

Problems of the International Communist Movement

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THE new world situation has given rise to sharp controversies in the international communist movement. This is understandable, since the tremendous new possibilities and opportunities opened out by the changed balance of world forces in the current epoch have called for new, positive and bold responses, set out in the Declaration of the Eighty-One Parties, in our own party programme *The British Road to Socialism* and Congress decisions, and in the new Programme (replacing that of 1919, which has been fulfilled) adopted by the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union two years ago.

1. Problems and Controversies

The path forward is not simple and easy. It never has been. As always, there are plenty of contradictory features in this current world situation or in the internal situation within each country, defying simplified straight-line analysis by formula, and requiring the most serious tactical judgement in each concrete situation. It is only necessary to consider the obvious two aspects of the present policy of American imperialism illustrated in the June 10 speech of President Kennedy for a relaxation of the cold war, directed to answer the anti-Administration right-wing critics suspecting a "New Yalta", followed immediately by the Berlin sabre-rattling tirades; or the signing of the Test Ban Treaty (denounced by all the most bellicose cold war champions as a betrayal), followed by the offer of nuclear know-how to France and the pressing forward of the multilateral nuclear force project which would bring the West German militarists very close to the final control of nuclear arms. Or the hostility of the Paris-Bonn Axis, allied in this respect with the American Ultra-Right, to the Test Ban Treaty, but reflecting at the same time, in the case of de Gaulle, a measure of resistance to American domination in the satellite countries of Western Europe. Or the complex political situation in India, with the Anglo-American imperialist grip closing in, utilising the pretext of the Border, while Nehru struggles to cling to the tattered remnants of the flag of "non-alignment", the reactionary monopolist

offensive drives for full Western imperialist alignment, and the Communist Party is dangerously divided, with a considerable proportion of its leading members suffering persecution. Or the varied trends in the Arab Middle East, with reactionary bourgeois nationalism in Iraq and Syria combining the slogans of "Arab Socialist Unity" with the most infamous anti-communist terror; Nasser tacking and manoeuvring; the Ben Bella Government in Algeria showing certain positive and progressive signs. Or the unique problems of the present stage in Africa, with the giant advance of All-African liberation registered at Addis Ababa, alongside the absence of Communist Parties in most of the countries, and the trend to seek expression of the united national front in a one-party system, discussed by Jack Woddis in the August number of *Marxism Today*. Or, for that matter the political situation in Britain, where it is urgently necessary to speed the defeat of Toryism and the return of a Labour Government, alongside Communist M.P.s, although, on the basis of present official Labour policy, a Labour Government would mean, as in 1945, the entrenchment of the reactionary cold war Nato nuclear policy.

Contradictory features of this kind are not new in principle in the present world situation. In one form or another, such contradictory features (alongside and complicating the essential basic contradictions of the epoch) have characterised every stage of the world socialist revolution. That is why the science of Marxism-Leninism is necessary in order to track the path forward through the morass, determine the decisive point of concentration for advance at each successive stage, and refuse to be side-tracked by picturesque generalised slogans. Hostile critics have always tried to take advantage of the particular contradictory features, to throw mud and abuse, raise would-be profound queries and dilemmas and seek to create confusion. But the successive critics have always fallen by the wayside and passed into oblivion; the caravan moves on. Marxism-Leninism has again and again been proved, and continues to be proved, by the event, by practice.

All these new problems of theory and practice

in the present world situation need the most careful consideration and discussion. Our syllabus *Communism and the World Today* has been prepared to assist in such clarification and discussion within the party.

2. How Not to Conduct Controversy

But such serious consideration is not helped when the presentation of a critical viewpoint with regard to a responsible tactical decision of the Soviet Government, as in the signing of the partial Test Ban Treaty, descends (in the Chinese Government's statement of July 31 to which reference is made in our party's Political Committee Statement of July 31) to the type of commonplace abuse long familiar in certain anti-Communist and anti-Soviet quarters—the customary denunciation of the Soviet Union as having “sold out” the revolution, as “allying with imperialism to oppose socialism”, etc.

