class is objectively becoming more and more the defender of the interests of all the working people. From the economic struggle for their own rights and interests many contingents of the proletariat are going over to political actions against neocolonialism, local reactionaries and international imperialism. At the present stage of the national democratic revolution even though the proletariat has certain objective and subjective weaknesses it remains the most consistent revolutionary force in the struggle for national and social liberation, national economic development, industrialisation, the promotion of cooperative forms of the economy, the remounting of tribalism—that blight of the African peoples—and for universal cultural rejuvenation.

In this struggle the peasantry, which in African countries comprises the majority of the population, is the natural and numerically strongest ally of the working class. It is impossible to ensure real social progress for a long period without taking into account the very serious problems of the peasantry, without responding to the aspirations of the peasant masses for socio-economic progress, without active support of the peasantry.

Profound changes are taking place in the agrarian structures of Tropical Africa. These changes are directly linked to the rapid extension of commodity production in the village. The penetration of foreign capital and capitalist forms of production (setting of prices, loans and credit), leads to the destruction of the simple forms of productive forces and growing erosion of the pre-capitalist patriarchal and feudal structures, resulting in the take-over of communal land for the purpose of capitalist exploitation by traditional landowners or by the leading segment of bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the emergence of rural bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie alongside with large masses of landless and impoverished peasants and agricultural workers. This process leads to the pauperisation of the rural masses; this is the social picture of rural areas in Tropical Africa.

### Class Struggle

The rapidity and the depth of these structural agrarian changes differ from one country to another. The growing heterogeneity of the peasantry inevitably means that opposed social and political interests shall emerge and lead to an intensification of the class struggle. Experience shows that the policies of "modernisation" of the rural area including the cooperative policies, if not accompanied by popular participation, are in favour of rich rural strata and they necessarily entail the pauperisation of the broad peasant masses.

This is why it is so important for progressive forces to ensure the widest democratic participation of the peasant masses in the anti-imperialist and anti feudal struggle in the countryside and in the struggle for genuine agrarian reform.

The progressive forces share the demands and aspirations of the working and poor peasantry and try to heighten their social and political consciousness. Naturally therefore the working class and other progressive forces encounter not only the active resistance of the local rich and exploiting classes but also that of imperialism and its instrument the multinational corporations.

As a result of the migration of rural population to the cities a rapid process of urbanisation has taken place. This rapid growth has created tremendous socio-political problems primarily that of spawning large economically unstable and declassed elements.

The process of urbanisation has also led to the marked numerical growth of the middle and some transitional strata which includes elements dislocated from the rural areas, small traders, artisans, office workers and intellectuals. These strata also take part with varying degrees of intensity in the struggle for democracy and national and social progress. It is from these strata that such an influential force as revolutionary democrats more or less clearly oriented countries controls state power.

The intellectuals constitute an active political stratum in African society. They play an important role in African political life, particularly during the independence struggle. After independence their number constantly grows, due to the expansion of education and the objective needs of economic and political differentiation is deepening. Uneavours to social and corrupt and to attract some sections of the intellectuals, including from the armed forces, to the positions of reaction is a general practice of the internal and external neocolonial forces. Nevertheless, a growing number of intellectuals closely connected with the popular masses, forms an integral part of the patriotic and revolutionary forces. There is a number of revolutionary intellectuals, of the type of the basic Marxist postulates of revolutionary theory and a broad commitment to the aims of socialist transformation.

Communists in Africa recognise and welcome the important ideological and political role played by this stratum in the struggle for national and social liberation.

To be Continued

# Muzorewa's 'Victory' Is A Farce

By-Ikpe Etokudo

IT is fourteen years since Ian Smith took the infamous road to UDI. Since then successive British governments have through various devices sought to hoodwink the entire world into believing that they were bent on bringing down the illegal and rebel administration in Salisbury.

Only a few people were bought over by those sweet coated guiles. The imperialists in whitehall and state department have established the racist regime by deception in Salisbury through the years and now are preparing way to give it legality.

The so-called 'internal settlement' in which the whites with less than four per cent of the population occupy 28 seats in a 100 member parliament, control the armed forces, judiciary, civil service and the entire economic activity of the country cannot be called a settlement.

The sham elections which Bishop Muzorewa's Party won majority seats under the cloak of darkness was no election. The party was approved by South Africa, Smith, Britain and the US and was tagged a "moderate"—misnomer for a clientele.

The issue involved in the sham election as Mr. Joshua Nkomo, co leader of the Patriotic Front said in an interview with New Times magazine, is that it is "an open challenge to the peoples of the world".

The farce called election could not possibly be carried out, Comrade Nkomo said, when martial law has been instituted in the country and the indigenous population tyrannized, when there was no democratic registration of voters and no regular constituencies.

He stated: "It is a tactical manoeuvre of the racists with the obvious approval of the Western countries, the United States and Britain

in the first place, which are seeking to legalize the unlawful regime at any price. It is perfectly clear that their purpose is to preserve their dominant position in Southern Africa with the help of their puppets and continued to plunder the natural wealth of Rhodesia and Namibia. They also hope to use the neo-colonialist regimes they establish by trickery to police independent African countries".

With a racist firmly in control of Downing Street, the subtle support by Labour Party to the rebel administration in Zimbabwe is now manifest.

Comrade Nkomo declared during the interview: "The United States and Britain are thus trying to camouflage their actual support for the election farce, .....Smith is merely a puppet in the hands of Britain and the United States".

Defending Smith's sham election the British Prime Minister said, according to Time Magazine: "There is an internal settlement..... There was an election, one person—one vote four fair different parties. Where else would you get that in Africa..... There's no reason to retain illegality, no reason to have sanctions at all".

The lady prime minister is not alone in that conviction, many Tories, Time says, favour recognition of the new bi-racial government headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa".

Africa's united stand against the farce! in Zimbabwe has left the imperialist in State Department and White Hall bewildered, Reports in Daily Times of Nigeria say plots against progressive African states such as Nigeria and Ethiopia for their uncompromising stand



Joshua Nkomo, P.F. Co leader  
Smith's election—"an open challenge"

against racism and apartheid are being hatched with fervour.

Support by socialist countries, especially the support of USSR for the Patriotic Front, even though interpreted by the racists and their mentors in the West as selfish, is most welcome. Because: "the armed struggle now going on from one end of the country to the other would have been impossible without the assistance and support.....of.....the Soviet Union, the other Socialist countries and all progressive forces of the world". Nkomo stressed during an interview.

The 'internal settlement' farce will be fought till final victory. Already the internal split is becoming clear. The stage managed election has left some principal characters with a taste of bile in their mouths because as Dr.

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# **WORLD MARXIST REVIEW**

*Problems of*

*Peace and Socialism*



**Problems of Peace and Socialism**

## **C O N T E N T S**

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# Day and Century Of Militant Solidarity Of Working People

Vasilias Venetianopoulos

CC member of CP Greece, member, WMR Editorial Council

To celebrate May Day is the class tradition of working people. Today we have every justification for speaking of it as a century-long tradition, for its age is indeed close to a century. Moreover, there is a profound significance in this. Indeed, the international solidarity of the working people, expressed by May Day demonstrations, is not a formal ritual timed to a calendar date. It is a factor powerfully influencing the destiny of mankind in our epoch. It is the imperative will of the age we are living in.

It has become the custom to call May Day a review of the militant forces of the international working class. Today these forces are larger than they have ever been. They play the leading role in world development. The workers of all countries, including and chiefly the state-organised working class, i.e., the working people of the socialist community, firmly hold the historical initiative, which they have taken once and for all out of the hands of the bourgeoisie.

We Communists are often told that in drawing this conclusion we overestimate the actual influence of the working people on national life in capitalist countries, and of the socialist states on the world scene. The bourgeoisie and the reformists take special pleasure in hurling reproaches of this nature at the Communist parties, to which like ours, the bourgeois parliamentary system denies representation corresponding to their actual influence among the people and which still have to secure the necessary dimension and mass character to the movements headed by them. In fact, the Marxists-Leninists by no means harbour illusions. They see the pros and cons of the existing alignment of class forces. They are aware that the struggle waged by labour against capital is inconceivable without ebbs and flows, without retreats, and sometimes even setbacks. But the developments determining the socio-political make-up of our day show that this struggle is proceeding with the balance tilting steadily in favour of socialism, the working class, the democratic and anti-imperialist masses.

This tilt reveals the strength of the world proletarian, revolutionary movement, a strength that is composed of the positions won by it within the national framework of individual countries and multiplied by the international community of the social aims and interests represented by this movement. The interaction of all three currents of the world revolutionary process, and the international solidarity of the participants in the struggle against monopoly oppression and capitalist exploitation, for national freedom, are factors that are everywhere enhancing the influence of the working class and its social allies and substantially enlarging their potential for steering a course in history for their peoples, for the entire world.

Our Party's 10th Congress, held last year, noted that "the nation's deliverance from US domination and monopoly rule and our road to democracy and socialism are the cause of the Greek people; however, this cause is linked, as never before, to support from the world revolutionary movement". This key provision of our strategy is based not only on Marxist-Leninist theory but also on our won experience, which has borne it out entirely.

This is the experience not only of our Party and not only of our people. The years the Popular Unity government was in power in Chile are still fresh in everybody's mind. The revolutionaries and democrats of the world did not merely admire its successes but did all in their power to help develop these successes with moral and political support, while the socialist countries rendered material assistance. The revolution in Chile was defeated. But international solidarity with its fighters and just cause has remained unshakable. It is growing, acquiring new dimensions, and giving the Chilean Communists and all of the nation's democratic forces the added confidence that their defeat is only temporary.

