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(Editorial Note: This is the pilot issue of a theoretical journal which will be published by the RCLB up to its 2nd Congress in summer, 1981. It is aimed first of all at the RCLB and its contacts, but there is also a range of anti-imperialist, progressive and revolutionary people who we also hope to reach. It will mainly be geared to dealing with questions raised by the programmatic work of the League and its mass work, and will publish articles which will be part of a process of discussion and summing up leading up to the Congress. Different opinions on many issues will therefore be published on the journal's pages; all we stipulate is that the articles should not breach the League's security or be abusive.

There will be a charge for each issue to cover its cost.

The two articles in this pilot issue deal with major questions of the struggle in Britain and the world. We would welcome readers to take up the questions they raise.

This theoretical journal is an interim publication; after the 2nd Congress, a new one will be launched to replace "Revolution.")

THE ROOTS OF RESISTANCE

AN EXAMINATION OF THE OPPRESSION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN BRITAIN

The sun has been setting over the British Empire for more than 40 years now, and though there are still some scattered remnants of Empire, like Ireland, Hong Kong, Belize and Antigua, where the descendants of Clive and Rhodes still rule, hundreds of millions of people once subjected to British colonial rule have freed themselves from that particular domination. In the main, they have exchanged one form of domination for another. Together with the rest of the Third World they are fighting for freedom from the two superpowers. And British imperialism's indirect economic control hangs on wherever it can, scrambling among the other lesser imperialist powers, like Germany, Japan and France, for a foothold.

The spoils of plundering the colonies no longer flow in abundance into the coffers of the British imperialist rulers. With the crumbling of empire the economy inside Britain is also in a state of decay. Industry is collapsing, the welfare state is being dismantled, and the queues of the unemployed are steadily mounting towards three million. The character of decaying imperialism is reflected still more starkly inside Britain, in the situation of some two million minority people, mainly from the ex-colonies, living here. The oppression of these people, the increasing threat to their existence in Britain, in the form of deportations, restrictions on immigration and citizenship and the development towards statutory repatriation, cannot be understood except in the context of Britain's fall from imperialist dominance.

These minority people are generally described simply as the black people in Britain, but such a description fails to approach the complexity of concrete conditions. If we are to have a starting point for investigation and analysis, we must attempt to describe reality as closely as possible, while recognising that this will still only be an approximate and general description, the full details of which can only be filled in when a rich practice provides a rich store of knowledge.

A PEP report of 1977 states that census estimates "show, in round figures, that in 1971 there were 1.3 million non-white people in Britain originating from the New Commonwealth countries (but not necessarily born there); they accounted for 2½ per cent of the total population. Immigration statistics show that by 1974 this figure had risen to 1.6 million, or 2.9 per cent of the total population." (Daniel, Racial Discrimination in England, Penguin) We can safely assume a figure of at least 2 million people in this "New Commonwealth" category today. But this category excludes some important minorities, such as the people from Britain's oldest colony, Ireland, people from countries which were never British colonies, and people who are essentially migrant workers, that is who have come to work on a short-term basis with no intention to settle down. This examination cannot fully take into account all these minorities, particularly the last one.

We can, however describe a central process whereby people have come to live and work in Britain mainly from the ex-colonies of British imperialism. The earliest settlers were the Irish. Thousands of Irish men and women came to Britain in the nineteenth century. Many settled, and in subsequent years the immigration and settlement has continued, so that today, especially in the larger cities of Britain, there are large Irish communities. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the settlement of thousands of people from Eastern and Southern Europe. Around the same time the first settlers came from the new colonies; communities of Chinese and Africans, in particular, grew in the major ports, like London, Liverpool and Cardiff. The latest stage began in the 1950s. Large numbers of people started to come and settle, mainly from the now-independent ex-colonies of the Third World; from the Caribbean (especially Jamaica, Barbados and the smaller islands like St Kitts), from the South Asian sub-continent (at first directly from India, Pakistan, Kashmir and Bangladesh, later indirectly from the Asian peoples who had emigrated to East African countries), from African countries, from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, from Malta and Cyprus. It is in this latest stage that the two million "New Commonwealth" citizens, or their parents, have come. And it is

against them, primarily, that the present increasingly repressive policies of decaying imperialism are aimed. It is in their situation, and that of the Irish, that the reflection of the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the Third World against imperialism and the two superpowers can be seen in Britain itself.

It is misleading to characterise the oppression of these minorities in Britain in a simplistic way. Two such oversimplifications have to be refuted. One is to say that they are migrant workers, suffering the same exploitation and oppression as migrant workers in Germany, Switzerland and other West European imperialist countries. The similarities are strong, but, whatever may be the intentions of the British state in future, the present situation is that people from the ex-colonies in Britain have a legal right to settle, deriving from Britain's imperialist history, whereas the "guest-workers" of Germany and elsewhere in Europe can be legally forced to leave as soon as the need for their labour-power ceases. Britain, like France, has used its old colonising relationship to fill its needs for labour-power, and has imported that relationship into Britain. The second oversimplification is to say that the issue is one of racism, that the minorities in Britain are exploited and oppressed because of racial differences from the majority, white, population. This argument must be examined in greater detail later, because it contains part of the truth. It suffices here to point out its two main inadequacies. It fails to explain the specific connexion between Britain's colonial past on the one hand and the settlement and oppression of people from the ex-colonies on the other. And it does not take account of the fact that oppression must derive from an objective, material, basis, rather from an ideological phenomenon, such as racism.

As a preliminary to analysis, certain propositions can be set out which describe the concrete situation of the minority peoples in Britain:

1. They are all from oppressed nations, mainly from Third World countries once direct colonies of the British Empire.
2. They left their original homelands because the plunder and pauperisation of those countries by British imperialism made it impossible to make a living there.
3. They suffer from a special oppression here, different from that of the majority population, and this oppression stems from the British imperialist ruling class and their state.
4. They meet antagonism from the majority population. This antagonism is mainly formulated in terms of so-called racial differences, particularly skin-colour.
5. This antagonism is created and promoted by the imperialist ruling class, and results in a division of the working class and working people.
6. Their special oppression is increasingly playing a part in a general development of state repression and fascist tendencies in Britain.

These propositions go some way towards showing the link between imperialism, the settlement and special oppression of the minority peoples in Britain, and the ideology of racism. But they also throw up certain questions which require deeper analysis. What is the specific nature of this oppression? How can this oppression be fought? How can the fight against this oppression be linked with the struggle of the whole working class for the revolutionary overthrow of the British imperialist ruling class?

NATIONAL OPPRESSION OR "RACIAL" OPPRESSION?

The historical development of the oppression of these minorities orientates Marxists to consider its relationship to the national question. The ex-colonies from which these minorities came were oppressed as nations by imperialism. Colonial domination of, for instance, India, Jamaica or Zimbawe, was the historical phenomenon of a stronger nation oppressing weaker nations, denying them the right to self-determination as nations, preventing their development of national economies, national political institutions, even national cultures and languages. Imperialism controlled their raw materials, land and labour power. Any development of their markets, of capitalist relations in industry or agriculture that took place was either directly or indirectly under imperialist control, to serve the interests

of the oppressor nation, not the oppressed. When it suited Britain in earlier years to transport Indian workers to Africa or Chinese workers to Malaya, this was due to the oppressor nation's control over the labour-power of the oppressed nations. It was a continuation of this control when Britain brought Irish workers to Britain in the 19th century and workers from the Caribbean and South Asia in the twentieth century.