For nearly half a century the Soviet Union has led the way, during the first twenty-eight years as the sole socialist state confronted with a hostile capitalist world, in the first victory of the socialist revolution, in the defeat of all its enemies, in the building of socialism and now entering on the first steps of the construction of communism, and in opening the gates to the establishment of the world system of socialism and advance of national liberation. Throughout all these years the Soviet Union has fought in the forefront for the common aims of all progressive mankind, for peace, for the independence of all peoples, for socialism.

Throughout all these years every new move of the Soviet Union, every unprecedented initiative to meet new conditions, and every tactical manoeuvre in this long and arduous path, has been met with a chorus of denunciation, not only from the enemies of socialism and communism, but also from some professed “friends” of communism or “experts” in Marxism-Leninism, discovering in each new move a “betrayal” of the sacred principles of communism and Marxism-Leninism. The Bolshevik Revolution was itself denounced by the most widely recognised pundits of Marxism at that time as a violation of the principles of Marx. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty was denounced as the betrayal of international socialism to German imperialism.

The New Economic Policy in 1921, introducing freedom of trade, when Lenin offered to lease tracts of Soviet territory and resources to foreign monopolists to exploit, was proclaimed to signify the end of the communist revolution and Lenin's surrender to world capitalism. The battle to build “socialism in one country”, as soon as it was clear that the conditions were not yet ripe for the vic-

tory of the working class revolution in the rest of Europe, was denounced as the “betrayal” of the world socialist revolution, in place of being seen as the positive revolutionary path forward in these conditions, in contrast to the defeatism of the alternative viewpoint which sought to cover black pessimism about the prospects of the Soviet Union with abstract formulas about world revolution. The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact let loose all the vials of wrath to denounce this “betrayal” revealing the Soviet Union as “the ally of Hitler and fascism” against the peoples of the world.

It is an old story; but there are always novices in world politics to whom it comes as a new blinding revelation the first time, and who can be temporarily thrown off balance. Indeed, judging by the numbers of times the world revolution has been “betrayed” by the Soviet Union, according to these pundits, it is remarkable how both the world socialist revolution and the Soviet Union have advanced in the world during these years.

3. The Chinese Revolution and the Soviet Revolution

The Chinese Revolution is the second great socialist revolution of our time, following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the victory of the peoples over fascism in 1945. The Chinese Communist Party and its leaders, with Comrade Mao Tse-tung at their head, have won the admiration and honour and affection of Communists all over the world for their brilliant and victorious leadership of the Chinese people's struggle through all the vicissitudes of the revolutionary battles of over a quarter of a century to the final establishment of the Chinese People's Republic fourteen years ago. Their heroic and indomitable creative leadership and struggle and the courage, enthusiasm, collective determination and tenacity of the Chinese people, during these fourteen years to grapple with the giant task of transforming one quarter of the world for the construction of socialism (whatever the mistakes made and admitted along the path, and there were mistakes also in plenty in the Soviet Union made and recognised in the difficult path of socialist construction) is an imperishable part of the epic of the transformation of humanity in our time.

The special hatred of American imperialism for China is a tribute to the Chinese Revolution. When we are considering the present ideological and tactical disputes which have arisen, we must never forget the sharp international situation in which the Chinese People's Republic is placed: the continued refusal of recognition and maintenance of an open state of war by American imperialism,

with its colossal armed, naval and nuclear power deployed along the Pacific against the coasts of China, and with open threats of aggressive intentions proclaimed through its puppets. Nor can we fail to note the way in which the most reactionary circles of imperialism have openly speculated on the present moment and the present disputes as a favourable moment for sharpening aggressive pressure against the Chinese People's Republic. Equally we need to recognise our responsibility, as emphasised in the Political Committee statement of July 31st, to intensify our fight for the rights of the Chinese People's Republic in the United Nations and in the international conferences of the powers.

But when the Chinese Government and Communist Party in this situation turn to denounce the Soviet Government as having "sold out" the revolution, as seeking to maintain a "nuclear monopoly" of "nuclear powers" (thus equating socialism and imperialism), and as having become an "ally" of American imperialism against China, then it becomes necessary to say plainly, as our Political Committee statement made clear, that such language and such an estimation is, in our judgement, incompatible with any communist viewpoint, and indeed contrary to the plain interests of the Chinese people themselves. For the unity and co-operation of the Soviet and Chinese peoples is the indispensable foundation for the strength of the whole world socialist camp, just as the strength of the Soviet Union has been through all these years and continues the most powerful international guarantee for the security of the Chinese people.