In recent years significant progressive changes have taken place in Africa. The peoples of Angola, Ethiopia, and other countries have upheld their right to choose their own road of social development. The racist regimes in Zimbabwe and Namibia are hard put to it to withstand the pressure from the national-liberation movement. The African peoples are not alone in their struggle. They have the effective international solidarity of the socialist countries, the world working-class movement, and the anti-imperialist movement.

In the Middle East the spring of 1979 saw a new and complicated political climate created, on the one hand, by the establishment of a democratic government in Afghanistan, the Iranian people's revolution, and the consolidation of South Yemen's socialist orientation, and, on the other, by the treacherous actions of the ruling elite in Egypt, by its US-dictated separate deal with Israel. The imperialists count on the Tel Aviv-Cairo axis becoming the pivot of a new system of their control of the political and social destinies of the Arab world. The patriotic forces of the region are determined to crush these designs. They are continuing the struggle for the basic national interests of their peoples, including the Arab people of Palestine. As they themselves emphasise and world progressive opinion realises, broad international solidarity with their struggle is of inestimable significance.

In the 1960s and 1970s the world-wide movement which helped the peoples of Vietnam and other countries of Indochina to defeat the US aggression inscribed memorable pages in the chronicle

of anti-imperialist solidarity. This movement's imperative slogan "Hands Off Vietnam!" was destined to acquire new life this spring. The Chinese invasion of a neighbouring socialist country triggered an international tidal wave of protest. Relying on international support and on their durable alliance with fraternal socialist countries, notably the USSR, the heroic people of Vietnam have once again repulsed aggressors.

In the light of these developments it would not be superfluous to recall that during the US intervention in Vietnam Peking's Maoist leaders posed as siding with the Vietnamese patriots, pledging support on a bilateral basis. However, they invariably fought shy of participating in the common front of anti-imperialist forces and refused to join in coordinated, joint actions with them in support of the DRV's war of liberation. Today the world sees the underlying motivations of this policy, which is destructive to the international unity of fighters against imperialism. In those days it paved the way for the Maoists towards rapprochement with the ruling circles of the capitalist world. The latter were not found wanting. In connecting with the Chinese invasion of Vietnam they peddled an analogous formula of verbal disapproval of aggression while actually conniving at it by abstaining from any actions that could hinder the criminal encroachment on the independence and territorial integrity of a sovereign nation.

Peking declared that its intention was to "give Vietnam a bloody nose", to "teach it a lesson". Indeed, it has been a lesson for the whole world. The important thing is to understand its significance, which, as we see it, lies in the visible confirmation of how right the Marxist-Leninist parties were when for years they had warned against the dangers to peace and the freedom of nations harboured by the great-power chauvinism of the Peking leaders, by the ideology and political practice of Maoism. It is a lesson that calls for vigilance on the part of the world's progressive and liberation forces. It demands their unity and cooperation in the face of the threat to international security from the attempts of Washington and Peking, together with NATO and the Japanese militarists, to steer a course towards a mutual exchange of services in their fight against socialism, against the revolutionary movement.

Life thus teaches the peoples and their advanced forces to be conscious of the need for international solidarity, reveals its effectiveness and, at the same time, shows that any relaxation of international unity against imperialism and reaction conflicts with the interests of peace, democracy, social progress, and national liberation.

In marking the day of international solidarity we see it as international cooperation ranging far beyond the class unity of the world proletariat. Internationalism in the struggle for the security and freedom of nations and for the renewal of the forms of social life has dramatically extended its social and political boundaries. We, the Communists of Greece, regard this as a highly significant and indisputably positive feature of the modern revolutionary process. Our Party is doing all in its power to help strengthen inter-

national solidarity with all movements prepared to unite in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Does this mean that the strictly class line of the policy of Communists is receding to the background, so to speak? I would say that the reverse would be the correct reply to this. Broad international solidarity does not mute the significance of the proletarian class positions maintained by the Communists without its framework. On the contrary, unity and cooperation among the Communist parties in the world Communist movement have played an inestimable role as the form-shaping core of anti-imperialist internationalism. They decisively influence the orientation of this internationalism and infuse it with the needed political drive.

Take the peace movement, for example. Here the stake consists of the interests of all humanity, and small wonder that the world front of peace fighters is so tremendously broad and its social composition so widely diverse. By and large, it is an immense force to which all of us owe the fact that it has been possible not only to prevent the cold war from erupting into a world thermonuclear catastrophe but also to achieve a turn hopeful for peace in the relations between countries with different social systems. But while we pay tribute to all who contributed to the turn towards detente, to all who are now helping to remove the difficulties from its path, we shall not forget that the largest and most tangible contribution to this improvement of the world situation was made by the USSR and other socialist-community states. One evidently cannot remain a realist by believing that public moral and political pressure will suffice in the struggle against imperialist militarism, that it will be possible to do without reliance on material strength which, among the peace fighters, it possessed only by the state-organised working class, only by the socialist countries.

If we approach this same problem from the opposite angle, we must stress that the war threat lies in the socio-economic nature of imperialism. The struggle for peace is thereby objectively given definite class orientations, the loss of which would inevitably reduce its effectiveness and lead to its dissolution into attractive but helpless and futile pacifism. It is obvious that even in this respect the guiding role of proletarian internationalism is indispensable in the joint, solidarity efforts of the participants in the anti-war movement, in the struggle to bridle the arms race.

We are fully aware that the class solidarity of the working people and the unity of their Communist parties do not remain harnessed to fossilised forms.

This witnessed the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Comintern. This memorable date of its history has been broadly marked in the international working-class and Communist movement. The Communist Party of Greece draws attention to the fact that the work accomplished by the Comintern in the course of almost a quarter of a century is inseparable from the conspicuous successes in mobilising the revolutionary forces of the international working class. On the basis of these successes the then young Communist parties of scores of countries acquired

invaluable experience and attained a high level of ideological and political maturity. As time passed this became the basis of their completely independent approach to the fulfilment of revolutionary tasks, of their justified confidence in their ability to apply the ideas and principles of Marxism-Leninism creatively and effectively in looking for the best ways and means of fighting for socialism under prevailing concrete national conditions.

Today the Communist movement does not have a unifying organisation such as the Comintern. It does not have any "centre". The equality and sovereignty of all the fraternal parties have become an immutable norm. We regard this principle as part and parcel of proletarian internationalism. It is our opinion that the independence of each Party enhances its interest in cooperation with the Communists of other countries, in promoting mutual assistance with them, and in learning their experience. This dialectic of the national and the international has always been present in the revolutionary struggle waged by the Communists. That it should be understood and used in all areas of work is one of Lenin's most important behests.

The Communists of Greece attach great significance to the promotion of contacts and fraternal cooperation with the parties in the international Communist movement. This is our unchanging, principled line. Six months ago, when the CPG, too, marked its 60th anniversary, it underlined with full justification that throughout its long struggle

it had always been guided by proletarian internationalism, by unbreakable solidarity with the revolutionary forces of the international working class and its main creation—the Soviet Union and the community of socialist states. Our Party has always been an active and committed participant in broad international meetings of Communists. It is convinced of the usefulness of bilateral inter-party links and of mutual consultations on a regional basis such as, for instance, the 1976 Conference of European Communist Party of Turkey and the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus within the framework of trilateral meetings has lately been progressing fruitfully. This is one of many examples of the effective internationalism of Communists, which in this case is helping them to make a more productive contribution towards settling the conflicts stirred by the imperialists between the three peoples of our region.

Fidelity to class internationalism is, we are convinced, an indispensable condition for significant and lasting successes in the struggle for socialism. Indeed, we are living in an age witnessing the profound internationalisation of all spheres of human life, including class relations. No national walls can be erected against the international confrontation between the forces of capital and the forces of socialism, of the revolutionary working class. To adhere to proletarian internationalism firmly and consistently means, above all, to rule out the risk of remaining single-handed in the face of the united front of the internal and external class enemies.

## In Tribute To the Comintern

60th ANNIVERSARY

**THAT** day in March 1919, when representatives of 35 Communist and Left-Socialist parties and groups from 21 countries of Europe, America, and Asia proclaimed the founding of the Third, Communist International, is one of the most notable dates in the history of our revolutionary epoch. The 60th anniversary of the founding of the Comintern has been broadly marked in the international Communist and working-class movement.

In Moscow a scientific conference was held to commemorate that anniversary. Sponsored by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism; the Academy of Social Sciences, and the Institute of Social Sciences, it was attended by prominent scientists, veterans of the CPSU, and representatives of the Moscow public. "The Comintern", said Academician Boris Ponomarev, alternate member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, "gave a powerful impetus to the struggle for unity of the working class, of the working people, on a principled class, anti-imperialist foundation. It not only united all the finest, internationalist forces of the working-class movement, but from the very

outset it took steps, on Lenin's initiative, to establish interaction between the Communist and the Social-Democratic trends of the working-class movement and started a drive to unite the ranks of the working class.... Individual shortcomings or miscalculations cannot nullify this fundamentally significant work of the Comintern in the period between the two world wars. Many of them were rectified by the Comintern itself, which approached its own work self-critically, analysed and assessed its actions soberly and realistically, and applied Marxism-Leninism creatively in mapping out new guidelines for the future". A paper headed "The Work of the Communist International Was a Major Phase of the Development of the International Communist Movement" was presented by Academician Anatoly Yegorov, director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism at the CPSU Central Committee.