These minorities have been separated from their homelands, from their original nations, by imperialism. And imperialism, in continuing to oppress them in Britain, continues their national oppression in a different form. Imperialism acts as capitalism did in Russia in the past, when the situation occurred which Stalin described: "the persons constituting a nation do not always live in one compact mass; they are frequently divided into groups, and in that form are interspersed among foreign national organisms. It is capitalism which drives them into other regions and cities in search of a livelihood. But when they enter foreign national territories and there form minorities these groups are made to suffer by the local national majorities in the way of limitations on their languages, schools etc." (Marxism and the National Question, 1913, Works 2, p. 334).

To characterise these minorities as national minorities, and to infer that the oppression they suffer is national oppression is not to deny the existence of the phenomenon of racism. On the contrary, racism can be explained as deriving from a material, rather than a metaphysical, basis. Racism is an ideology conforming to the needs of a particular ruling class in a particular stage of society; imperialism. While racist ideology may share some characteristics in common with the tendency of all social groups to to demarcate themselves from their neighbours and to create artificial differences based on ideological stereotypes, racism is distinct from these. It is a specific ideology arising in a specific historical period. Before imperialism there was no need to develop a theory of "races" of mankind, among which one, the "white race", was seen as superior to the others, the "black" or "non-white races". But imperialism had to develop such a theory to explain and justify its subjugation of the other nations of the world.

It is dubious whether there is any meaningful, let alone useful, biological concept of "race". The period of the creation of classifications of mankind on the basis of greater or lesser degrees of physical resemblance in certain respects, such as skin-colour, facial appearance, type of hair, etc., was the period of the rise of imperialist domination. "Racial" typologies are conceptually inseparable from the notion of the superiority and inferiority of races. Much of the work of early physical anthropologists was devoted to measuring physical characteristics in a way which they postulated could provide evidence for this or that theory of a connexion between differences in physiognomy and hypothetical differences in intelligence. Such efforts can now be seen as ludicrous, although they have their modern counterparts in the writings of Eysenck, Jensen etc. (By comparison, differences and similarities in languages, and the division of languages into groups, are the subject of meaningful and useful scientific study. But there is no question of any hierarchy of higher and lower among languages)

Whereas the concept of race is essentially an ideological fiction, calculated to provide a justification for the domination of some nations over others, the concept of nation is based on real social phenomena. Nation-formation is a historical process, involving the development of certain real social characteristics—language, culture, economy, psychological make-up based on common history—within a given territory. And whereas the superiority and inferiority of "races" is a myth, the domination and subordination of nations in the era of imperialism is historical fact. Racism, a system of false ideas producing feelings of superiority and hatred, is calculated to cover up the reality of national oppression.

"The overwhelming, stifling factor of race, the doctrine of inherent Black inferiority perpetuated by ruling class ideologues, has sunk deep into the thinking of Americans. It has become endemic, permeating the entire structure of US life. Given this, the Blacks could only remain permanently unabsorbed in the new world's 'melting pot'.

"The race factor has also left its stigma on the consciousness of the

Black nation, creating a powerful mystification about Black Americans which has served to obscure their objective status as an oppressed nation. It has twisted the direction of the Afro-American liberation movement and scarred it while still in its embryonic state," (Haywood, Black Bolshevik, p 233).

So writes Harry Haywood, a leading Marxist thinker from the Afro-American nation. Ideas that distinct "races" exist as objective categories and that oppression can be explained as "racial" oppression are themselves mythical ideas derived from the ideology of racism itself. Racist ideas exist, and they must be understood because they make national oppression more vicious at the same time as obscuring its true nature. Haywood says elsewhere; "racism is just a smokescreen to cover up national oppression and the exploitation of the entire working class." (Class Struggle, Journal of the CPMLUS, Winter 1979, quoted on p.80.)

IS THERE A BLACK NATION IN BRITAIN ?

These quotations from Haywood raise the issue of the Black nation in the USA. The scientifically analysed, tried and tested, Marxist thesis that the Black people in the Black Belt area of the Southern states in the USA constitute a nation, with the right to self-determination, up to and including separation, was first put forward by Lenin. After intense struggle, it was accepted by the CPUSA in the 20s, and was put into practice with great success in guiding the class struggle in the USA. Although the revisionist CPUSA of today has dropped it, it is still the line of genuine Communist organisations in America, such as the CPMLUS and the League of Revolutionary Struggle (ML). It is an analysis based on the specific conditions of the origins and development of the Black people in the USA.

In Britain today it is necessary to develop an analysis which conforms to the specific conditions of the national minority people here. Nothing could be more absurd than to assert that there are two nations in Britain, a black nation and a white nation. And yet a position remarkably similar to this has recently been put forward by a group of organisations calling for the foundation of an "Afro-Asian-Caribbean Organisation in Britain". The position is put forward in a rather tentative and qualified manner, but its general direction requires assessment nonetheless. The group says: "In the last few years, the political processes at work in this country (which have been, in the main, hostile to ethnic minority people) have increasingly identified, isolated and exploited the people from the Caribbean, Asia and Africa to such a degree that we now virtually face a two nation situation in Britain: one comprising the majority, i.e. indigenous whites, and the other a loose conglomeration of people originating from the Caribbean, Asia and Africa.... These negative and hostile political activities have forced the predictable separate 'National' identity among our people..." (Emphasis mine. For full text see quoted in Balkar, June 1980.)

If a nation of the people from the Caribbean, Asia and Africa really existed in Britain, such a nation would have the right to self-determination, including the right to separation. A cursory glance at the factors of territory and economy shows that this is unrealistic. Although there are areas of concentration of the national minorities in Britain, mainly in the industrial towns and cities, there is no area larger than a few square miles in which these minorities, either together or separately, make up the majority of the population or have done historically. Secession is inconceivable without a home territory. And although there are a few businesses, banks and shops owned by national minority people, there is no basis for a common economic system, separate from the overall economy dominated by the British monopoly capitalist class, nor has there ever been the historical potential of this.

Then there is the fact that these minorities are from different nations. It is not perhaps beyond the bounds of possibility that all these minorities could, at some stage in the remote future, assimilate together into a common national culture and psychological make-up. But that is the realm of science fiction, not of the real world today. There are national differences between all these minorities, just as there are between them and the national majority. They are Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Kashniris, Jamaicans, Barbadians, Ghanaians, Nigerians, Chinese, Maltese etc. Between the countries

of origin of these minorities there are many thousands of miles in many cases, and there are differences in culture, language and psychological make-up as great as those between any nations of the world. What they have in common is their historical and modern oppression by British imperialism. To share a common enemy is an excellent basis for unity against national oppression, but it is far from being the basis for nationhood.

On the other side to characterise the majority nation as "indigenous whites" shows a marked lack of sensitivity to the national question and of awareness of potential allies. The Irish are white, but if they are not seen as indigenous, they are ignored altogether. If they are seen as indigenous, they are lumped together with the majority nation, despite their national oppression in Britain and their common history with the people of Third World countries in the continuing struggle against British imperialism. And the "indigenous whites" must be taken to include the Scots and the Welsh along with the English. So Scotland and Wales, the only real oppressed nations in Britain, which have the characteristics of nations and the right to self-determination, including the right to separation, are ignored, while a spurious nation is created by wishful thinking. To fight national oppression effectively, it is necessary for all the nationally oppressed, nations and national minorities, to unite, not to cut themselves off from one another.