The Chinese Revolution is the child of the Soviet Revolution. The Chinese Communist Party was first founded in 1921, four years after the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, from the most advanced elements of the national revolutionary movement in China, inspired by the example of the Soviet Revolution and Communist Party, just as our Communist Party in Britain was similarly founded in 1920 from the most militant socialist and working class representatives and organisations in Britain, inspired by the example of 1917. The Chinese Communist leaders have always, at any rate until the most recent period, recognised their debt to the Soviet Union. They have always recognised the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as their teacher. It is possible that a pupil may advance beyond the teacher, though the concrete evidence for that needs to be visible. But a pupil should show some sense of decency before proceeding, as from some lofty height of superiority, to berate the teacher with very foul abuse, especially when that teacher is

the vanguard party of the world socialist revolution, bearing the heaviest burden and having to face critical responsibilities of decision in every daily changing aspect of the whole international situation.

For those of us who have longer experience in the Communist movement, who called ourselves communists before the Bolshevik Revolution and pledged support to it before its fulfilment, the degeneration of a critical opposition viewpoint, which might at the outset have some valid points to make, into abuse of the Soviet Union and its leadership as having "sold out" the revolution and joined up with imperialism, is a familiar story in a variety of forms over four and a half decades, and a sure danger signal. But for more recent comrades this spectacle of public division between the two major governing Communist Parties, with one great socialist power accusing the vanguard socialist power of betrayal, is not only painful, as it can only be a source of deep pain to all who have the cause of communism at heart, but can also cause bewilderment and confusion.

4. The Controversy and Our Party

Our party is not a governing Communist Party or one of the major mass parties in the international communist movement; and the conditions for the fulfilment of our programme to lead the majority of the working class and people of Britain to political power and the construction of socialism are not yet present. At the same time we operate in a country which was the cradle of capitalism and the working class movement, from whose midst our party was formed; which is still a leading industrial country, whose highly organised working class has its role to play in the world; and which is at the same time the metropolis of a leading imperialist power whose tentacles spread over the world. Placed in this situation we have recognised, although a small party, our special international responsibilities. We have always sought to fulfil to the utmost of our strength, however inadequately, our role of active comradeship and practical solidarity with the great liberation struggle of all the peoples oppressed by British imperialism. Our bonds of friendship and comradeship with the Chinese people and Chinese Communist Party were forged by such as George Hardy, or when Harry Pollitt received his crippling back injury at the hands of jingo hooligans while publicly denouncing the *Amethyst* aggression.

In the great issues of the international communist movement we have always sought, throughout these four and a half decades, to reach our

independent judgement, to the best of our ability, and present our independent viewpoint, within the framework of international solidarity. When all the records and the archives finally become available in the future, the truth of this claim will be proved.

Despite the ideological differences, when the Indo-Chinese Border conflict arose in the autumn of last year, we had no hesitation in denouncing, on the basis of the concrete facts known to us, the imperialist lies about Chinese aggression and in exposing the real responsibility of Anglo-American imperialism and pro-imperialist reaction within India which was deliberately exploiting the border dispute, inherited from the old expansionist strategy of British imperialism, to instigate and foster conflict in order to destroy Indo-Chinese friendship, strengthen the imperialist economic and military grip on India, and disrupt the left in India.

In the controversies developing during the last four years, after the agreed Declaration of the Eighty-One Parties, when these controversies reached the stage of public polemic between major parties and at the Congresses of leading parties, we took steps, by the January resolution of our Executive this year, by our sending of delegations both to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to the Communist Party of China, and by our Congress resolution, to adopt a line which we hoped could best serve the interests of the international communist movement. While making clear our viewpoint on the ideological controversies, and expressing in temperate terms our disagreement with the new contentions put forward in documents of the Chinese Communist Party, which we regarded as not in accord with the agreed line of the 81 Parties' Declaration or the requirements of the present world situation, we placed our main emphasis on the necessity to restore and strengthen the unity of the international communist movement, end the public polemic, and seek to resolve the differences on a principled basis through comradely discussion between parties, leading up to an international conference of Communist Parties provided that the ground were sufficiently prepared to offer the prospect for a successful and united outcome and not the occasion for intensifying the danger of a split. As part of this preparation we urged the desirability of talks between the representatives of the Soviet and Chinese Communist Parties.