In Prague the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Communist international was marked by a symposium sponsored by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the CPCZ Central Committee and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPCZ. CC. It was attended by Jan Fojtik, Secretary of the

CPCz Central Committee, officials and lecturers of the CPCz Central Committee, Party functionaries, representatives of the scientific community, and Party veterans. Ivan Krempa, deputy director of the CPCz Central Committee's Institute of Marxism-Leninism, spoke of the Comintern's influence on the emergence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its organisation as a Marxism-Leninist party.

In Ulan-Bator the anniversary was marked by a scientific conference sponsored by the MPRP Central Committee's Institute of the History of the Party, the Suhe-Bator Higher Party School, and the combined editorial staffs of the Party journals. It was attended by N. Luvsanavdan, member of the CC political Bureau, Chairman of the Party Control Committee, A. Minis, Deputy director of the Institute of History of the Party, presented a paper headed "The Communist International and the Communist Movement Today".

Functions commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Comintern were organised by other Communist parties.

The work of the Third, Communist International was appraised highly in anniversary articles carried in the central organs of the Communist and Workers' parties.

"Fidelity to the ideals of Marxism-Leninism, unrelenting struggle against right and 'left' revisionism, and consistent proletarian internationalism", wrote Rabotnichesko delo, organ of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party "were strikingly embodied in all the work accomplished by the Third, Communist International". "The Comintern's service to history". Rude Pravo, organ of the CPCz Central Committee, wrote in an editorial, "is that it created the conditions for turning the young Communist parties into strong revolutionary contingents capable of leading the working class and large masses of other working people to ultimate victory. One of the Comintern's unfading behests is the orientation set towards proletarian internationalism, which spells out the ideological and political unity of the international Communist movement and the joint struggle for common aims". Weg und Ziel, theoretical journal of the Austrian Communists, noted in an anniversary article that the Comintern was at the "cradle of the present-day mighty international Communist movement. Its founding expressed the need for organisational demarcation from opportunism in the working-class movement on an international level".

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## Why We Are With the Communists

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*We continue our series<sup>1</sup> featuring interviews and letters in which people of different walks of life, nationality, and professions state their reasons for joining the Communist Party, voting the Communist ticket or just participating in mass actions organised by the Communists. The following interviews were taken by our correspondents among the Communists of Cyprus and the Republic of Ireland.*

### CYPRUS:

Kotos Phellas  
welder (Limassol)

I began to understand what the Communist Party stood for while I was serving in the National Guard when the military junta ruled Greece and the majority of officers in Cyprus were the junta's henchmen. We were made to attend special lectures on anti-communism. We were made to attend special lectures on anti-communism at which we, young soldiers, were stuffed with humbug about the Communists. I recall that my reaction to these lectures was the exact opposite of what was expected—I found that I wanted to know why Communists were so ardent and self-sacrificing in

upholding ideals which were explained to us in such uncomplimentary terms. Gradually, many facts came to light that made me doubt the truth of what I was told at these lectures, and my sympathy for AKEL began growing.

After I was mustered out of the National Guard I started reading more, with greater purpose, and looked deeper into politics. By this time my views had more or less crystallised and I joined the Progressive youth organisation EDON. I was living not far from Limassol in a village known for its reactionary and conservative sentiments, and our youth organisation had a hard time of it. But we were encouraged by AKEL. I realised that this was the only Party with which I wanted to be associated. Its traditions and the role it played in our country's history and in the day-to-day struggles for the working people's interests, and the people whom I knew to be members of AKEL—all this helped me make my final choice and I, too, joined AKEL. In Cyprus, of course, there are other parties that are not indifferent to the people's interests. But I feel that often they either lack vigour in upholding these interests or their understanding of them is much too narrow.

My family, too, influenced my choice. My father,

mother and elder brother are all members of AKEL. But, I think political views are formed when a person starts living his own life. To give an example I have a friend who comes from my village. At home, with his parents, his upbringing was undemocratic. We served together in the National Guard, and he made a lot of trouble for me for he would report my political conversations to the officers. After he finished his term of services he went to work at an asbestos plant. When he started earning his own living and facing his first difficulties his opinion of the Communists began changing, softening, I would say. He started looking for the right road and I think he is beginning to find it.

I was elected secretary of the youth organisation in our village. This keeps me very busy, and besides I work here in Limassol. We try to win over as many people as possible in order the better to counter reaction in everything, in big things and small. There has been a change of mood in our village. Before the putsch, the Turkish aggression and occupation, we Communists were often viewed with distrust, even prejudice, and the general mood was often sceptical when we explained that Cyprus was to be turned into a NATO, an imperialist springboard. However, after the tragic events that descended upon our people, many of those who refused even to listen to us, now feel ashamed, for our Party was speaking the truth and they understand this. They are embarrassed by their behaviour. Those who opposed us before now come and say they want to work with us. As for us, we cannot stand aloof from those who want to see Cyprus free.

Eleni Michail  
*packer (Nicosia)*

We workers must stick together. How else can we get what we want? In Cyprus there is no other Party except AKEL that unites the workers. The very atmosphere in other parties is alien to us. As for AKEL, its policy is clear. In our Party branch at the factory we freely discuss our personal and common problems and this helps us to understand the Party's policy. It is the most influential Party in Cyprus. I trust my comrades and whatever happens I shall always be with them. I know and I believe that the work the Party is doing, that each of us is doing is very important for the country's independence and freedom, for a better life, for socialism, and we try to show the people just why ours is the correct road.

I have seen a woman, especially working women, do not have too much time for Party work and as we get older we have even less time. Many have families and children, and after work there are chores at home. However, I think what is important is not how much time we are able to give to social work, but the fact that at the factory we work together and support one another. Our Party is highly appreciative of the support of working women, and

we want as many of them as possible to share our views and ideas.

Dimitris Constantinou  
*production manager (Nicosia)*

I joined the Party when I was 17, when it was in the underground and our people were fighting the English for independence. Those were difficult years for everybody. Many people were trying to find their place in the common struggle. I found mine as a member of AKEL, the reasons being that that was how I was brought up and I was attracted to the Communists. I always tried to measure up to them and follow their example. True, there were things I did not understand. I wanted an opportunity to avenge the death of comrades murdered by the fascists. I am still very hot-tempered, but in those years I was always itching for a fight. But my comrades, the Party were against any kind of terror. Today I realise that this policy was correct.

The Party helped me to form my political and moral views and to mould my character. Certainly many AKEL members go through this formative school. One other thing: I have been a Party member for over 20 years—a good part of my life—and I have found my identity in the struggle for our common cause. This has given meaning and content to my life. It is wonderful to know that if today there exists the Republic of Cyprus this is largely the result of the struggle organised by the Party.

Andrula Etchidou  
*biochemist (Nicosia)*

I had not been to Cyprus for six years because I was studying abroad. When I returned I was quite baffled by what I saw. I became friendly with some young people who were educated in Greece. We discussed politics and the country's problems at length, and to me they seemed to be true revolutionaries. I felt their views were close to my own and I decided to join their party. But gradually I began to sense that the people in that organisation wanted something different from what I was striving for. At first I thought this concerned only a few. But when I saw that there seemed to be a multitude of views—Social-Democratic, and Maoist—you name it, we had it. But most of all I was greatly disappointed by the party leadership—among rightists they were rightists, among leftists they were leftists. The general atmosphere was insincere and false. So I wrote the leaders a letter stating that I no longer wished to remain in their party because of a difference of views and ideology.

I am a biochemist by profession. At first I worked in a clinic. Then, my friend and I borrowed money to purchase our own small laboratory where we work together. But I always believed in the necessity of social work. Nothing can be achieved single-handedly. I joined the youth organisation

EDON and was active in other non-partisan mass organisations. This work helped me to learn more about AKEL and its genuinely revolutionary tactics. When I joined I was well aware of the full measure of responsibility I was taking upon myself: it was a very serious step. Being a member of AKEL means working for the people, for your country

## IRELAND:

Eddlo Glacken

### *32, employed by the Dublin Municipal Authority*

My first involvement in politics came about nearly 15 years ago when I had just left school and was a clerical worker in a state company. I found that after many years devoted to studies in school, when I started working I was on very, very low wages and it would take at least twenty years before I would be receiving a decent living wage. This was a factor which made me question the value of the education that was meant to prepare me for the world.

After I left school, I was struck by the fact that I had been taught to believe, all the Christian values of "love your neighbour", and, son, I found that these were very shallow when applied to the real world that existed outside of school. Lip service was paid to all these values by the government, by politicians, by the major press and radio. But, in fact, these values did not amount to very much in real life in society, as I saw it, based on hypocrisy and a denial of these values. This led me to question many of them.

Things like the very considerable poverty in Dublin brought me at one time to a voluntary religious organisation. We used to visit old people in their homes to help them. But then, I started questioning the value of what this organisation was doing, of my work. I mean, I could come to some old person, make a cup of tea, talk to him for a while, but when I went away the poverty and loneliness were still there. And I questioned this also, this society which led these people, after they had given all their work to society, to end their days in these conditions, in squalor and loneliness. This also led me to question the values which I had been given in school. And, through the combination of these experiences, I began to look for something which would give expression, meaning, to these criticisms in my own mind, and new values.