This "Black nation" position also fails to make any analysis of the "indigenous whites" in terms of class. Thus it does nothing to point the way forward for achieving an end to national oppression. For the enemy of the oppressed nationalities in Britain is the British imperialist ruling class. This is also the enemy of the whole working class in Britain. The working class can never free itself from its exploitation without the overthrow of national oppression. And national oppression can never be ended without the emancipation of the working class. Both require the destruction of the rule of the imperialist class. This is a point to which we must return.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IS RELATED TO ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There are then national minorities, which are not nations, but which are nationally oppressed within Britain. Exactly which are these national minorities cannot be precisely determined without due investigation, but most clearly among them are the minorities from the Third World ex-colonies and existing colonies (such as Hong Kong) and the Irish minority. The ruling class of Britain, inasmuch as they admit the existence of these minorities at all, regard them as "racial" or "ethnic" minorities. (The term "ethnic" is derived from the Greek word "ethnos", meaning Nation. But "ethnic" is not used in this sense. The dictionary definition is "pertaining to race", and this is the sense in which it is used today, particularly by liberals who imagine it avoids the pejorative connotation of the word "racial"). While the objective policy of the ruling class and the state is to oppress these minorities, a liberal facade has also been adopted towards them, embodied in Race Relations legislation and institutions like the Community Relations Councils and Commission for Racial Equality. These "liberal" policies are principally aimed at absorbing the national minorities into the British population. This is to ignore objective facts and the real contradictions, in the hope that they will gradually disappear.

A Marxist position must be to fight against all national oppression and for the rights of national minorities. But there is confusion on the national question among Marxists, which leads to a conclusion of the need to advocate and fight for the assimilation of national minorities into the majority nation, a view remarkably similar to the Bourgeois Liberal view. This view is expressed in an article in Lalkar (June 1980). It must be dealt with at some length, because it distorts the essence of Lenin's and Stalin's position on the national question, and diverts the struggle against the oppression of national minorities into a bourgeois backwater. The article begins by making an essentially correct, if somewhat mechanical, repudiation of the "Black nation" position dealt with above. It then manages to deny the progressive nature of the struggle of oppressed nationalities (nations and national minorities) against imperialism, in the

course of arguing the "inevitability of the assimilation of the black population.

The article achieves this distortion of reality by neglecting that Marxism is a developing science, which thinkers like Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong have advanced by applying its basic principles and methods to concrete reality and concrete practice in a changing world. The national question is one of the most complex phenomena in the world, and solutions to any particular national problem cannot be found by applying a formula instead of analysing concrete conditions. One of the greatest changes in the line up of opposing class forces in the world occurred in 1917, with the October revolution, and this change significantly developed Leninist theory on the national question. Yet the Lalkar article relies exclusively on three articles, all written before 1917- Stalin's "Marxism and the National Question" (1912), and Lenin's "Critical Remarks on the National Question" (1913) and "Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914). These are extremely important works of historical materialism, but they have to be read in the context of the specific questions with which they deal and the specific stage at which they were written.

The importance of this can be seen from the later works of Stalin himself, in which he refers to these earlier writings. In the Foundations of Leninism (1924), Chapter VI, Stalin quotes from Lenin's CRNQ. "Developing capitalism," says Lenin, "knows two historical tendencies in the national question. First: the awakening of national life and national movements, struggle against all national oppression, creation of nation states. Second: development and acceleration of all kinds of intercourse between nations, breakdown of national barriers, creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science etc.

"Both tendencies are a world-wide law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterises mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society."

This refers to developing capitalism. But Stalin looks at it in the context of imperialism, which is the moribund and parasitic stage of capitalism. He writes: "For imperialism these two tendencies represent irrenoncilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the 'integral whole'; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of annexations and colonial conquest, without which imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

"For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are but two sides of a single cause- the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism; because communism knows that the union of peoples in a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that the road to the formation of a voluntary union of peoples lies through the separation of the colonies from the 'integral' imperialist 'whole', through the transformation of the colonies into independent states." (Peking edition, pp 78-79.)

Thus it is no longer just a question of capitalism at the beginning of its development knowing the tendency of "awakening of national life and national movements, struggle against all national oppression, creation of nation states", and mature capitalism being characterised by "development and acceleration of all kinds of intercourse between nations, breakdown of national barriers," etc. For imperialism the two tendencies are in contradiction. Imperialism can only break down national barriers by force, by national oppression. But for communism, the deadly enemy of imperialism, they are not in contradiction. For communism fights for the liberation of oppressed nations, which alone can provide the basis for the eventual voluntary union of free peoples.

And communism fights for the abolition of all national oppression, which it can only achieve by the socialist revolution. Under socialism the emphasis must be on promoting the development of nations and national cultures, as Stalin makes clear in his article, "The National Question and Leninism" (1929), in which he talks of "the awakening to life of hitherto unknown or little known nationalities" (Works 11, p 359), and describes the socialist state as one where "nations and national minorities may be equal and develop freely" (ibid, p 354). In that article, Stalin is educating comrades who think that the victory of socialism in one country should entail "the disappearance of national differences and national languages, the amalgamation of nations and the formation of one common language." (ibid, p 356). He points out that they fail to see "that the national question is not always of one and the same character, that the character and the aims of the national movement vary with the different periods in the development of the revolution." (ibid, p 365). He points out that the policy of the Russian Marxists was different in two historical periods. In the period before the first World War, when CRNQ and MNQ were written, the national question was linked with the democratic revolution in Russia. "Our Party held that the overthrow of tsarism, the abolition of the relics of feudalism, and the complete democratisation of the country provided the best solution of the national question that was possible within the framework of

capitalism."(ibid,p 366).But in the period of the first World War,"when the united front of the working class of the advanced capitalist countries and of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and dependent countries began to be a real force,when,consequently,the socialist revolution became the question of the moment,the Russian Marxists could no longer content themselves with the policy of the preceding period,and they found it necessary to link the solution of the national and colonial question with the fate of the socialist revolution."(ibid,p 367).

This article of Stalin's demonstrates the strength of Marxist theory on the national question its ability to relate to changing concrete conditions,and the error of taking in isolation an analysis based on a particular period of the revolutionary struggle and applying it blindly to very different concrete conditions in a different stage.But this is what the Lalkar article does.

It takes Stalin's thesis in MNQ,that "a nation is a historical category belonging to a definite epoch,the epoch of rising capitalism",and applies it dogmatically to the events in the whole world in the present period.It states:"What took place in the Western Europe earlier (roughly between 1789 and 1871) took place in Eastern Europe and Asia,where capitalism was later in developing,a century later,i.e. from the turn of the 20th century...The same process is taking place under our very eyes in Africa today,where various politically strong peoples and tribes have taken upon themselves the task of amalgamating various peoples and welding them into nations...And in this process of nation-formation the bourgeoisie everywhere plays the leading role."(Lalkar,p 8,col 1).The article then quotes Lenin's outline in RNSD of how the rising bourgeoisie forges a nation state,and comments:"These then are the historical and economic conditions of the national movements and of the formation of nations."(ibid).

In Western Europe,when the bourgeoisie triumphed over feudalism,they did play the leading role in national movements and in nation-formation.But the world has changed since then.Imperialism has developed.And the oppressed nations have struggled and are struggling today to form nation states in the teeth of imperialism's denial of their right to national independence.The imperialists,and particularly the two superpowers,prevent the successful completion of the national democratic revolution in Asia and Africa.In Africa the boundaries within which the national movements are taking place have little or nothing to do with "tribes",everything to do with imperialism's carving up of Africa.And the successful national democratic revolutions in the 3rd World are not led by the bourgeoisie,even by the national bourgeoisie as opposed to the compradors,but by the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry and the national bourgeoisie.

ASSIMILATION IS IRRELEVANT

This absence of any attention to imperialism runs throughout the article.It naturally affects the analysis of Britain.In Britain,the article says,the process of nation-formation was settled long ago (the Scots and the Welsh might not agree) and subsequently Britain has"absorbed literally millions of alien people."The black population is sooner or later bound to be assimilated and form part of the British nation" in the same way."This is in conformity with the historical laws of the development of capitalism."There follows the quotation from Lenin's MNQ cited above (p 6).

The absence of attention to imperialism begins to strike home already.Britain today is regarded in exactly the same light as Lenin regarded the backward Russian capitalism,emerging from feudalism,in 1913.British capitalism is regarded as a progressive force,progressive as far as its attitude to national minorities anyway,and there is a touching faith in its ability to produce a happy accord between all the nationalities in the country,provided they are prepared to be fused into one.