5. A Dangerous New Stage in the Controversy

Since then the talks between high-level delegations of the Soviet and Chinese parties opened on July 5, and were adjourned on July 21

without any date fixed for a further meeting. From this it was evident that the issues had not yet been resolved, and no ground had been found for a common statement even of the measure of agreement existing, while holding over questions in dispute. On the other hand, adjournment, or a "recess", as it was called, was better than a direct breakdown and termination of the discussions; since adjournment implied the recognition by both sides that the dialogue must be eventually resumed, and that differences between communists should be settled in a communist fashion, by comradely discussion. Time was needed, both to enable the present exacerbation of controversy (and sometimes unfair vulgarisation of the issues on both sides, as often happens in the heat of controversy) to cool down; and for time to provide that unflinching test of events and practice which so often resolves initially disputed questions, shrivels up false theories, and proves the justice of correct theories.

Meanwhile, however, new factors had arisen which in fact brought back the public polemic in a sharpened form, despite the declaration in principle by all parties affirming the desirability of its cessation. On June 13th, within three weeks of the talks, the Chinese Party published, in the form of a reply to the Soviet Party letter of March 30 welcoming the prospect of the talks, a 25-Point Statement entitled "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement", outlining their position in a highly polemical form. As it was now the eve of the talks, and publication would have inevitably involved an answer and therefore the resumption of sharp public controversy at the very moment when the private talks were due to open in order to replace public polemic by a friendly informal exchange of views across the table with a view to resolving the differences, the Soviet Party held over publication until it had become clear from the talks that there was no immediate prospect of agreement. On July 14th the Soviet Party published the Chinese 25-Point Declaration together with an Open Letter to their membership explaining their view of the differences. These two documents, which are available in our party bookshops, provide a summary of the two opposing viewpoints in the controversy, and should be studied by those who wish to acquaint themselves more fully with the issues.

While the Soviet-Chinese talks were proceeding, the long awaited Three Power Conference on a Test Ban Treaty opened in Moscow on July 15, and a partial Test Ban Treaty was initialled on July 25. From the outset the Chinese Party and Government took a hostile view to these negotia-

tions and the proposed partial Agreement, and the Chinese press publicly warned the Soviet Government against falling into the "trap". After the initialling of the Treaty, the Chinese Government on July 31 took the unprecedented step of issuing a public statement in which, alongside the demand for a Summit Conference for complete nuclear disarmament (along the lines of four concrete proposals identical with proposals already put forward by the Soviet Union), they denounced the partial Test Ban Treaty as "a fraud" and denounced the Soviet Government as having "sold out" the Soviet people and the peoples of the world and "allying with the forces of war to oppose the forces of peace, allying with imperialism to oppose socialism". Subsequently the *People's Daily* described the Treaty as a "U.S.-Soviet alliance against China".

This direct and public denunciation of the Soviet Government by the Chinese Government, accusing it of betrayal of the revolution and of alliance with United States imperialism against China, created a new and dangerous situation, far exceeding the previous very sharp ideological controversy. With regard to the Test Ban Treaty we had already made clear in our Political Committee statement of July 25 our support for it, in common with supporters of peace all over the world, as a step forward in the long fight for nuclear disarmament, opening the way and calling for renewed efforts to carry forward the advance. This new situation created by the Chinese Government's statement and anti-Soviet accusation compelled our party to state its position, both to reaffirm support of the Test Ban Treaty and to repudiate the very shameful anti-Soviet calumnies. This was done in our Political Committee statement of July 31.

Since then, further serious developments have taken place with the Chinese Government spokesman's statement of August 15th on the question of nuclear weapons. This statement advocated the extension of nuclear weapons to other socialist countries ("the greater the number of socialist countries possessing them, the better the guarantee of world peace"). This advocacy of the proliferation of nuclear weapons failed to take into account the obvious fact that such a policy would play into the hands of the imperialist aim to extend nuclear arms to West Germany, Japan, Chiang Kai-shek and similar reactionary militarist regimes, thereby increasing the danger of nuclear war. The statement further alleged that the Soviet Union in June 1959 had refused to supply an atom bomb and nuclear weapons know-how to China, and on the basis of this allegation launched a new violent denunciation of the Soviet Union.

