



Theoretical journal
of the Socialist
Party of Australia

Australian Marxist Review

- ★ *Has the peace movement won?*
- ★ *Links between peace, social justice
and the environment*
- ★ *Values*
- ★ *The state of apartheid*
- ★ *A turning point in history*
- ★ *Economics and politics in the era
of the dictatorship of the proletariat*

QUARTERLY
NEW SERIES No 25

- APR 1990

Price \$2

Australian Marxist Review

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**Published by New Age Publishers
for the Socialist Party of Australia
65 Campbell Street, Surry Hills 2010
Phone (02) 212 6855**

CONTENTS

Has the peace movement won?	Dr Hannah Middleton .. 3
Links between peace, social justice and the Environment	Pauline Mitchell 10
Values	Spiro Anthony 14
The state of apartheid 22
A turning in history	Gus Hall 26
Economics and politics in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat	Lenin 42

Has the peace movement won?

by Dr Hannah Middleton

In the second week of February, talks between Soviet President Gorbachev, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State Baker were reported as bringing much closer agreements on deep cuts (30 to 50 per cent) in long-range nuclear weapons (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or START) and on major troop cuts in Europe.

These welcome developments have reinforced a tendency in the peace movement — particularly although not exclusively in Europe --to claim that “the cold war is crumbling” and “we have won”.

These claims began to be heard following the historic INF agreement and were stimulated by the dramatic changes taking place in Eastern European socialist countries. For some in the peace movement, what they see as the “collapse of socialism” and the end of the cold war is a cause for rejoicing.

However, the confidence that victory for the peace movement cause is imminent is based on some dangerous assumptions and does not reflect global realities. The growing euphoria has the potential to divert and undermine the peace movement in ways which can seriously damage the efforts to achieve a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

Focus on USSR

The INF agreement in 1987 was achieved as a result of the work of the socialist countries and the influence of the massive peace movement all around the world.

Peace initiatives were nothing new for the socialist countries which had been working for disarmament and peaceful co-existence for decades. However, the development of “new thinking” in the USSR, the force and style of CPSU General Secretary Gorbachev, the impact of these two events on the peace movement and the growth and impact of that movement around the world created a new situation in which the most reactionary circles of imperialism were unable to prevent some agreement on disarmament.

The new situation was a positive development, creating an improving inter-

national climate which pulled the world back from the brink of catastrophe. However, some negative aspects also developed.

A tendency grew to expect the USSR to make all the proposals, to come up with all the answers and to make all the concessions. The impact of the Soviet unilateral cuts and peace proposals led some peace activists to start thinking as if the Soviet Union could deliver the disarmament goods on its own and to forget about the role of the United States and NATO.

Many peace groups, particularly those in Western Europe and the USA, put a great deal of effort into contacting and influencing their East European counterparts. This effort was exciting and was apparently yielding results. However, the same level of attention was not devoted to efforts to try and impact the US and NATO Governments.

Added to these developing illusions is the idea that "socialism is dead" and that a new order and unity in a "common European home" is about to be established. The "old bloc mentality is dead", it is claimed, ideological conflict is over and so the danger of war has receded.

Underlying these developments is a resurgence of the old "equal responsibility" and "convergence" theories in new forms. The socialist countries were equally responsible for the nuclear arms race, the argument goes. Now socialism is dying out, one half of the danger of nuclear war has been removed. In addition, the demise of socialism removes the enemy which imperialism had to arms itself against so the threat of war again recedes. Europe will come together on the basis of some Swedish-style, benign capitalism and East and West will march together to a peaceful year 2000.

The harsh realities of new nuclear weapons (the "modernisation" program) in Europe and inter-imperialist rivalries (revealed, for example by responses from London and Paris to the idea of German reunification) have not yet undermined this illusion.

The fact that the socialist countries, together with the national liberation movements and the progressive and peace movements in the West, have been the main barrier against the threat of nuclear holocaust and have protected the interests of social development as a whole is not taken into account.

The fact that there is an organic link between imperialism and the emergence and aggravation of the threat of nuclear war, the fact that the trend towards aggression is inherent in the imperialist system and that the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction is supported since it generates super-profits are not accepted. The fact that the weakening of the socialist community of nations and the growth of illusions in the peace movement increases the danger of war is also not taken into account.

How many new nuclear missiles must be deployed by the US in Europe, how many Grenadas and Panamas must we witness, how many more victims must fall to Contras and Salvadoran death squads using American-supplied arms before the realities of today's world are acknowledged?