It was around this period that I first attended a meeting of the Connolly Youth Movement which was only being formed as the youth organisation of the Communist Party.

Gradually I became more and more involved in this movement because I found there young people who had the same questioning attitude as myself to society and who were not afraid to say that there was an alternative that could be realised if people worked together to achieve it.

So, basically, this was how I became involved in

politics. Afterwards, I took part in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, a very big movement in Ireland. I represented the Connolly Youth Movement (CYM) on the Executive Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. I was already on the Executive Committee of the CYM and eventually became Chairman of the CYM.

It was through this movement that I came into contact with the Party because many of the CYM leaders were young Party members. One thing that struck me about the Party was that, as a young person growing up in a capitalist society, in the early 60s there was all this talk about a generation gap and the total divorce and division between old and young people. But, when I looked at the Party, I was able to see people of all age groups cooperating together on the basis of their common beliefs and ideology, both young people and older people who, until then, I and my generation blamed for all that society was lacking. This had a big effect on me because I could see not other organisation that could bring young and old together on this same basis.

I found that in the Party were ordinary working-class people with a great sense of dedication and ready to make tremendous sacrifices for what they believed in. All this impressed me greatly and so, in 1969, I decided to join the Party. After that much of my work was still in the Youth Movement until 1975. Then I began to work in the Party as Education Secretary covering the Republic of Ireland.

I also actively involved in the trade union movement. This, again, was something that I learnt from the Party because, though I had been a trade union member before joining the Party, I did not appreciate or understand the importance of trade union work, of educating the workers to understand their own power and strength.

So, although I am working in the Party, I have also learned a great deal from the Party, and have been elected Chairman of the section committee at my job in the Municipal Authority of Dublin. Our trade union has about a thousand members. This involves me a good deal in negotiations on a day-to-day basis representing workers who have been discriminated against or victimised in some way by the employers. I try to organise the workers through the trade unions, to get them more involved in seeking better wages and working conditions for themselves, better facilities, holidays, safety regulations, etc.

One of our main goals is to try and politicise the activities of the workers, to bring a class consciousness to the workers, to get the workers to understand that the trade unions by themselves cannot fundamentally alter the conditions of their existence, that the trade unions are an effective weapon of the working class but that they are essentially defensive, in the present circumstances, a defensive mechanism

to seek to mute the worst excesses of capitalism and protect the workers from them. And we, Communists in the trade union movement, obviously seek to transform the unions into fighting class-conscious organisations of the working class, capable of playing their role in pursuit of national independence and socialism.

**Q:** Did your family have any influence on the formation of your thinking?

**A:** No, my father was a policeman, definitely not a Communist. My mother was never interested or involved in politics at all. What political beliefs my parents had could be said to be orthodox, right-wing, capitalist, but not ultra right-wing. Basically, they just accepted capitalist as a society, that's the way the world is and it cannot be changed, is their view.

My political involvement created many difficulties at home. Several times I was on the verge of leaving home. My father was very embarrassed by my involvement in what he saw as subversive organisations. The political differences are still there between us but there is no longer the personal tension there was for many years. So, my home environment was certainly not conducive to political involvement. My experiences in work, when I started working—that was when the changes came, really.

**Q:** How about the young people, do many of them join the Party?

**A:** Well, this is an interesting question because the average age of the membership in the Party has been dropping steadily over the last ten years or so.

When I joined the Party in 1969 the majority of members was 40 years old or more. The bulk of our new members today are young people, the average age is 30, maybe younger. This includes a shop steward, an activist in the trade union movement or in the local tenant or community organisation. Many of them come to the Party through the CYM.

The ideas of the Party are gaining ever greater response amongst the young people in Ireland. They are a more questioning, critical and searching younger generation.

**Stephanie Gallacher**

**30, works in a small confectioner's shop**

Progressive ideas did not come to me easily. The influences I received from my mother and father were typical, particularly for their generation brought up in a rural area. They tried to bring us up on their old-fashioned views of life. My mother and father would tell me: "You do what your husband says, he is the breadwinner, he goes out to work and you stay at home and have children and look after them".

When I finally came to realise what was happening and the injustice of it all, and started asking questions requiring explanations, my parents could not understand what had happened to me. And even

today, with the world changing as we watch, they cannot understand why I talk so much about women's equality, women's liberation, about the different role women have to play in society, about man's equality and man's liberation. They are old people and find it difficult to change their ways.

About five years ago I started showing an interest in communism. A young chap I used to know would talk to me about the position of women in Ireland and the issues and difficulties they came up against, things that I had experienced. He seemed to put into words just what I was thinking. He would explain why women in Ireland did not have equal rights with men, why we were backward, etc. Slowly but surely I was becoming aware why this inequality existed, particularly in industry. I started reading up on various magazines and sometimes the Communist Party monthly paper.

Gradually I started accepting Communist ideas, and I am still learning today. Every day I learn something new but, what is most important, I look at things differently now. My thoughts about women, about their role in society, changed. Knowing the little that I do today, I realise we have an awfully difficult struggle ahead of us.

Take the places where I work. It is difficult to organise in a trade union because it is a small confectionery shop. There are only five girls working there and it's down to a very personal level. The boss comes in in the morning and says "hello" to each of us calling us by name, patting us on the shoulder, this sort of relationship. You can't really ask for any more money, he doesn't give you the extra hour off if you do a favour for him, so you end up by sort of working it for nothing. And there are lots of other such small favours that you find yourself doing constantly.

But we must come to understand that without our own trade union movement we cannot go to the boss and ask for normal working conditions like the in some of the bigger stores have. We are going to have to organise, but it will not be easy.

After I got closer acquainted with the Communist Party I started taking part in its campaigns and other functions. I would like to say a few words about the general election in June 1977, when we voted for the Communist Party candidate Gerard McIntyre. This was in Northeast Dublin where I live. This is in the Catholic part of Ireland and it is the first time there was a Communist candidate and, to tell the truth, we expected the voters to be more negative.

After work, in the evening, my sister and I, she also supports the Communists, would go canvassing, knocking on doors and asking for support for our candidate, and we couldn't believe the good response we were getting. Despite what the bourgeois media wrote, people were not afraid of the word

"communism". They would listen to us, and this was wonderful. We certainly did not expect such a response.

McIntyre got hundreds of votes. This may not sound like much compared with the thousands you need to be elected. But it was a breakthrough. People weren't afraid of Communists and did not shut doors in our face. They talked with us and we became confident that in the next elections the Communists would gain even more.

At home, as politics have made their way into the family, our relations have improved somewhat. My father still can't get rid of his old beliefs and views. Traditionally, he still votes for the conservative Fianna Fail Party, although he doesn't necessarily know what the party stands for or what the political issues are. He lives in the past.

Just one example. When I told my father I was earning 40 pounds a week—and this is not much what with the big chunk taken by taxes and social insurance—all he said was "When I was your age I earned 10 pounds and we lived on it." He thinks we should be grateful just to have a job and a roof over our heads. This is important, of course, because of the mass unemployment in Ireland. But I cannot accept the notion that we should not fight for something better.

My father has more respect for my sister and me now. He knows we are with the Communists, that we are close to the Party. He doesn't approve and often argues with us but our arguments often slip into good discussions of problems that affect us, that concern us. This is very important for me and my sister, for we think this will help us to win over the younger members in our family.

It is very hard to change tradition in our country, but this must be done sometime. When you do this together with such convinced people as the Communists you are certain that if not today, then tomorrow, success will come.

John Mooney  
57, worker

I have been a member of the Communist Party for 32 years. I joined in Britain, not in Ireland, because I emigrated like hundreds of thousands of other Irish men and women due to the depression. The Second World War had begun and there were greater possibilities of getting work in Britain. Five days after I arrived I was employed as a construction worker. I am a house painter by trade. I was put in the construction industry, an essential industry at that time. The war was on, they needed factories, aerodromes, hospitals, they needed everything that would help in the war effort.

After the war was over in Europe, a Labour government came to power in Britain and it seemed that there would be no danger of any unemployment. Already then, however, I happened to be

working in James Park in London on the construction site of a labour exchange. This led me to believe that the Labour government did not have any faith in its own promises to provide jobs for everyone.

Well, I was somewhat disillusioned with what was happening in Britain at that time and I started reading socialist literature, particularly by Irish authors. James Connolly had a big influence on me. I kept thinking of conditions in my own country and this literature helped me to see that Britain would never stop its oppression of people seeking national independence. At that time Malaya was a good example of this. The Malay people were fighting for their independence and the so-called workers' government in Britain was responsible for sending troops to slaughter the freedom fighters there. This, of course, gave me a lot of food for thought.

At that time, though I had socialist leanings, I nevertheless was not in any party. Well, while on the job I heard a speaker once, he was a member of the CP Great Britain, and what he said had a great effect on me, to the extent that I agreed to sell the *Daily Worker*.

The time came when I said to myself: "Now is the time to join a party, and it is the Communist Party of Great Britain". That was late 1946 or the beginning of 1947. Of course, being an activist before joining, it was not trouble for me to become fully activated and I could give all my free time, even Sundays, to selling literature.

Q: When did you become active in the revolutionary movement of Ireland?

A: Once I happened to hear some Irish speakers in London's Hyde Park. They, of course, were all out for socialism. I became very interested in what they had to say because they were talking about my own country. Soon I had to divide my time between the CP Great Britain and working with Irish immigrants explaining the truth about their plight and telling them of the alternative proposed by the Communists.