This denunciation equally failed to take into account the principled stand of the Soviet Union and the international communist movement (expressed also in John Gollan's Political Report to our Congress last April) against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It also failed to take into account the indisputable fact that Soviet nuclear power is already sufficient to stand guard, and has consistently stood guard to protect the entire socialist camp, including China, against the threats of imperialist nuclear aggression. This is not only embodied in the Pact of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and China, but was reaffirmed by Premier Khrushchov as recently as on February 27th, 1963, in his speech to his electors:

"If an attack is made on the Chinese People's Republic . . . the Soviet Union will come to the rescue of its friends and deliver a crushing blow at the aggressors."

To refuse to recognise this is to fall away from the basic principles of socialist internationalism.

But this allegation, dating back to June 1959, throws a flood of light on the concrete origins of the subsequent fantastic edifice of highly scholastic anti-Soviet "ideological" controversy, whose empty battle of abstract formulas, without facts, without evidence, without attempt at serious examination of any concrete situation (and offering the wildest absurdities as the supposed viewpoint of "certain comrades" without a single reference to substantiate the picture) could make no sense to any experienced Marxist. For Marxism is always concrete; deals with living concrete situations and problems; never plays with formulas in a vacuum.

The issues raised by the Chinese Government spokesman's statement of August 15th were dealt with in the *Daily Worker* editorial of August 16th.

6. The Fight for International Communist Unity

It would be premature to endeavour to predict the consequences which may flow from the present grave turn in this situation, whether in a sharpening of public polemic, which we would have been happier to see ended, or in diplomatic repercussions. But we adhere to the basic view, expressed in our Congress resolution, that the overriding aim of all Communists everywhere, and of our party specifically, must be, alongside firm and unwavering support for the line of the 81 Parties' Declaration and every action arising from it in response to the needs of the world situation, to exert all our efforts to resolve the present differences on a principled basis through

comradely discussion, and to restore and strengthen the unity of the international communist movement, which is the indispensable basis for the future of mankind. We are confident also that, despite the sharpness of the present difficulties, and the heat which has been brought into the controversy, the objective basis exists for such a resolution of the differences and restoration of unity. That objective basis exists because of the common aim of all communists in the service of communism; because of the common interests of the Soviet and Chinese peoples and all socialist peoples in the tasks of economic and social construction and the maintenance of peace; because of the common interests of all working people and opponents of imperialism and supporters of peace all over the world; and because internationalism and international unity is the indestructible life-giving principle of international communism.

But at the same time we must, in all humility, warn our Chinese comrades, at the same time as we honour their revolutionary achievement and pledge our unswerving solidarity and support to them against every attack of imperialism, that language of wild and irresponsible slander of the Soviet Union as betraying socialism, or of veteran honoured working class fighters like Maurice Thorez as a robot jumping at the command of the marshal's baton of orders from Moscow—language hitherto only found in the lowest gutter anti-communist press—will not assist the presentation of their case, but will only close the ranks of the entire international communist movement like a rock against such a presentation, and against any attempt at factionalism based on such

a presentation.

Meanwhile within our Party it is necessary for our members to reach a full and clear understanding of the issues in discussions in the Party on the basis of our January 12 Executive Committee Statement and our 28th National Congress Resolutions, and in the schools and study groups on the basis of the syllabus *Communism and the World Today*; to resist all attempts at factionalism, and refuse to allow our party to be divided, or the splendid growth of these recent years to be destroyed, by the impact of this phase of problems and differences arising within the international communist movement; and to carry forward our urgent tasks in Britain for the further advance and strength of the party and of the whole working class movement and peace movement.

We reaffirm our confidence that, despite the sharpness of the present differences and the obvious calculations of the enemy to exploit a rift or openly express the aim of isolating China, the deep underlying unity and friendship of the Soviet and Chinese peoples and all socialist peoples will prevail and prove indestructible. We are confident that the unity of the international communist movement, which has known difficult times before and emerged the stronger, and which is the most precious treasure of mankind to ensure the advance to the victory of peace and the future of communist society, will in the end, whatever the passing tempests and ordeals we may still have to pass through, prevail and be restored and strengthened and go forward to new triumphs. We pledge all the efforts of our party to serve these aims.