The article proceeds to use quotations from MNQ to illustrate the assimilating tendency of capitalism.Capitalism draws the peasantry into the towns.For highly developed countries,the people of non-industrialised countries act as the peasantry,and they are drawn into those industrialised countries.Comparison is made with the Jews in Russia and their assimilation."The example of the Jews is a very instructive one for our purposes.What is true of the Jews living in Europe,America etc, is also true of the black people living in Britain,in Western Europe and America.And nowhere in these countries do the black people constitute a separate nation."(It might have been wiser to leave the question of America to be decided by American Communists!)"The black people living in these areas constitute national minorities (not nations) within integral regions of compact majorities of other nationalities (which are nations)." Here follows a passage pointing out that as national minorities,their existence as nations is undermined and they are put on the road to assimilation.This passage is taken,word for word, from Stalin's MNQ,except that where Stalin writes "the Jews" the article substitutes "the black people".While noting,with Stalin,that the objective process of assimilation gives rise to a demand for a guarantee against assimilation,the article then states,as Stalin does not,that far from fighting for such a guarantee,we should fight against all factors which retard this objectively inevitable assimilation,"namely discrimination and violence directed against black

people. We should fight against all privileges of any nation, against all exceptionalism, against all inequality of languages and against all violence and discrimination against any national minority. We should fight for the equality of rights of all the people of various national minorities. However this can only be achieved in the course of the struggle for greater democracy, and of course, in the struggle for socialism. "It cannot, according to the article, be achieved "by clamouring in a reactionary fashion against assimilation."

The article is wrong to say the example of the Jews is a particularly instructive one. The Jews in Russia were not drawn there by imperialism, nor did they live in a decadent imperialist state, nor did they come from an existing nation elsewhere. The question of national minorities in Britain is intimately linked with the question of imperialism. And the question that confronts national minorities in Britain is their oppression by the imperialist state. Instead of dealing with this question the article emphasises their absorption into the majority nationality. It raises the struggle against aspects of their oppression, not to attack that oppression, but as a means to facilitate their assimilation and the destruction of their national identity and their characteristics as a national minority. It talks of the "equality of rights of all the people of the various national minorities." This formulation makes it a question, not of the equality of the national minority, as such, with the national majority, but of the individual rights of individual persons. National minorities are oppressed as a whole, and they need equality as a whole.

Now the article turns its fire on any opponents of the "assimilation is inevitable" thesis. It quotes Lenin's attack on the Jewish "Bundists" from CRNQ. Lenin there stated that the tendency of capitalism to effect the assimilation of nations "is one of the greatest forces transforming capitalism into socialism." Later Lenin talked about how New York, in the period 1891-1900, ground up national distinctions, and of how there is, in the process of capitalist assimilation, "immense historical progress, the breakdown of the national bigotry of the backwoods- especially in backward countries like Russia."

Here it is appropriate to recall Stalin's warning in 1929, in NQL, that the national question in the era of the struggle for democracy in backward Russia is not the same as in the era of imperialism and the socialist revolution. There is a difference between developing capitalism, in backward Russia or in America emerging from being a colony itself, and the moribund stage of imperialism, when capitalism has divested itself of any progressive tendency and can bring nations together only by violence and national oppression. And as for America, leaving aside the arrogant denial of the existence of the Black nation in America, it should be clear to anybody who has even read about the USA that racism and the intensity of national oppression has made it impossible for the Blacks, as well as Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Chinese and Japanese Americans, to assimilate, even over centuries.

The article totally distorts the question of assimilation. Lenin praised it at a certain stage in the struggle for democratic rights in backward Russia, but even here he did not argue that Communists should fight for it. Stalin's remarks in "Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East" (1925) give a more balanced picture. "Undoubtedly some nationalities may, and perhaps certainly will, undergo a process of assimilation. Such processes have taken place before. The point is, however, that the process of assimilation of some nationalities does not exclude, but presupposes the opposite process of the strengthening and further development of quite a number of existing and developing nations; for the partial process of assimilation of individual nationalities is the result of the general process of the development of nations." (Works 7, p 142). Stalin writes of a possibility of assimilation, of the partial process of assimilation of some nationalities. That is entirely different from saying that the assimilation of all national minorities is inevitable. And it is entirely different from actively supporting assimilation, from whatever altruistic motives, when the people of national minorities are fighting national oppression and assimilation is one of the weapons being used against them by the imperialist ruling class and its state.

The culmination of the article is an attack on the slogan of national culture. It poses two alternatives: "the international culture of democracy and of the world working class movement", or "narrow nationalism". In India, it says, different peoples came into each others' areas to work, and through the development of capitalist productive forces Biharis became Punjabis and Punjabis Biharis and so on. In Britain, it says, once there was feudal culture, now there is capitalist culture, one day there will be socialist culture.

And British culture is also changing because people with different cultural backgrounds intermingle, are assimilated and impart richness to the culture. The black people will also add to this richness. The article gives two examples of this. First, the British diet has become spicier. Second, the British democratic and working class culture will be enhanced "through struggle against racial and national oppression, through their struggle against exploitation and their support for proletarian and liberation movements all over the world."

But the slogan of national culture is "bourgeois (and often also a Black-hundred and clerical deception," says the article, quoting CRNQ again. Just as British proletarians cannot accept the slogan of national British culture, so the black people cannot adopt bourgeois-national slogans like the slogan of national culture. If they do, they become like the Jews in Russia again, whom Lenin (in the context of struggling against the Bundists) called enemies of the proletariat if they put forward the slogan of Jewish national culture. And, apparently thinking it is driving this point home, the article points to the rise of Zionism and its use by imperialism to oppress the Palestinian and Arab peoples.

This passage entirely distorts the role of culture in the struggle against national and class oppression. On the one hand there is a narrow economic determinism. The growth of capitalist forces makes Punjabis Biharis and Biharis Punjabis, the development of capitalism makes British culture capitalist instead of feudal. Although the article refers abstractly to democratic and working class culture, it says nothing about where this culture comes from. It cannot, because it does not mention class struggle, which is the element which actively shapes the proletarian element in culture even under imperialism.

Mixed with this determinism is idealism. How do the different nationalities contribute to culture in a concrete way? Bourgeois culture in Britain is not being enriched by national minority cultures, on the contrary the bourgeoisie are destroying those cultures. The contribution to proletarian culture by the national minorities comes from their struggle against national oppression, not their total or partial assimilation. National minority workers today fight most steadfastly against the exploitation and oppression of the whole working class, and they also fight their national oppression, virtually alone, despite the contribution that struggle makes to the cause of the whole working class. To weld together class and national struggles requires a conscious Marxist line and practice. But the article assumes that they will fuse automatically, in the course of the capitalist assimilation of the national minorities. This is wishful thinking, at best, and worst it plays into the hands of big nation chauvinism.

The ludicrous innuendo that the national minorities in Britain may set up an Israel to attack Third World peoples should be mercifully ignored. But two implications of the argument about national culture cannot be ignored. For it implies that the main enemy of the black people in Britain is the black bourgeoisie in Britain, and not British imperialism (which, incidentally, also oppresses black non-proletarians in Britain). Secondly, it puts on the same level the attitude of a British worker to "British" national culture, which is that of the dominant imperialist ruling class, and that of a national minority worker to the culture of his or her nationality, which is under attack by imperialism.