Some European realities

The socialist states of Eastern Europe are in turmoil. Socialism is under severe attack internally in these countries and externally as imperialism wages a determined ideological campaign and offers massive financial aid in return for “market economies” and “multi-party elections”. Cheque book diplomacy has never been so blatant or determined. However, it is an illusion to claim that “socialism is dead”.

While Western European and American companies begin to compete for the new East European markets and investment opportunities they desperately need to help overcome their own economic crisis, the Pentagon and NATO have not altered their military-strategic doctrines and policies in any essential sense.

A survey of senior British nuclear weapons decision-makers conducted by the prestigious Oxford Research Group found that:

“People who play leading roles in deciding the UK’s nuclear weapons policy believe that the country should continue to increase its nuclear weapons regardless of change or the immediacy of threat from the Soviet Union.

“They hold that the bloc system, together with well recognised and invested boundaries are the best insurance against war...

“The assumption that **nuclear deterrence is stable and any change is dangerous** is explicitly referred to by all decision-makers...

“It is quite clear ... that a reduction of Soviet military strength would not have any real effect on the policy of deterrence — there are so many other forces maintaining it.

“In short, it is reasonable to infer that the decision-makers assume that deterrence must be maintained **whatever the level of threat.**” (Oxford Research Group *Media Bulletin*, November 1989, pp 7-10)

European defence ministers have committed US\$135 million in 1990 alone to weapons development and research under the EUCLID program (European Co-operation Long-term Initiative for Defence).

Despite a massive budget deficit, US President Bush wants US\$306.9 billion (A\$403.7 billion) for defence spending in 1991. This is higher than the US\$301.6 billion (A\$396.73 billion) spent in 1990 but about two per cent less than the inflation rate.

NATO is covertly planning to field a new generation of nuclear missiles which will more than compensate for its arms reductions. Experts say the new missiles will outnumber the 570 ground-launched missiles removed by the INF agreement and because they can be used by a wide range of aircraft they will greatly increase the West’s nuclear strike capacity.

Not only do these missiles (often called “stand-off” weapons) escape the categories included in any of the current East-West arms talks, but no NATO parliament on the European side of the Atlantic has debated the wisdom of

developing them.

The cold war is certainly not over for the nuclear warriors of the West.

Regional realities

Many of the illusions which have developed in the peace movement are based on developments in Europe. The view from Australia is less optimistic for militarily and strategically, the Asia-Pacific region remains substantially the same. We are confronted by an intransigent United States determined to maintain its military, economic and political dominance in our region.

Other countries around the area are either following the urging of the US to take up a greater share of military spending (such as Australia) or are increasing their military expenditure at the expense of their people.

More menacing still is the presence of thousands of nuclear warheads in our seas and the introduction of new cruise missiles by the US to "compensate" for the INF cuts. Despite requests from all sides, no negotiations are taking place to eliminate or even limit naval nuclear arms.

There is no withdrawal of the US maritime strategy which foresees an early escalation to nuclear weapons in the event of heightened tension. The combination of no controls and aggressive strategies means that the Pacific is still a nuclear powder keg.

While the United States continues its policies of confrontation and military adventurism, the USSR has dismantled land-based SS-20 nuclear missiles in the Far East, scaled down its regional naval operations and withdrawn 100,000 troops from the Soviet-Chinese border.

In response to the US escalation of weapons and tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, the Soviet Union has offered a series of confidence building and arms control proposals.

In July 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev said the Soviet Union was ready to begin talks on scaling down naval activities in the Pacific, above all by vessels with nuclear weapons.

In a speech in Vladivostock, he proposed setting limits on rivalry in anti-submarine weapons and eliminating anti-submarine activities in certain zones of the Pacific.

A year later, in an interview with the Indonesian newspaper *Merdeka*, Mr Gorbachev offered a package of proposals, including a call to limit the scale of naval training exercises in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, to limit anti-submarine rivalry, and to restrict the operational area of nuclear-armed ships so they could not put the coasts of the other side within range of their on-board nuclear weapons.

In September 1988, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would continue its freeze on the deployment of additional nuclear weapons in the Asia-Pacific region.

Speaking in the Soviet city of Krasnoyarsk, Mr Gorbachev proposed multilateral talks for the region aimed at reducing the level of military confrontation.

He called for an agreement to freeze and then lower the level of naval and air activity in the areas where the coastlines of China, the two Koreas and the Soviet Union merge.

Mr Gorbachev suggested talks between these four countries and the United States to deal with the region's hottest flashpoint — the Korean Peninsula and the Sea of Japan.