Well, in time, of course, I had to return to Ireland. I came back and in 1952 joined the Communist Party of Ireland and to the present day I am still an activist. I have learned many lessons in my years in the Party and it has been a wonderful experience. Maybe I have made but a modest contribution but I am proud of this. In my family there are five of us in the Party—myself, two sons, my sister and brother, not bad for one family.

Q: A small Party organisation in the family?

A: Yes, I suppose you could call it that. One of the lessons I have learned in my years in the Party is the importance of unity of the working people for the success of the class struggle.

Back in those days when my socialist convictions were just starting to take shape, I saw that it was useless to fight alone, that it was necessary to join up with other like-minded people. I am saying all this

because in order to succeed in what we believe in, that is, world socialism, all the Communist parties must pull together in tight unity, and this is the lesson gained from the experience of each Party and of every Communist.

**Maureen Mooney**  
*48, housewife*

I come from a poor working-class family. My father died when I was just a youngster. There were five of us and we had to live on my mother's widow's pension. Most of the women in working-class families were in a difficult position and took on cleaning jobs or would do laundry. But mother had to look after us, we were still small, and so she could't do even that much.

My brother emigrated to England during the war and I started working at a clothing factory when I was 14 earning about 6 or 7 shillings a week. The conditions were appalling. My next job was in a shirt factory where conditions were no better if not worse. I stayed there for two and a half years. There was no union there. From the age of 14 to 21 I worked at seven factories. I was sacked out of six of them for trying to organise the workers in the trade union movement.

At about 16 years of age I became interested in joining some sort of political party. I had letters from one of my brothers in England and he wrote me that he had joined the British Communist Party. In his letters he would explain to me what the Party was working for. When I was 17 I joined the Youth Movement, a new movement just started in Dublin.

The conditions under which we lived and the conditions under which I worked, the experiences of my family and background led me to the conclusion that it was very important to join a working-class movement. It was a kind of natural progression that I should join the Communist Party of Ireland.

**Q:** What were the conditions then for working with the masses?

**A:** In my early days in the Party, during the cold war era, it was very difficult to be a Communist in Ireland. Our monthly paper, *The Irish Worker's Voice*, was quite difficult to sell. And it wasn't unusual to be beaten up. In fact I was very badly beaten on one occasion. This was in the centre of Dublin one evening when we were selling the paper. I was with a male comrade. We were beaten up by some of the people in a pub and we were bleeding badly. Some of the people there objected to this but they still felt we deserved it for provoking people by selling the Communist paper.

Since then opinion has changed quite a lot. Some may disagree with the Communists, there may be hostility, but not in the vicious way of those early days. The climate has changed in the world and people are more tolerant to our ideas.

**Q:** Do you take part in the women's movement in your country?

**A:** There is the National Women's Committee in our Party, and I am its member. I can say that women are becoming more interested in left-wing politics.

In 1975 I attended the World Congress of Women in Berlin. It was the first time I attended such a huge gathering of women. I represented the Communist Party of Ireland. I found the Congress very inspiring. When I returned home I thought it would be a good idea if we could arrange some big event that would relate to the women in the world.

I had heard of International Women's Day and I decided this would be a very good thing to start here, to bring women in Ireland together on one particular day and to make them aware of the international women's movement and to let them see that women the world over have similar problems, that many have won their rights and are more advanced.

So, we organised our first International Women's Day gathering in 1976. We invited representatives from the Soviet Union, Chile, the Republic of South Africa and Britain. There were over 500 people and it got good coverage in the press, radio and on television. In 1977 we also had a very successful meeting.

And in 1978 again, there was a successful meeting but with a greater social content. It was necessary to have a forum whereby women from the various organisations in Dublin could come and meet and talk to each other and exchange views. The whole idea of International Women's Day, quite apart from bringing the idea of international solidarity to the women of Ireland, is also to bring unity into the women's movement here.

Today, our strength lies in our unity for it is a mighty weapon in the struggle for better living and labour conditions, against discrimination, oppression and exploitation. Only united efforts can force the government to carry out the necessary social, economic and political reforms.

As I look back at the road the Party has travelled, I am happy to see the successes scored by the Communists of Ireland, but I also see that there still are many difficult problems coming up ahead and for every Communist it is an honour to participate in solving them.

1. See WMR for January, March, May, July and November 1977, and January, February, April, May and October 1978.

# The People Pay For Cannon

What the "Soviet Threat" Myth Costs the Nation

Ken Gill

*General Council member, British Trade Union Congress, General Secretary, Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.*

IN Britain mass unemployment is accompanied by a shortage of skilled manpower and continuing inflation. And we put £7 billion of scarce resources into a war machine which is both incapable of defending us and makes our ultimate destruction in a nuclear catastrophe the more likely.

It is crazy situation—the most dangerous symptom of the general crisis of capitalism. In a situation where essential social services are starved of resources, and many sectors of our industrial base starved of investment, it is a criminal waste.

On first sight it seems inexplicable that Labour governments cannot, or do not want to, cast off this heavy burden. But this is the reality and has to be faced by all those in the labour and peace movement.

The main disarmament is the so-called Soviet threat. Day in and day out the Tories, government ministers, the military and the capitalist press pour out torrents of abuse and accusations against the Soviet Union and her allies. Take a recent example. When the Soviet Union invests millions in civil defence, these warriors stand truth on its head. We are told that civil defence expenditure is not all that it seems. Apparently attempts to defend the mass of people against possible nuclear devastation is an offensive act, tilting the balance of terror in favour of the Soviet Union. According to this twisted logic, it means that because the Soviet Union has superior means of defending her people, she is much more likely to strike first. But this nonsense is just one example of the way language is used to distort, mystify and mislead. Arms expenditure is part of the defence budget, NATO is defending freedom and democracy by supporting and supplying with arms a whole batch of fascist and military dictatorships in every section of the globe, supplying arms to China is vital to the defence of the West, and so on.

There are, of course, many differing views in the British labour movement on the nature and role of the Soviet Union and her socialist allies. It is a continuing and developing debate. But what cannot be doubted is the sincerity of the Soviet search for peace, detente and disarmament.

It is time we nailed the lie of the Soviet threat. There is no group in the Soviet Union with an economic interest in promoting arms expenditure. On the contrary, Soviet policy is directed towards the expansion of consumer goods production and raising living standards.

Every time a government spokesman, Tory politician, or Fleet Street editor attempts to justify the continuing and frightening expansion of arms expenditure by trotting out the Soviet threat, then that statement should be repudiated by a united labour movement. It is time we turned the heat on the real culprit—the capitalist system which exploits the mass of our people and threatens to destroy us all if not deliberately, then by some crazy accident. We should seek to develop closer and expanded trading, social and cultural ties between Britain and the socialist countries, and work for the end of all military blocs.

I feel confident that such an approach will continue to receive a positive response from the Soviet Union. It is surely preferable to export cargo ships to Poland rather than military frigates to Brazil, tractors to the Soviet Union, Cuba and Tanzania rather than armoured cars to South Africa. This is one aspect of the problem.

I now want to turn to the economic case for disarmament and alternative production. Many of the economic arguments for disarmament are well understood. In simple terms it is a matter of resource allocation. While the people of Britain face a housing shortage, a run down social infrastructure, and accelerating de-industrialisation, it is clearly madness to invest huge sums to support a military machine. Pounds sterling 7 billion invested in our basic industries and the social services would transform our economic prospects.

If anyone doubts the drain of military expenditure on our economy, let him compare our performance with that of Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany. While Britain spends 6 per cent of GNP on armaments, the FRG spends 4 per cent

and Japan 3 per cent. Over 30 years this has had a tremendous impact on the development of the respective economies. The FRG and Japan have invested heavily in research and development, in export-based industries, and in producing goods for consumption, while Britain's industrial base has been neglected. According to government statistics, in the years between 1963-73 research and development in all manufacturing industry as a percentage of net output fell from 4.4 per cent to 3.5 per cent. From a position of parity with the Federal Republic of Germany and a substantial lead over Japan in 1963, industry-financed research and development in Britain has fallen to half the FRG and Japanese levels.

It is safe to say that Britain's industrial base is starved of innovative investment and that our economy is being increasingly distorted by militarisation. Britain's chronic underinvestment in skills and technology has left our industry in a far weaker position than its industrial competitors to exploit the potential for new product development. Unless British industry adapts to use the new technology and the necessary investment funds are made available, we will simply not be able to compete in world markets.

The development of microelectronics, which causes a sharp rise in labour productivity, adds a new dimension to the argument. The prospects are both exciting and frightening. It has been estimated that by the end of the century only 10 per cent of the labour force will be required to supply the British people with all its material needs. Even right-wing Social-Democrats recognise that this enormous increase in labour productivity provides the basis for a vast increase in public expenditure? We can spend the money on leisure, on education, on decent pensions, on the health service, and so on. Or the money can be spent on ever more sophisticated armaments and other forms of mass destruction. It seems to me that we are faced here with a clear political choice. We can harness the new technology to meet social need or commit mass suicide. It is the task of the British labour movement to put this choice clearly before the people.

It cannot be claimed that Britain's economic inferiority can be planned on armaments alone. Capitalism, and especially the British variety, has a responsibility wider than for its own failure. But the slowness of development, the lack of competitiveness, the inability to find investment for industrial initiative is closely connected with the obsession with an imperialist role and the wound inflicted by massive armaments. The resultant lack of development has been the reason for attack on our living standards.