Compare the attitude of Stalin in NQL. After the October revolution had abolished national oppression, and established the equality of nations in the Soviet Union, there existed not the old bourgeois nations, but new socialist nations. And the conditions were created for the renaissance and flourishing of the formerly oppressed nations. The Party's policy was "to help the regenerated nations of our country to rise to their feet, to their full stature, to revive and develop their national cultures, widely to develop schools, theatres and other cultural institutions functioning in the native languages, to nationalise - that is to staff with members of the given nation - the Party, trade union, co-operative, state and economic organs..." (p 369). And although Stalin here refers specifically to nations, his article also refers to national minorities in the same spirit. On p 354 he says that one of the aspects of the existence of new socialist nations is "abolition of the relics of national oppression in order that the nations and national minorities may be equal and develop freely." And although Stalin is here talking about the position of nations and national minorities after the socialist revolution, it is scarcely conceivable that Communists could work to destroy national culture and assimilate national minorities up to the socialist revolution, only to turn round after the revolution and promote the renaissance of the nationalities and the flourishing of the national cultures which they have previously attempted to eliminate! The Lalkar article's view that internationalism can only develop by destruction of national identities is fatally mechanical. The only way to nourish friendly relations between nationalities and genuine mutual co-operation is for the working class to unite with the oppressed nationalities in their struggle for their national survival and their cultures.

The general theme of the Lalkar article is that the problem of national oppression and the fight for the equality of national minorities will be resolved under the present class rule, the rule of imperialism. Where it mentions the link between the struggle against national oppression and the struggle for socialism, this is brought in as if it were an afterthought. This is not surprising for an article based, not on concrete conditions in imperialist Britain, but on abstract theory, and particularly on quotations torn from context from works written at a stage when the democratic struggle was the main task. Thus its main solution, assimilation, is seen as a process taking place under capitalism. And where it puts forward a concrete solution for the equality of national minorities (in a footnote on page 10), it is calling for legislation by the imperialist

state to outlaw discrimination. Although it qualifies this demand by saying that to get such legislation passed will not be an "easy affair", it still displays a touching faith in the imperialist state. In the present era the abolition of national oppression requires the overthrow of the imperialist state, and under socialism it will be necessary for a long time to promote the interests of oppressed nationalities as a conscious and active policy.

This brief examination of the Marxist method of analysis of the national question can be summed up in three main points. National oppression cannot be abolished through democratisation within the framework of capitalism, but only through the proletarian revolution, which overthrew the imperialist state. The task of Communists is not to fight for assimilation under capitalism but to wage an unqualified and determined struggle against national oppression. And it is wrong to mount an attack on all slogans of national culture raised by oppressed nationalities, rather than to fight for the conditions in which national cultures can develop freely under socialism.

THE RIGHT OF NATIONAL MINORITIES TO FREE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Lalkar article is correct to refer to the black people in Britain as national minorities. There are other national minorities in Britain, in particular the Irish, and also settled communities from Continental Europe. The Scots and the Welsh are national minorities within England. And the term "black" is not necessarily appropriate to describe all Third World national minorities, for instance the Chinese. It is up to the national minorities themselves to decide whether they wish to use the term to convey the unity of all those who suffer racism, but it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that there are specific and distinct national minorities.

Stalin rightly points out that some nationalities may be assimilated, but it is a concrete question in any society whether such assimilation is partial, temporary and relative. Perhaps the descendants of Continental European immigrants to Britain in the 19th century have been assimilated. If this has happened, or is happening, that may be well and good. But in terms of fighting the oppression of national minorities the question of whether or not they may assimilate in the future is irrelevant. In the case of black national minorities, racism so intensifies their national oppression and exacerbates the contradictions between them and the national majority that assimilation is made highly unlikely.

In any country the particular solution to the problem of how to struggle against national oppression must be a concrete one related to specific conditions. But the theoretical analysis that Marxism has made does provide the guidance of general principles. In 1921 the CPSU guaranteed the right of free national development to national minorities in the Soviet Union. (Resolution Adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 1921, quoted in edition of *The National Question and Leninism*, Mass Publications, Calcutta, 1976, p. 37). This is distinct from the right of a nation to self-determination, up to and including secession. That right would neither be in the interests of a national minority, nor practical. But the right to free national development means positive rights for national minorities - such as the right to develop their own cultures and languages, the right to achieve equality by obtaining greater rights in some areas than the national majority (by some kind of "affirmative action" on jobs, education, housing etc.). It is also a right of a nationality as a whole, not merely the democratic rights of individuals of that nationality. To fight for such a right is not merely to react against oppression, whether this takes the form of state violence, discrimination, or destruction of language and culture. It is to go on the offensive, to fight for the positive right of a national minority to national identity, not just its freedom from persecution.

Marxists have generally linked such a right to some territorial component, to some form of regional or local autonomy. It is difficult to see how such a right can be guaranteed without some such territorial rights. In the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, autonomy in given regions, areas and localities, with varying degrees of power, was granted to the different nationalities. In the People's Republic of China, regional autonomy for the formerly oppressed nationalities is guaranteed. The programme of the Workers' Communist Party (ML) of Canada demands autonomy in areas of concentration for national minorities, including the Chinese-Canadians and Black Canadians, as does the programme of the Communist Party (ML) of the United States for national minorities, such as the Asian-Americans. Such comparisons must be taken seriously, but British Communists must put forward a policy which accords with conditions in Britain.

The national minorities have been driven to Britain by the degradation of their homelands in the past mainly by British colonialism, and the continuing exploitation and oppression of those countries today by neo-colonial means, by many imperialisms including British imperialism. In a world situation where the Third World countries and peoples are the main force fighting the two superpowers, as well as all imperialism, and are the force driving the world forward historically, the minorities from those Third World countries living in Britain are a concrete link between the British working class and the struggles of the Third World. It is the national minorities who take up most consistently the struggles of the Third World, whether it is the fight

against superpower meddling, imperialist domination, and imperialist-backed internal reaction in their own countries of origin, or the struggle for national independence in countries like Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Iran. The struggle against national oppression in Britain is intimately linked with the struggle against British imperialism abroad, whether in Ireland, Malaysia or Southern Africa, and with the struggle of the Third World in general, for national independence, a new economic order, and against the superpower policies of hegemonism and war.

Within Britain the national minorities have come to play an integral part in the British economy, and have been integrated into the class structure in Britain. Black workers, for instance, are part of the working class in Britain, even though they are generally a super-exploited section of the class; they are not merely some temporary addition to it. But while they have been in general integrated into the social relations of production in the British class-structure, still they remain separate, and this is evidenced by the close social and cultural interrelations within the minority communities and the comparative distance in their relations with the majority community. This contradiction is the result of national oppression.

National minorities fight for the right to stay in Britain. They do this in the face of state policies which increasingly deport them and refuse them entry, threaten their civil rights and move closer to statutory repatriation. Communists must fight for the right of national minorities to stay, and against all immigration laws, not because an attack on them is an attack on democratic rights in general, and accelerates the general growth of repression in Britain (which it does), but on the grounds of their specific superexploitation and oppression by British imperialism, and of the superexploitation and oppression of the nations from which they came.

SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC STRUGGLES IS THE BASIS FOR UNITY

The national minority peoples fall into national groupings—Indian, Bangladeshi, Jamaican etc.—which have certain characteristics. They are multi-class groupings, although the working class among them are dominant in numbers. They have common cultures, frequently common languages distinct from that of the majority nationality, often distinct religions, systems of kinship and marriage etc. They have common psychological make-up, derived from a common history. They tend to live in fairly compact communities in particular cities. They come from nations which exist in their full integrity in the world today (unlike the Jewish people). They can be defined as historically part of those nations, separated from them by imperialism, and become national minorities within a different nation. They share with the nations from which they have come a common struggle against national oppression, although this takes a different form in the imperialist heartland and the national homelands.