Despite all this, while President Gorbachev and Secretary of State Baker were talking in Moscow, the Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Command, Admiral Huntington Hardisty, told the US Senate Armed Services Committee that even if the entire Soviet Pacific fleet was removed, the US would not cut its Pacific forces.

Four days later, the US Ambassador to Australia, Melvin Sembler, stated that Nurrungar and Pine Gap would become more important for world security after the events in Eastern Europe (*Brisbane Courier Mail* 15/2/90).

In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* (7/2/90), Professor Stuart Harris, professor of international relations at the Australian National University and former head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, is reported as saying that "the US is still fighting the Cold War in the Pacific, manoeuvring its navy provocatively, risking military conflict and showing little imagination and poor leadership.

"... the US is not prepared to talk. The continuing arms build-up in the North Pacific and the lack of movement in arms control remain a concern.

"Professor Harris also blamed Japan for continuing to wage the Cold War against the Soviet Union and for its military build-up, which would make its neighbours nervous."

According to journalist Peter Hatcher in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (13/2/90), "the US and its chief Pacific ally, Japan, have shown no inclination to discuss either disarmament or confidence-building measures in the Pacific, where the US has a clear military advantage".

The cold war is certainly not over in Asia and the Pacific for the nuclear warriors of the West.

Australia

In Australia, the Federal Labor Government's "new militarism" continues apace with \$25 billion to be spent over the next 15 years on submarines, frigates, planes and other aggressive military hardware. Nearly ten per cent of the annual Australian budget is spent on so-called "defence".

In an address to the 13th Pacific Armies Management Seminar in March last year, Lieutenant General O'Donnell, Chief of the General Staff of the Australian Army, summed up Australia's defence policy by saying "it provides for the

self reliant defence of Australia, but in the context of our ongoing alliance relationship with the US ... We are neither neutralist, nor non-aligned, but positively a part of the Western strategic community”.

Australia is taking its share of America's military burden by assuming the role of policeman of the south Pacific. In 1988-89, Australian forces were put on alert three times, for the Fiji coup, the Vanuatu crisis and the land owners struggle in Bougainville. The Australian Government is intervening to support Australian capital investment in the copper mine on Bougainville.

The Australian Government's approach was elaborated by Senator Gareth Evans, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, in a statement to Parliament last December entitled *Australia's Regional Security*. He said:

“The contribution that our military capabilities make to our general national status strengthens our ability to exercise leverage across many fields.” (p 18)

“The Australian Defence Force has the capability to undertake — both in Australia, and in the region more broadly, particularly the South Pacific — a diverse range of peacetime activities. They extend ... to ... activities as sensitive as counter-terrorism operations, the protection or rescue of Australian citizens abroad, or the provision of support for a legitimate government in maintaining internal security.” (p 21)

Increased armed sales in the region contribute to both increased regional tensions and insecurity as well as to development of a domestic military-industrial complex with all the reactionary political implications that inevitably accompany such militarisation of a society. Already troops have been used against non-violent peace protesters and the airforce was ordered to become scabs during the domestic pilots industrial action. Democracy was stifled when both Liberal and Labor Parties boycotted a debate in the Senate on the US base at Nurrungar. Without a quorum, no discussion could take place.

A long way to go

The adoption of principles of non-aggression, equality, non-interference and mutual benefits and the dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction remain distant goals which will not be achieved without mass pressure from the world's peoples.

The United States militarisation of the Asia-Pacific region has gone hand in hand with economic exploitation and political interference. Many developing countries of the region are trapped in international economic relations which keep them in a state of dependence and poverty, while allowing transnational corporations to bleed them of their wealth. They are recipients of aid packages which often benefit the donor more than the recipient.

Billions of dollars are still spent every minute on armaments instead of being used for desperately needed global, regional and local environmental and development projects.

The struggle for peace cannot be carried forward on a wave of illusions and

pro-Gorbachev euphoria. Nor can this euphoria be allowed to replace organisation and mobilisation of millions of men and women in a mass peace movement around the world.

Now is not the time to abandon the peace movement. To think that changes in the socialist countries will bring a weapon free world is a very dangerous illusion.

It is a time to continue to build coalitions against the warmongers of this world, to take advantage of all the opportunities our changing world offers. It is a time to build the links between the struggles for peace, against colonialism and for the economic and political rights of indigenous peoples, for environmental protection and to make even stronger the demand for disarmament and development.

The work of the peace movement must be maintained and intensified. A mass movement for peace and disarmament, embracing all peoples and all countries, is still crucial in our world.