Our social services, which used to be the best in Western Europe, are now among the worst, and the problems of managing the national debt have clearly been a factor in recent inflation. The whole question

of the level of public expenditure and how it should be financed has emerged as a major political and economic issue. The Tories, who would cheerfully strip the lead from the roofs of old people's homes to save a penny on the rates, constantly press for higher and higher arms expenditure.

Current imbalances in public expenditure are too little known. Just one example. An analysis of public expenditure in 1976/77 shows that £36 million was spent on medical research, while £202 million went on defence research and development. These are the priorities of barbarism. It is not even justified by job creation. Arms expenditure is not nearly as labour intensive as expenditure on housing, health, and so on.

What is the connection between the arms race and job creation? Will disarmament lead to unemployment? These are important questions and they require clear answers. According to the latest available figures, a cut in arms expenditure of £1 billion would shed 70,000 jobs. As over 4 million workers change their jobs each year through the normal operation of the labour market, this would not appear to be a major problem in macro-economic terms. But for the 70,000 workers concerned it is a major problem which is exacerbated by the regional structure of employment in the arms industry. Two years ago our members in Preston conducted a major survey of employment prospects in the area. The area is dominated by two major employers—the Leyland Bus & Truck Division and the British Aircraft Corporation (now part of British Aerospace) Military Division employing 12,000 workers. The cancellation of contracts at BAC Military Division would, without the provision of alternative work, lengthen dole queues, reduce spending power, badly affecting local commerce and the whole basis of the area's prosperity.

Therefore our members not merely called for a reduction of military production but went on to make these two demands:

1. That the Preston area be given a more diverse and a stable base for its prosperity and that the release of a good proportion of the skilled workforce engaged in arms work would aid the development of that base.

2. That the total community be involved in the planning of a regional industrial investment strategy which would ensure the smooth run down of the arms industry.

This approach seems to me to be democratic and practicable and can command the support of the workforce presently employed in the arms industry. But there are broader questions to be faced.

My union unreservedly welcomed the nationalisation of the aerospace and shipbuilding industries. We have been concerned for a number of years about the growing militarisation of both industries and the lack of forward planning in industries reliant on large

and continuing orders. What particularly pleased us was the provision in both Acts to give the industries the power to diversify their activities. It appeared to us that nationalisation opened up great possibilities. It must be said that we have been sadly disillusioned. Far from slackening, the drive to militarisation has increased. Essentially, the Civil Air Transport side of British Aerospace has been scaled down and our industry relegated to subcontractors to Boeing. On the design and development side British Aerospace will become increasingly reliant on military projects and orders.

It is not as if there are no tremendous opportunities. Our engineering skills match the best in the world, and we have a publicly owned industry—British Aerospace, Rolls Royce and British Airways. The world is crying out for the development of short takeoff, low fuel and low engine-noise planes equipped with relatively few sophisticated avionics aids. The development of civilian aircraft is essential if our industry is to stay in the race for a share of the world civil aircraft market.

How can we explain the disappointing performance of public enterprise as far as shifting the balance between civilian and military production is concerned? It must be said that military contracts are relatively safe and profitable. The boards of nationalised concerns will always choose the safe, that is the arms, road to prosperity unless there is strong mass pressure to do otherwise. The arms market is buoyant and for national strategic reasons and development costs are guaranteed by the government.

There is another aspect, which accounts for the attractiveness of arms manufacture. My union organises thousands of highly skilled and qualified engineers and designers in the aerospace industry. It must be said that some view the debate about alternative products with mixed feelings. They know that Britain is a world leader in military technology and they are concerned that high technology is not easily diverted to other less demanding, yet sometimes more socially useful, products. Our members, therefore, have a genuine fear that should military production be cut, their skills and experience will be under-utilised.

There are two issues here. It is essential that their skills are fully utilised and that alternative products are in high technology areas. Secondly, this approach illustrates a genuine problem in the education and training of professional engineers. Many professional engineers do have a narrow view of society and of the industry in which they work. This is no fault of theirs, but a failure of the education system which produces them. Qualified engineers and scientists must be given an education which stresses social responsibility.

It may seem that I have overstressed the problems involved in a switch of resources into al-

ternative production, into the production of socially useful products rather than weapons of mass destruction. It seems to me that in some sense arguments used by the peace movement have been too simple and have failed to address themselves adequately to the very real problems we face. Of course, right is on our side, but the future of humanity depends on our finding a solution to these problems, on whether or not we find a way of winning the support of the millions of workers who are directly and indirectly reliant on arms expenditure for their livelihoods.

It should be said that this is no new issue. Workers have always understood the need to diversify production in order to protect jobs. But bringing forward plans and solutions is one thing and forcing capitalist employers and governments to adopt such programmes is another. While profit considerations are dominant, moral stances alone will not achieve the necessary breakthrough. While agitation for alternatives has always been a feature of workers' fight back against closure and cuts, switches cannot be made without political determination to challenge the domination of the profit-makers. A mass, organised movement is a prerequisite for the success of such a challenge.

It is essential, therefore, that the numerous schemes for alternative products are linked to the labour movement's overall strategy to regenerate British industry, to deal with the regional question, and to ensure a much greater degree of public and political control over industry, both in the public and private sectors.

The fact is that sector after sector of British industry is in crisis. In the national interest it is therefore essential that the militarisation of our economy is reversed and resources transferred into our civilian industrial base. As a first step the publicly owned aerospace and shipbuilding industries must be forced to invest in the research and development necessary to give birth to a new generation of peaceful products. Such a process would have a profound effect on wide sections of British industry.

If technological and scientific progress are to be harnessed to raise productivity and to meet unsatisfied and basic human needs, then the demilitarisation of our economy is essential. The conversion of the armaments industry to the production of socially useful products is both feasible and necessary. We should, however, have no illusions. This fight will not be won by rational argument alone, but by mass political struggle led by the organised labour movement and involving the workers presently employed in the defence industries. What has to be built is the political will.

What conclusions can we draw and what are the policy and campaigning issues facing the British labour movement? I want to emphasise a number of points.

Firstly, and above all, we must nail the lie of the Soviet threat. Without an "enemy" it becomes impossible to justify the barbarous priorities given to the stock-piling of arms. We must be determined to repudiate every attempt to present the Soviet Union as the enemy of the British people.

Secondly, we need to develop a national consciousness which is determined to maintain Britain as a nation state, so that the people would understand the economic impossibility of playing an imperialist role in the world. In the modern age a small island, packed with military bases including nuclear ones, is a sitting duck. The British people, therefore, have a vested interest second to none in promoting peace and disarmament. Arms expenditure not only cripples our economy, it jeopardises our very existence. It is essential that the British people control all major political, economic and defence decisions taken in their name.

Thirdly, it is important to stress the potential role of the public sector in leading the struggle

to demilitarise our economy and to develop alternative products. It should be understood that such products include increased leisure, longer and continuing education, earlier retirement, and so on. If we could transfer resources from armaments into the social services and our industrial base, then many of these advances would become possible.

Lastly, I want to deal with the role of the labour movement. The organised labour movement is committed to a whole range of policies which present a coherent alternative to the Labour government's capitalist "solutions" to the crisis. The problem is that while we have the policies in support of arms cuts and the development of alternative and peaceful production we have not yet mobilised mass support to fight to have our policies carried out. This is the main task facing us today, as all our history shows that, without involving all sections of the labour movement, the broad masses of working people in town and country in the campaigning, we make no progress.

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THE PRESS

## Articulating the People's Will

The Mass Media and the Struggle for Democratic  
and Revolutionary Change, for Socialism<sup>1</sup>

Takis Mammatis

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Communist Party of Greece

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IT is beyond question that the mass media play a crucial part in moulding public opinion and that their role has been growing in step with the expansion of radio and television. Ven so, the basic issue is still that of who controls the media and what policy they follow, as participants in the discussion organised by WMR have pointed out.

The rulers of capitalist society understandably use the media in their own interests, for purposes running counter to the goals and aspirations of the popular running counter to the goals and aspirations of the popular movement and the progressive forces. But as these informations and propaganda vehicles try, in accordance with the nature and position of the class controlling them, to justify capitalist exploitation and oppression, social inequality, and injustice, and as, in so doing, they are compelled to resort increasingly to lies, falsification, slander, and provocation, their propaganda becomes ever more vulnerable and its impact on the masses less and less effective. They can no longer decisively influence developments or check progressive trends:

In other words, the growing crisis of the bourgeoisie's ideology inevitably affects its propaganda.

By contrast, the propaganda of the Communist parties and consistently democratic forces, propaganda based on truth and meeting with the people's interests and aspirations, is appreciated by them more and more even though under capitalism, as in our country, these parties and forces have scant means and limited opportunities. It is not accidental, therefore, and is due, among other things, to the very existence of Communist media that the capitalist propaganda machine, especially the press, is forced more and more often to use "democratic" camouflage in reporting or publishing news, commentaries, and articles concerning Communist activity and policy and the achievements of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

This comprises both the strength and weakness of the bourgeois media. It lends them strength because this kind of propaganda still misleads many people. On the other hand, it is a sign of weakness because it indicates a retreat, a modification of form

much space to the problems and pressing needs of the working class and other working people as Rizospastis. Its influence among the people and its circulation are growing in direct connection with this. Rizospastis has the third largest circulation among the morning papers of Athens, having ousted the semi-official Kathimerini to say nothing of the revisionists' paper, whose circulation is one-fourth that of Rizospastis.