The specific national minorities organise their resistance most commonly along national lines. Thus they become involved with the struggles of their countries of origin. For instance, progressive sections of the Indian national minority organised opposition against the State of Emergency in India, and there has been consistent mobilisation of thousands of Indians in Britain in support of the struggle for a people's democratic India. Kashmiris in Britain fight for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri nation. The struggle against British imperialism in Ireland and the occupation of the six counties is most strongly taken up by Irish people in Britain. There are countless similar examples which could be brought to light by investigation.

National minority people most commonly organise themselves into specific groups based on their nationality. Such organisations, whatever their express purpose, are a strong base for fighting national oppression. There are politically oriented groups, like the Indian Workers' Association, Bangladeshi Workers' Association and Kashmiri Workers' Association, social groups, religious groups, parents groups and pressure groups of all kinds. These organisations have this in common: their opposition reflects concrete reality, not a bourgeois narrow nationalist attitude. If some individuals propagate such attitudes within them, that is a different matter. Many of the specific demands put forward by national minority communities reflect the specific national needs of their cultures and languages. For example, the demands of Sikhs to wear their traditional dress at work, at school etc., the demands of Rastafarians to wear their hair as they are accustomed, the demands of Muslims to send their girls to single-sex schools, and for Muslim women to wear trousers at work and school.

The struggle for the right to use national minority languages is one of the most important, and needs to be developed more broadly and intensively. There are two main aspects, the right to speak Urdu, Punjabi, Chinese, Bengali etc., at work, in meetings, in public bodies, such as local councils, and the right to pass on the languages to the national minority children. There must be very few, if any, state schools which use minority languages as a general medium of instruction, few which teach them, there are some which ban their use altogether on the premises. In some places national minority communities themselves provide language instruction for the children cheaply, or for nothing, and others individual parents have to pay a high price to have their children taught to read and write their mother-tongue. Rarely does the British state provide the funds for this. But most

parents insist that their children do not forget their language, and in many cases the children stick to their language out of defiance of their oppression, as Caribbean children use their dialect at school because the teachers cannot understand it.

The rising generations of national minority peoples are evolving their own road, their own methods of struggle. But young black people, at any rate, are increasing their level of resistance all over the country, in places like Brixton, Southall, Handsworth, Bradford and Bristol, and even in areas where settlement occurred earlier, like Liverpool. It can reasonably be argued that, even though the new generations will adopt many elements from the majority culture which are convenient to them, the level of their oppression will ensure that they will not allow their own national cultures to die out. More likely, they will use them as a focus for their resistance to oppression.

To emphasise these national aspects of resistance, and to suggest that the dominant aspect in the resistance is that it is based on the specific nationalities, is not to argue against the unity between national minorities, nor the unity of the national minorities with the working class in Britain. Growing unity of both kinds exists. Common national oppression, on the one hand, and common class exploitation, on the other, are the objective foundations on which such unity will be built. But in order to build such unity in a conscious way it is necessary first to be aware of the concrete existence of specific national minority struggles, and to turn the consciousness of this into a positive factor for unity.

THE STRUGGLE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The strength of the characteristics of national identity in the make-up and the resistance of the main national minorities in Britain, and the intensity of their national oppression, particularly racism, indicates that the demand for their right to free national development is both necessary and realistic. This demand is not just a reaction against acts of oppression when they arise, still less only against racist violence and discrimination. It requires the unfolding of a positive struggle for positive rights, which accords with the specificity of the national minority question. It encompasses the full equality of languages and cultures, and the right to develop them freely. The right to freedom from violence entails the right to organised community self-defence, armed if necessary, and the right to freedom from discrimination entails affirmative action on jobs, education and housing. But such rights cannot be guaranteed without political power. The key to ensuring and maintaining such rights will be local democratic control by the national minority people in areas in which they are concentrated.

Only the national minorities themselves can work out what such local control will mean in detail, and only they can test such a policy in practice. All that can be said is that without such control, free national development cannot be realised. It implies control over education, over the use of funds for local administration and community development, control of policing and the judicial apparatus, to make these serve the needs of the national minority people instead of the perpetuation of national oppression. It would be easy for the imperialist ruling class and their allies to caricature such a demand in order to create antagonism between the working people of the national majority and the national minority communities. But an end to national oppression and the guarantee of the right to free national development is in the interests of the entire working class. The working class does not benefit from national oppression, nor from the impoverishment of areas where national minorities live, nor from the exacerbation of national contradictions which is bound to occur where there is no national equality or national freedom. Local control by national minorities in areas of concentration will not discriminate against workers of the national majority, whereas control by the national majority does discriminate against the national minorities. It will rather eliminate the power of the imperialist ruling class and their state to impoverish the lives and living standards of the national minority people and to turn one nationality against another.

It is implicit in this policy that it cannot be effectively implemented by the imperialist state, but only by the proletarian state as part of the socialist revolution. It is a question of the link between the struggle of the working class against its exploitation and the struggle of the national minorities against national oppression. Just as there is a simplistic analysis that the oppression of national minorities is based on "racial" differences, so there is also a simplistic notion that this "racial oppression" exists because the imperialist bourgeoisie is conspiring to divide the working class.

Certainly national oppression divides the working class. Imperialism exacerbated this national contradiction into antagonism by all the means at its disposal, in particular the promotion of racist ideology and racist state policies. Certainly imperialism will not be overthrown unless the working class is united.

But the struggle against national oppression is a specific struggle. And without the freedom and equality of nationalities no unity and co-operation between nationalities will be possible.

Imperialism is still in power precisely because it rests on both national oppression and the exploitation of the entire working class. In national oppression are included the oppression of nations abroad, the ex-colonies and the existing colonies like the six counties of Ireland and Hong Kong, the oppression of the Welsh and Scottish nations in Britain, and of the national minorities in Britain. All the oppressed nationalities in Britain will fight national oppression, just as the oppressed nations abroad, and the working class in Britain will fight for its emancipation from exploitation and oppression. Both types of struggles challenge the very basis of imperialist state power, and neither can succeed without overthrowing that state power. Similarly neither can succeed without the other. The working class and the oppressed nationalities are allies, and Communists must build a revolutionary alliance between them. This revolutionary alliance will fuse into a single whole in the struggle for proletarian revolution. This is the living revolutionary link between the struggle of the whole working class in Britain and the struggle of the national minorities. The alliance can be forged more effectively, because the greater part of the national minority people in Britain are themselves working class. British imperialism is stepping up its attacks on the working class and the national minorities. The once mighty British empire has become weak and wounded. It betrays its weakness as it turns savagely on the national minority people it has brought into this insignificant island. That weakness can become a strength for the people of the whole world, when the struggle against national oppression is welded together with the struggle of the working class.

THE BROADEST UNITY IS NEEDED TO STOP SOVIET EXPANSION

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1. It is now clearer than ever that the threat of expansion from the Soviet superpower has become very grave indeed. The outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq has not only uncovered some intractable contradictions between these two third world countries, but has also exposed the pervasiveness of the Soviet Union. In the welter of reactions to the conflict and the scramble to take sides, it is the Soviet Union which has reacted most decisively and made the most capital.

2. In the last three years, we have seen their instigation of the invasion of Kampuchea and direct invasion of Afghanistan. We have now head their threats to the Polish people now that the workers are resisting revisionist rule and winning concessions. There is no doubt about Russian influence growing in India, Bolivia, Argentina and Grenada and is being strengthened by whatever means necessary in their existing spheres of domination. The way they are supplying arms to Syria and Iraq, playing one off against the other, while at the same time offering to sell arms to Iran, is a clear example of their perfidy and complete lack of principle.

3. Soviet aggression has to be resisted more firmly than before. In fact the time has arrived when uniting with all other forces to resist Soviet expansionism has become the most important task for Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries in Britain. The struggle for socialism has to be temporarily relegated to a secondary position and resistance to Soviet hegemonism elevated to the prime task of the present period.