Links between peace, social justice and the environment

by Pauline Mitchell

The trite phrases “*There have always been wars and there always will be*” and “*There has always been hunger and there always will be*” are rarely heard these days as increased public awareness of the part played by economic forces comes into focus. A feature of the 1980s was that not only war but the arms race and economic monopoly were recognised as factors directly affecting the solution of the urgent global problems of social progress, security and environmental protection.

In 1917 the world capitalist system of individual ownership, accumulation and control of wealth was overturned in Russia and replaced by socialism which abolished private ownership and exploitation for profit. Competition between the two systems developed even though the war against fascism brought capitalist nations and the Soviet Union into the fight against fascism.

The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by nuclear weapons in 1945 demonstrated that humankind had gained the awesome power to destroy all life on earth. This led to the “*Ban the Bomb*” movements that marked the 1950s and 60s.

However, after the Second World War the United States, the sole possessor of the bomb, began to accumulate nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction in the name of “national security” to protect itself and the capitalist system against the advance of socialism. This started a feverish arms build-up in other capitalist countries and caused the socialist countries to respond for their own protection.

In 1961 the late Dwight D Eisenhower, former President of the USA, warned against the growth of the military industries and their acquisition of unwarranted influence and misplaced power. The warning was not heeded and today the military-industrial complex has both economic and political influence that is felt in every office of the US Government.

It is the non-elected weapons designers, the non-elected defence contrac-

tors and the non-elected military planners who make up the strategic communities which wield enormous power and influence in determining the political and military policy of capitalist states.

Apart from the huge public funds that the military-industrial complexes absorb, they are the biggest user of raw materials and the biggest polluters of the environment. For example, if the civilian use of CFCs and other ozone depleting gasses stopped today, it would take only 20 years to destroy 15 per cent of the ozone layer by the US military use of halon gasses alone.

Side by side with the exploitation by these military conglomerates is the exploitation by huge civilian corporations with their insatiable desire for profit. Together these monopolies are responsible for the spread of hunger and poverty, for the wholesale depletion of the planet's natural resources, for massive world-wide pollution, the destruction of forests and the destruction of ozone layer that threaten a universal catastrophe even in the absence of nuclear war.

An important step would be taken if the resources now used for militarism were freed for development. But this is not enough. It is the social regime governed by exploitation that threatens us with a holocaust. Environmental catastrophe is linked with political and economic oppression which result from an unjust economic order.

It will not be easy to stop and repair the consequences of a system of plundering and it has been demonstrated more than once that the exploiters will go to any lengths to retain their power and economic dominance. Each year \$150 billion is spent by the under-developed countries on their militaries despite for many the absence of any military threat. Many Third World armies are class armies, guarding the wealth of the few and the system of exploitation to the detriment of their own people. On the average, there is one soldier to every 250 people but only one doctor for every 3,700 people in the under-developed countries.

The concentration of wealth, power and technology is an alienating factor. The tremendous cost of the arms race has led to the impoverishment of nations and to the reduction or effective liquidation of social programs in many countries throughout the world. By cutting social spending, industrialised countries have promoted a large-scale brain drain from under-developed countries.

Without independence and sovereignty in the interests of the people, it is not possible to have peace, social justice or environmental security.

Devastation of the global environment and the threat of nuclear war are issues which affect everyone, irrespective of their nationality and class. As the crises become more widely felt, the concept that we should forget antagonisms and put differences aside to join together to save the planet is heard more and more.

However, it is the misuse and careless application of technical and scientific ability that threaten the planet.

It is the research, manufacture and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, pushed by national and international policy makers, which threatens war.

It is also the policies of big business corporations which threaten ecological disaster.

Socialism cannot be exempted from the harm it has done to the environment but, unlike the forces that determine capitalist profit, the socialist system has the greatest potential to deal with these problems.

Environmental programs showing the destruction and problems facing us were recently aired in Australia. Problems were pointed out and emphasis was laid on the role that consumers could play by recycling, limiting consumption and buying environmentally safe products. But no mention was made of new rules or controls to govern industries which have created and are creating these problems.

Consumers are at the mercy of big business production, "environmentally safe" items are often more expensive, not readily available and are in the minority among the many different brands of the same product. Recycling of waste products is only possible if recycling facilities are available and they are often only provided if they can make a profit.

Recently in Melbourne a charity-run paper recycling plant was forced to close because of shortage of money and storage space. At about the same time, an arm of General Motors received a cash grant from the State Government to establish a profit making enterprise.