Our daily, which articulates the true interests of all working people, makes its columns available for statements, interviews, and articles by politicians, trade unionists, and other public figures who do not belong to the Left. Many of them, including even Seraphim, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, took part in the campaigns conducted by Rizospastis for the repatriation of Greek political exiles living in socialist countries, for the abolition of foreign bases on Greek soil, against anti-communism, etc. Our contributors include many democratic personalities in literary and artistic life.

Rizospastis and other CPG periodicals expose the anti-popular policy of the government and the sinister aims of the conservative Right. Simultaneously they campaign against the revisionists, whose party has become an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet group virtually following a policy of submission to the bourgeoisie. We also fight from positions of principle against

"leftism" and against the policy of the Chinese leadership and the various Maoist groups active in our country, whose adventurist and provocative tactics encourage attacks on the democratic and popular movement.

In the struggle which the CPG is carrying on jointly with the Communist Youth of Greece and the left-wing and democratic forces cooperating with us, we do our best to inform and enlighten the working people and resist reactionary propaganda directed by foreign imperialist centres. In this struggle we also use other forms and methods of propaganda, such as leaflets, appeals, posters, and panels. We use them particularly in parliamentary and municipal election campaigns and during the celebration of memorable events, for instance, the 60th anniversary of our Party. The impact of these mass forms is seen in the fact that recently the Minister of Public order drafted a law banning wall posters on the pretext of protecting the capital and other cities from, of all things, pollution.

Invariably making a large effort to improve its propaganda, our Party strives to make it more incisive, more militant and effective and to ensure that it wins increasing support among the masses. We regard this work, which we are carrying on along with the campaign for the democratisation of the official media, as an alternative to imperialist propaganda

1. Continuing the round-table discussion by correspondence. See WMR, October, and December 1978.

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## Their Objective

*The Hoa in Vietnam. Dossier. Foreign Language  
Publishing House, Hanoi, 1978, 181 pp.*

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THIS booklet consists of feature stories and articles reprinted from the newspaper Nhan Dan, and also illustrations and a selection of Vietnamese and Chinese documents on the so-called problem of ethnic Chinese (Hoa) in Vietnam.

The materials in this book irrefutably give the lie to Peking's charge that socialist Vietnam is "persecuting, ostracising, and expelling" Hoa. They shed light on "Operation Nanguiao" and the designs of the Chinese authorities, and explain the solutions proposed by Vietnam to settle this problem. Moreover, the inclusion of Chinese documents is incontrovertible evidence of the compilers' desire to be objective, to give a truthful exposition of the facts.

Since World Marxist Review has given an account of the developments linked with the exodus of Hoa and the subsequent Chinese orchestrated provocations on the Vietnam border,<sup>1</sup> I shall confine myself to the facts stated in the booklet, giving a closer insight into the reasons behind these developments.

In the multinational Vietnamese socialist state there were 1,200,000 Hoa, i.e. 5 per cent of the total population (p 19). Most lived in the southern provinces, mainly in Ho Chi Minh City and other large population centres. In north Vietnam they were concentrated in Quang Ninh Province, which borders on China. The majority of the ethnic Chinese (they are mainly working people, although among them

there are small and middle traders and even big compradores) have acquired Vietnamese citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

Relative to the Hoa the Communist Party of Vietnam—this is lucidly shown in the booklet—had from the moment of its founding adopted a class and internationalist attitude. The political programme of the Communist Party of Indochina<sup>3</sup> (October 1930) declared: "The workers and labourers among the Chinese nationals are allies of the Vietnamese revolution" (p.23). A resolution passed by a Party plenum in 1939 noted: "In the last few years, as a result of the movement to support the Chinese people's resistance, feelings of mutual affection and a close relationship have developed between the two peoples" (Ibid.). And in 1941 the Party Central Committee issued a directive to all Party and mass organisations, which stated in part: "The workers and labourers among the Chinese nationals constitute a reserve force for the revolution in Indochina. It is therefore imperative to step up agitation and propaganda work among them" (pp. 23-24).

As the outcome of this principled and consistent policy many ethnic Chinese took part, along with their Vietnamese brothers, in the revolution of August 1945, in the resistance to the French colonialists in 1946-1954, and in the struggle against the US aggressors. They were active in the socialist transformations in Vietnam, particularly in the north.

Needless to say, the ethnic Chinese residing in the SRV enjoy the same rights as other Vietnamese citizens, and many of them have been elected or appointed to positions of responsibility. In Ho Chi Minh City, for instance, three members of the National Assembly, five members of the City People's Council and 30 members of ward and district people's councils are Vietnamese of Chinese origin.

However, some of the Hoa—small and middle traders, and particularly the big compradores<sup>4</sup> in Ho Chi Minh City—did not accept the socialist regime and the policy of encouraging them to invest their capital in production. They continued to engage in hoarding and profiteering, sinking into the mire of fraud, bribery, corruption, tax-evasion, sabotage, and so on. The steps taken by the SRV government in accordance with its policy of socialist transformation were exploited by Chinese propaganda to whip up a psychological campaign that led to an exodus of ethnic Chinese. Furthermore, Peking used trained agents and had recourse to the most subtle and ruthless actions. All this is strikingly described in four feature stories: "Operation Nanquiao: Second Act of an Ubuesque Farce";<sup>5</sup> "Mechanism of a Campaign of Coercion"; "The Exodus FEver in a Border Province"; and "The Hoa People in My Neighbourhood". These must be read to understand why thousands of Hoa, who had worked peacefully and been content in Vietnam, suddenly, as if possessed, fled to China with all their belongings.

leaving behind relatives and close friends in a country they had regarded as their homeland.

The documents and facts presented in the booklet eloquently show that "Operation Nanquiao" was a psychological campaign launched by the Chinese authorities to compel ethnic Chinese by means of flattery, threats, and blackmail to return to China, portray this provoked exodus as resulting from alleged persecution by the Vietnamese authorities, and utilise this allegation to discredit the Socialist Republic of Vietnam politically and dislocate its economy as "punishment" for the SRV leadership's fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and for denying the Peking leaders assistance in the attainment of their hegemonistic and expansionist ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

This is a valuable booklet not only because it shows what actually caused the sudden exodus of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. It gives a clearer picture of the strategic plans of the Chinese leaders and of the methods used by them. It is particularly valuable to the peoples of Southeast Asia, which has large colonies of ethnic Chinese (totalling more than 20 million) and where Maoist-inspired organisations and parties are active, still blindly following all the political twists and turns of their Peking mentors. Many facts indicate that these political twists and turns spell out a serious threat, chiefly to the peoples of Southeast Asia, and that ethnic Chinese, particularly, the Chinese bourgeoisie, are accorded a significant place in the designs of the Peking strategists.

From recent history it is well known how Peking used the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia, how it attempted to inspire anti-government actions in Burma, organise an "insurgent movement" in Malaysia and split the national-liberation movement in the Philippines and otherwise interfere in the internal affairs of these countries. The newspaper Patriot recently reported that Peking plans to form a "corridor" in South and Southeast Asia (from Thailand, where five million ethnic Chinese reside, across Burma and some Indian states to Tibet) to serve as a spring-board for interference in the internal affairs of the countries in this region.

In this context it would be well to remember Mao Tse-tung's declaration in August 1965 that this entire region should "to be secured". If to this is added Peking's recent heightened interest in the Huatsiao (overseas Chinese), the special conference on this question in early 1978, the examination of this question by the National People's Assembly, Peking's public pledge to "protect the rights and interests" of overseas Chinese and its policy of regarding all overseas Chinese as "members of one big family", and, lastly, the proclaimed intention to form a "united patriotic front of overseas Chinese" and the

inclusion of this front into an "anti-hegemonistic" front, the question arises whether there are guarantees that the scenario played out by the Chinese strategists in Vietnam is not repeated by them in other countries of Asia.

*Jose Lava*

1. WMR, February 1979.
2. In north Vietnam they were granted citizenship as a result of agreements signed in 1955 and 1957 with the People's Republic of China. In South Vietnam, from 1956 onward, all persons of Chinese origin acquired Vietnamese citizenship first as a result of coercive measures by Ngo Dinh Diem and later of the economic handouts offered by Nguyen Van Thieu.

3. The name by which the Communist Party of Vietnam founded in 1930, was known until 1951.—Ed.
4. Under the US puppets in south Vietnam (particularly under Thieu) 60 ethnic Chinese compradors became billionnaires. In business circles they were called "uncrowned kings". They held a monopoly in three major sectors of the economy: manufacturing, distribution, and credits. Li Long Than, the most powerful among them, was able to meet with Thieu, his wife, or the US Ambassador at any time at 15 minutes' notice. He was called the "actual president" of south Vietnam.
5. Ubuesque—derived from Ubu, a grotesque personage in Alfred Garry's play *Ubu Roi*.—Ed.
6. After this review was written China committed an act of aggression by invading the Socialist Republic of Vietnam soon after Teng Hsiao-ping's visit to the USA. This invasion bears out the conclusions of both the booklet and the review about the present Chinese leadership's expansionist and hegemonistic ambitions, which are imperiling peace.