4. Internally, our main task is to defend democratic rights. The Thatcher government is using the crisis as a cover to attack democracy. In opposing the Soviet Union's aggression, they try to denounce communism by labelling the Soviet Union a 'communist' country. Anti-Sovietism is equated with anti-communism, and in this the Tories have no quarrel with the Russian leaders themselves. The obvious next step is to curb 'communism' in Britain, and this is defined as broadly as necessary to embrace any effective opposition to their growing repression. At present 'communism' means the following: strong unions; nationalisation of industry and commerce; municipal ownership of homes; the welfare state; any attack on the trans-national monopolies; opposition to Britain's membership of the EEC; unilateral nuclear disarmament. Whatever weakens the rule of the bourgeoisie of imperialist Britain over its workers is linked with whatever weakens imperialist Britain in the face of Soviet expansionism. We must break this link and show that it is only by extending democratic rights to the full that the best resistance to Russian domination is achieved.

5. Racism and other forms of national oppression negate democratic rights and must be firmly opposed. The right of free trade unions to exist and promote their members' interests must be defended whilst attacking the bureaucracy of some of them. British troops must leave Ireland where they are trampling on the rights of the Irish people.

6. It will be a big task to promote democracy to deepen the resistance to the Soviet Union. But even though there will be anti-socialists involved in such a task, it is the only rallying cry which will unite the broadest possible forces in the broadest possible front against Soviet expansionism. Politically, this would include the anti-Soviet Conservatives, the 'right-wing' Labourites, the Liberals and the miniscule anti-hegemonist 'left'. Our call for unity must be conditional on these forces respecting democratic rights and national sovereignty. We must support the demand for proportional representation, for the devolution of central government power to Scotland and Wales and to local government, and support the fight against unemployment, bureaucracy and inefficiency.

ULTRA-LEFTISM

7. It is clear that we are still bogged down in the mire of ultra-leftism. We have tackled some of its worst aspects - of ignoring all issues bar party-building and industrial work - but we still have some way to go to correct its bad effects. One tenacious form of ultra-leftism is the need to appear to be 'leftist' and to justify and apologise for one's ~~actions~~ ~~and~~ ~~other~~ ~~leftists'~~ attempts to outleft the left and such negative phenomena as the excessive persecutions during the Cultural Revolution in China and the sectarian arrogance of the 'Maoists' in Britain. The struggle to correct ultra-leftism and its results will take some time. Whatever was the main aim of the rectification stage, there should be general agreement that today the main target of inner-party struggle must be ultra-leftism and its twin manifestations of ultra-democracy and overlordism which replace democracy and centralism respectively.
8. An excellent example of a stand against ultra-leftism was the article in Class Struggle (Vol.4 No.19) entitled 'Zimbabwe Makes Progress'. It answers the ultra-lefts who expect apologies from this newly independent third world government and demanding the achievement of socialist revolution overnight when the national democratic revolution has hardly begun.
9. In Kampuchea we have recently seen self-criticism on the part of the Khmer Rouge, even to the extent of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister declaring that 'Communism is dead' and that socialism was not on the agenda. Both leaders have admitted to mistakes in the Kampuchean revolution - all of the ultra-left variety - too rapid deurbanisation and collectivisation, too much discipline, too rapid abolition of money, too much class struggle. All the advances they might have achieved have now been brushed aside by the Vietnamese invasion and occupation.
10. What had happened was that the Khmer Rouge had underestimated the barbarity and ruthlessness of what is now the polecat of the world - Soviet social-imperialism. That underestimation was coupled with the overestimation of the strength of the revolutionary forces in Kampuchea and the world. It is to the eternal credit of the Kampuchean party that they have now so openly and bravely corrected their mistakes, and are now leading a broad front to liberate their country and save the Khmer nation as a whole from extinction.
11. Their stand should not be imagined to be opportunistic, nor should it be thought that the Khmer Rouge leaders are just pretending. They are in deadly earnest and their line accords with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in today's world. What has been demonstrated in Kampuchea in very stark fashion is that there is no virtue in trying to build socialism in a world where the Soviet marauders are on the rampage. Kampuchea has lessons for the world which we cannot and must not ignore.
12. It is worth remembering the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. Trotsky did not want to sign and thus make concessions to the German bourgeoisie. He was interested in the glory of the revolution, not in its survival or victory. His ultra-left purity would have led to the defeat of the Bolsheviks, whereas by signing they were able to win breathing space at the expense of territory, consolidate their forces and be able to beat off the imperialists' intervention in 1921. Lenin and Stalin understood very well that establishing a revolutionary government involved it in national defence from external enemies whilst the class struggle against internal enemies continued. Neither facet could be ignored, and either could take precedence over the other in particular circumstances.
13. These experiences are relevant to Britain because they reveal general principles which can be applied here. The main question that needs to be answered is whether, despite Britain's great industrial strength, the external threat looms large enough to overshadow the internal class contradictions. To automatically assume the class struggle

is primary at all times is to be ultra-left.

U.S. IMPERIALISM

14. There is a marked aversion among some comrades to face up to another 'unpleasant' consequence of the Soviet aggression and expansion. That is the strong possibility that the US will line up with the main forces of the second and third worlds against the Soviet Union.

15. In being opposed to both superpowers, we must remember that if it is true that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous, then it is only logical that opposition to it is more important and takes precedence over opposition to US imperialism on a world scale. No amount of twisting or writhing can avoid the logical fact that there cannot be three sides in a world war. There can only be two sides. It is thus inevitable that the second and third worlds will find their interests lie in the same direction as one or other superpower. For the foreseeable future that superpower is US imperialism which is in decline.

16. In fighting for a united front of the second and third worlds against the superpowers we are furthering the cause of world peace and delaying world war. But it does seem that the Soviet Union now has the bit in its teeth and the situation is worse than it has been. War is now very likely and the alliance with the US is becoming necessary. Such an alliance has to extract from the US the right to be treated with mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of allied countries. So far the US has shown signs of being prepared to do this - in Western Europe by being susceptible to demands for a European finger on the nuclear button; in Kampuchea by supporting Democratic Kampuchea; in Afghanistan by calling for withdrawal of Soviet troops and an independent non-aligned Afghanistan to be developed; in the Iran-Iraq conflict by calling for cessation of hostilities and studiously not backing one or other side; in South Korea by keeping its troops strictly confined to barracks and condemning the overthrow of parliamentary rule; in Poland by calling for no outside power to intervene; in its new-found respect for Mexico and purchase of natural gas at a price dictated by the Mexicans; its preparedness to lift the Cuban blockade if Cuban mercenaries leave Africa. These things are positive but let us not be under any illusions - the US has been forced to take such stances. Even a Reagan victory in the presidential election is not going to alter this course despite his foul-mouthed desire for the return of a 'two-China' policy and his loud-mouthed hawkishness.

17. In its contention with the Soviet Union, the US superpower has realised that in today's world, the best it can hope for in the way of defending its strategic interests is to ensure as far as possible that the Russians do not fill any power 'vacuums' created by its own retreat. The US superpower is in decline and now hopes for a huge buffer zone of independent and non-aligned states to help stem Soviet expansion.

18. This does not mean that the US superpower has changed its spots. Far from it. It still dreams of being the dominant world power but, as Britain and France discovered in 1956 at Suez, its power does not any longer match up to its ambitions. Thus it is now pursuing a policy which faces the new realities and in supporting the tendency for independence and non-alignment in much of the world, its policies coincide with the interests of the second and third worlds! This is an example of a contradiction between the superpowers that can be utilised to undermine the expanding superpower - the Soviet Union.

19. In our Draft Programme there already many hopes expressed and ~~these explained~~ ~~we include the golden~~ ~~British being the~~ ~~the progress~~ ~~stage of the~~ class struggle. Then there is garble galore (Section 4, in particular paragraphs 6-11) where there is an attempt to take into account the Soviet

menace. It is a hopeless muddle. Essentially it only pays lip service to the rise of Soviet aggression. It declares that even though 'it is more likely that a new war will be unleashed by Soviet social-imperialism before the working class seizes power in Britain' (Section 4. 11), 'the socialist revolution must continue!'

20. Comrades, the stage has now arrived where Soviet expansionism must be opposed tooth and nail. In the face of its aggression, the anti-superpower united front must be developed. More than that, it must be developed as an anti-Soviet united front. The US superpower must be curbed within the front itself and not be excluded from it at this stage. Its domination must be modified to allow countries siding with it a much bigger say than at present, but it must be kept in the united front as long as possible.

WHAT SORT OF UNITED FRONT?

21. This present necessity must not be proposed in a confusing way i.e. by proposing that there should be several levels of united front (eg. the international revolutionary forces, the third world and proletariat of the rest of the world, the second and third worlds etc.) indicating that there should be several united fronts of varying degrees of broadness. This all just skirts the problem. The main united front at this time is not the British proletariat and petit bourgeoisie against the imperialist monopoly bourgeoisie. It is not the EEC against the two superpowers. It is not the second and third worlds against the superpowers. The united front must now be unequivocally stated to be an anti-Soviet united front and it must include all the forces which oppose Soviet expansionism. That has to be our central orientation - all else must follow from that.

22. Our tasks in Britain today are to fight for reforms, to broaden democracy and to oppose all those who support or defend the Soviet Union. Our task is to make it clear that the anti-Soviet united front is vital if there is ever to be a socialist revolution in Britain. Our job is now to define the strategy and tactics of Marxist-Leninists in this period when anti-Soviet united front work should be the main aspect of our activity. This stage, which we did hesitantly anticipate, has now arrived. The united front must now be built to defeat Soviet aggression.

~~22. Comrades, when the RCL and CWM united in the wake of hasty expulsions of ultra-leftists in each organisation, it changed the orientation of the new RCL. The RCL shifted its ground and declared that work in the field of anti-racism, anti-fascism and in anti-imperialist solidarity would now complement industrial work and party-building. This was a very positive step and recognised the realities within Britain. This was a step forward because it recognised that there was not only class struggle in Britain but also national struggles; that not only did the working class potentially want socialism, but that broad sections of the people wanted democracy on the broadest possible level. Some comrades are beginning to say, and the realisation is beginning to grow, that the socialist revolution is not on the immediate agenda. If this is so, then why is the struggle for socialist revolution still at the top of our agenda?~~

24. The Iran-Iraq war is bringing home the realities of Britain in the world more than ever. The theoretical expression of the reality in the world up to now has been that the Soviet Union is the more dangerous of the two superpowers. The concrete expression of the realities of the world now are that the Soviet Union is on the rampage. It backs the most ruthless and vicious third world regimes in the world today - Vietnam, Cuba, Ethiopia - and is dangling the Middle East franchise before Syria and Iran. Its own invasion of Afghanistan has also exhibited a detached barbarity not seen since the heyday of US imperialism or Nazi Germany. Its neo-colonial rule in Eastern Europe and other countries is readily

backed by military force. These things all prove the theoretical contention that we all accept. But we have not yet made the logical conclusion from these recent developments - the Soviet Union is only being slowed down or opposed by broad united fronts - from Kampuchea to Afghanistan to Poland to Eritrea to Zimbabwe. This is the reality.

25. We should take a hard look at the statement of the CC of the CP of Malaya on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their founding. Even though they are fighting an armed struggle, their orientation is not socialist revolution, but to fight to defend the people's democratic rights and protect the territorial integrity of their country. The fight to defend democratic rights is directed against the reactionary anti-communist and anti-popular policies pursued by the government, and the fight to defend their country is aimed at Soviet-Vietnamese hegemonism. 'These two aspects of the struggle are inseparable and must be integrated.' (p. 21) The CP of Malaya regards the contradictions between its own ruling circles and the people as the main contradiction at present, but warns that 'the contradictions between Soviet-Vietnamese hegemonism and its lackeys on the one hand and the people of all nationalities and strata on the other is on the rise and could become the principal contradiction in our society' Either way, the struggle for socialism is clearly not on the agenda.

26. What are the lessons here for Britain? These third world countries and peoples face very different problems to those existing in second world countries like Britain. But the Marxist-Leninist principles by which these problems can be understood and overcome are universal. We here in Europe can learn a great deal about Marxist-Leninist principles from the struggles in the third world and the M-L's there. Indeed, we all subscribe to Mao Zedong Thought. We must not dismiss their conclusions on the grounds that our own problems are more complex because of our industrialised society. That is just being chauvinistic. If the third world is the leading force combating imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism then that is where the theoretical clarity will be greatest. So we must take careful note of what M-L parties in the third world are doing and saying today. In correcting our previous paralytic adulation of China's revolution we must not swing right over to rejecting the experience of revolutionary parties in the third world.

MOUNTING TENSION

27. Comrades, the tension in the world is mounting very rapidly. The forces for war have overtaken the forces for revolution. In this new situation Soviet hegemonism has become the main enemy of the people of the world and the broadest possible united front must now be built to oppose it. In Kampuchea, Laos, Afghanistan, Eritrea, fraternal parties are building united fronts to smash the Soviet hegemonists and their neo-colonial cronies. In Poland, Vietnam, Ethiopia and Angola the contradictions with Soviet imperialism are sharpening and resistance is mounting. The contradictions between the two states of partitioned Germany are now sharper than ever. The GDR has become very belligerent about the Polish developments and has imposed inhuman conditions on travel between the two parts. This is a serious reflection of Soviet hegemonism in Europe. In Latin America, they are grooming Argentina to launch an attack on Chile.

28. World war three is upon us and our orientation must reflect this. We must never abandon the working class in building this front, nor should Britain's independence be jeopardised by the alliance with the US superpower. The matter has become very urgent. The bankruptcy of the Labour Party is acutely evident - the revisionists and Trotskyists keep apologising for Russian aggression and are being groomed as a 5th-column. Birch and Baines have bounced into bed with Brezhnev and Albania

is frenetic. We must keep cool and plot our new course. We must build up our movement around this orientation and talk to all M-L's and other left elements who embrace the Theory of the Three Worlds and who are conscious of the overwhelming Soviet threat. We must take forward this view into the anti-racist movement and into our solidarity work. We must explain our view to the anti-nuclear movement and keep clarifying our view on nuclear weapons and war and peace. There can be no peace until Soviet imperialism is destroyed. There can be no democracy of any type where their jackboots tread. There can be no socialist revolutions while they threaten to engulf the world.

29. The defeat of Soviet social-imperialism (or hegemonism as it is better categorised) is now very necessary for any progress to be made anywhere. Azania cannot be liberated until they stop sabotaging and subverting the liberation movements. We must warn the Western imperialists that they are damaging the anti-Soviet united front by clinging to the white supremacy regime in Azania, and not allowing Namibia full self-determination. We must warn the British imperialists of the dangers of their Irish policies and of opposing the working class. We must support UNITA in its efforts to liberate Angola. Zimbabwe and Mozambique cannot develop full economic independence until the Soviet-backed Cuban mercenaries get out of Angola. The unification of Germany will only occur when the Russians are driven home. Wherever Western imperialism is in retreat - in el Salvador, South Yemen, Argentina Grenada - it is now generally Soviet influence which replaces it. There are 4 exceptions, but the main trend should be quite clear by now. The Russians are expanding and the bulk of revolutionary wars in the world today are directed against Russia. We must join this revolutionary crusade. This must become the guiding principle of all our work in the coming period, and must be reflected in our programmatic document.

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