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## EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

# Some Aspects Of the Marxist — Christian Dialogue

Robbert Steigerwald

*Board member, German Communist Party*

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THE struggle for influence among the masses in the Federal Republic of Germany entails a dialogue and development of cooperation between Communists and religious people. The Programme of the GCP says: "The growing participation by Christians in the struggle for peace and social justice, and for a humane society is highly important. The GCP respects the action based on creed, by religious citizens including many church leaders, for social progress. Cooperation with believers is of much importance for the GCP at the present time, and will be so in the future as well".<sup>1</sup> That is why it is so important to take into account the processes taking place in the minds, moods and orientations of religious people and also in theology. That is the only way in which we can find the right approach to solving the difficult problem of dialogue and cooperation between Marxists and Christians.

In our search for such an approach we come up against highly contradictory trends. Of course, the Communists thoroughly consider the urge on the part of many Christians to break with the traditions of religious conformism, meekness and passiveness, and to find their place in the struggle for social justice and peace. But the balance of forces between progress and reaction which has now taken shape has resulted not only in positive changes in the ideological and political positions of believers and theologians. We find the clerical leadership

trying to give a false orientation to those who seek. These contradictory trends were fairly pronounced, in particular, in the discussions at the 16th World Philosophical Congress in Dusseldorf, within whose framework a meeting was held by the American Society for the Philosophical Study of Marxism and the International St. Paul Society,<sup>2</sup> with the participation of Marxists and prominent theologians.

In view of the opposite ideologies of Marxists and Christians it has been and continues to be important to determine the problems that should be central to the dialogue. It is superficial, to say the least, to deny the ideological contradictions. But what is more important: to discuss these contradictions or jointly to work out solutions to ensure mankind's existence? One need merely pose these questions to decide that the latter is of crucial importance. And that is precisely the answer, and a highly concrete one, that is given by some theologians.

But another trend also emerged, Kelner, of the St. Paul Society, has put forward, as a preliminary condition for joint action by Marxists and Christians for peace and social progress, "guarantees" from the Marxists for the existence of Christianity under socialism. He is clearly confusing two different questions. His demand would have been acceptable if he had said that, under socialism, when the Church is separated from the state, the Marxists should carry on ideological struggle against religion only

Firstly, and above all, we must nail the lie of the Soviet threat. Without an "enemy" it becomes impossible to justify the barbarous priorities given to the stock-piling of arms. We must be determined to repudiate every attempt to present the Soviet Union as the enemy of the British people.

Secondly, we need to develop a national consciousness which is determined to maintain Britain as a nation state, so that the people would understand the economic impossibility of playing an imperialist role in the world. In the modern age a small island, packed with military bases including nuclear ones, is a sitting duck. The British people, therefore, have a vested interest second to none in promoting peace and disarmament. Arms expenditure not only cripples our economy, it jeopardises our very existence. It is essential that the British people control all major political, economic and defence decisions taken in their name.

Thirdly, it is important to stress the potential role of the public sector in leading the struggle

to demilitarise our economy and to develop alternative products. It should be understood that such products include increased leisure, longer and continuing education, earlier retirement, and so on. If we could transfer resources from armaments into the social services and our industrial base, then many of these advances would become possible.

Lastly, I want to deal with the role of the labour movement. The organised labour movement is committed to a whole range of policies which present a coherent alternative to the Labour government's capitalist "solutions" to the crisis. The problem is that while we have the policies in support of arms cuts and the development of alternative and peaceful production we have not yet mobilised mass support to fight to have our policies carried out. This is the main task facing us today, as all our history shows that, without involving all sections of the labour movement, the broad masses of working people in town and country in the campaigning, we make no progress.

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THE PRESS

## Articulating the People's Will

The Mass Media and the Struggle for Democratic  
and Revolutionary Change, for Socialism<sup>1</sup>

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IT is beyond question that the mass media play a crucial part in moulding public opinion and that their role has been growing in step with the expansion of radio and television. Ven so, the basic issue is still that of who controls the media and what policy they follow, as participants in the discussion organised by WMR have pointed out.

The rulers of capitalist society understandably use the media in their own interests, for purposes running counter to the goals and aspirations of the popular running counter to the goals and aspirations of the popular movement and the progressive forces. But as these information and propaganda vehicles try, in accordance with the nature and position of the class controlling them, to justify capitalist exploitation and oppression, social inequality, and injustice, and as, in so doing, they are compelled to resort increasingly to lies, falsification, slander, and provocation, their propaganda becomes ever more vulnerable and its impact on the masses less and less effective. They can no longer decisively influence developments or check progressive trends

In other words, the growing crisis of the bourgeoisie's ideology inevitably affects its propaganda.

By contrast, the propaganda of the Communist parties and consistently democratic forces, propaganda based on truth and meeting with the people's interests and aspirations, is appreciated by them more and more even though under capitalism, as in our country, these parties and forces have scant means and limited opportunities. It is not accidental, therefore, and is due, among other things, to the very existence of Communist media that the capitalist propaganda machine, especially the press, is forced more and more often to use "democratic" camouflage in reporting or publishing news, commentaries, and articles concerning Communist activity and policy and the achievements of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

This comprises both the strength and weakness of the bourgeois media. It lends them strength because this kind of propaganda still misleads many people. On the other hand, it is a sign of weakness because it indicates a retreat, a modification of form

and method necessitated by the impossibility of carrying on as in the past.

This is the trend that has emerged in postwar decades. In Greece the official media found themselves controlled by reaction, which came to power immediately after British imperialism's brazen military intervention in December 1944, in the wake of liberation from fascism. The result was that of decades they monopolised information and used their position to promote the tenets of imperialism and domestic reaction; they carried on rapidly anti-Communist propaganda aimed at justifying terror, arbitrary arrests, court sentences, banishment, torture, and the execution of many Communists and other unvanquished democrats.

Under the military junta's fascist dictatorship (1967-74), control of the media was tightened and the propaganda conducted through them grew more reactionary. All their efforts were directed towards extolling the junta hated by the people, towards promoting fascist ideology, primitive and rabid anti-communism.

However, this junta propaganda proved ineffectual. The overwhelming majority of the people, including conservatives opposed to the fascist dictatorship, switched to foreign broadcasts. These included broadcasts from Moscow in Greek, which were heard with close attention and interest, as well as from the capitals of other socialist countries.

Throughout those years, with the Communist Party outlawed (since 1947), the Communists' main propaganda vehicles were Rizospastis, published underground by the CC, and other newspapers, underground appeals, slogans, and leaflets, plus Radio Free Greece (called the Voice of Truth between 1961 and 1974).

The struggle of the Greek people, primarily democratic youth, for the overthrow of the military fascist junta benefited particularly by broadcasts from the Athens Polytechnic. These broadcasts did much to mobilise patriots and give popular support to the courageous rising of Polytechnic students, a rising which shook the fascist regime to its foundations and marked the beginning of its end. The whole population of the Greek capital and Piraeus hung on the broadcasts of this round-the-clock station, whose call sign was "This is the Polytechnic calling".

Significant political changes took place in the mass media in July 1974, after the junta was removed from power. First, Rizospastis resumed legal publication after 27 years of illegality and indescribable persecution, it became a daily. Other democratic publications appeared almost simultaneously. They were followed by periodicals of the CPG and other progressive and democratic parties and organisations. As for the press which had backed the dictatorship, it had to revise its policy. The only excep-

tion was Eleftheros Kosmos, a newspaper which tried to keep alive the spirit of the junta; its circulation dropped sharply. Anti-communism was thus dealt a telling blow and this showed in official propaganda—its vehicles were compelled to stop or tone down their anti-Communist slander and their attacks on the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community.

But with the passage of time and as a result of the policy of the government under Karamanlis, leader of the principal right-wing party demagogically calling itself "New Democracy", the official media, in particular, radio and television, found themselves in the hands of this government, which wanted, in effect, to establish an authoritarian, anti-democratic state and championed the interests of domestic and foreign companies. Entirely in line with the government policy of discriminating against the CPG even in parliament, the radio and television stubbornly deny equality to our Party. They report on its activity very rarely, and in many cases deliberately distort its name by the addition of the word Exterior. This anti-democratic and occasionally provocative attitude draws protests, not only from the Communists, but from all consisted democrats. They consider as intolerable the fact that a substantial segment of the people who vote Communist, get no information about the Party from the state-controlled radio and television while having as all other citizens to pay for the upkeep of that network.

Another characteristic of the official media in our country is that a TV network called the Information Service of the Armed Forces (YENED) operates in addition to the ERT, the official radio and television network. Set up during the civil war, it is maintained by the Karamanlis government as a special uncontrolled agency specialising in whipping up anti-communism. This is done in the face of vigorous protests from the people, who demand the closure of the YENED or its merger with the ERT.

Both the ERT and the YENED generally ignore or falsify strikes and other struggles of the workers and other working people or of young people, and join in smear campaigns over alleged human rights violations and the "persecution" of dissenters in socialist countries. As for their programmes, 60 to 70 per cent consist of imported items, "thrillers", gangsters films, and other products of the "American way of life", which prejudice the education of young people. The rest of the programmes, or the Greek part proper, is likewise substandard, with very few exceptions.

Faced with the new notable gains which our Party scored in the municipal elections last October and with its increased influence both at home and abroad, as the celebration of the Party's 60th anniversary showed again, the Karamanlis government and the reactionary forces generally have lately mounted a new anti-Communist campaign orchestrated from