Environmental laws to limit dangerous waste disposal in industrialised countries have led to illegal and widespread dumping of toxic waste in under-developed nations. Because of desperate financial need, some Third World countries are being paid by big business to accept industrial waste from companies in the developed world. Many products banned in the developed world are sold to the under-developed world.

Economic growth in the Third World is not geared to the people or to safeguarding the environment but to the profit of transnational corporations and to debt repayment to industrialised nations.

Such unequal laws and the disregard of people to satisfy the profit motive is a crime against humanity and if governments cannot or will not control the market forces of capitalism that have brought this about, then the challenge must come from the people.

While the threat of world war has receded and some regional wars appear to be winding down owing to the reduced tensions between East and West, there could be some negative consequences.

The new international political detente may lead to a decline in opposition to the system of exploitation. Less criticism would lead to governments strengthening the state system which will further entrench the narrow interests of the exploiting class in the industrialised countries and isolate the

developing world's poor even further.

There is no guarantee that "detente" will translate into a greater commitment to equality, to ecological protection or to the less hazardous use of industrial technology.

In addition, the reduction in armaments and armament spending by the capitalist countries has not matched the new international political climate. The Western world has not responded to the reduced armament manufacture or reduced military spending of the Eastern countries. Under the guise of "modernisation" of NATO, it is estimated that by the mid-1990s there will be 400 extra nuclear weapons in Britain despite the INF agreement that eliminated cruise nuclear missiles. Many nuclear weapons have been merely transferred to the oceans.

The manufacture of weapons is the biggest profit maker in the profit making system. If the "Soviet threat" is no longer viable as a strategic rationale for weapons production and sales, then other reasons will be put forward.

While the huge world-wide peace and nuclear disarmament movements of the 70s and early 80s seem to have diminished, the end of the 80s have been marked by the growth of multi-faceted movements of equal urgency. As we approach the last decade of the 20th Century, humankind faces huge problems which have to be solved if we are to enter the 21st Century without a greatly impaired life system.

New concepts of global security, development, economic justice and democracy are required if the earth and its people are to be saved.

Values

by Spiro Anthony

In today's world of politics, particularly in the criticisms of Marxism and socialism, much prominence is given to the role of values.

The outpourings of slogans from leaders of capitalist countries and the mass media stress repetitively that socialism negates human values.

From within the socialist movement, arguments have emerged to the effect that Marxist theory has not been developed to the level of encompassing values or is not relevant to values. A "human values" approach to society is being put forward as a new theory.

The real struggle, it is being maintained, is not between classes, but by all classes working towards the fulfillment of values, to the extent that values are the driving force in social change.

This paper seeks to discuss some aspects of values, their role in individual and social life, their place in social activity and within the processes of social change in society.

What are values?

A value is a mental construct, existing in the human mind.

Values are what the individual sees as important for himself/herself and others. They are judgements about how one should live, how others should live and how society should function.

These ideas exist in the mind along with other mental constructs. Mental constructs include:

Sensory perceptions — the sensing of an object or phenomenon and the representation of that thing in the perceiver's mind through retention of images.

Beliefs — interpretations or assessments of things perceived; beliefs may consist of mental responses to immediate perceptions or to stored information, or involve concepts and highly developed theoretical positions.

Attitudes, opinions — mental constructs consisting of views, preferences or predispositions in favour of or against a specific thing.

Ideology — a system of beliefs, attitudes and values concerning all of society, and all of reality; ideology can be regarded as a whole world outlook.

Values do not have a special or unique role; they are one form of the content of people's thinking.

Values may be projected towards various spheres of personal and social life. There are values about political systems, individual and social rights, how laws should operate, aesthetics, economics and so forth. "One person, one vote" is a political value; "equal pay for equal work" an economic value.

When values are shared between people, they become social values which can find expression in social movements.

Values are found in all social institutions (courts, parliaments, schools, etc), formulated by or inferred from the practice of the institution. Some values may not be enacted but exist as an ideal.

Unlike sensory perceptions and beliefs on which there can be wide agreement (e.g. that a ball is round), values involve a high level of abstraction. Actual definitions of values rely on semantics and are subject to interpretation. A value such as "it is wrong to steal" or the values of "democracy" or "freedom" can be open to various interpretations in meaning and application.

Source of values

Like all mental constructs, the values possessed by an individual arise from and are maintained by the functioning of the brain.

Values develop from the totality of experiences of the person in society. Factors influencing the formation of values are the individual's history, biological make-up, emotional disposition, needs, position in society and what the individual is exposed to in society, including family and peers. The person's own activity influences values.

Social values are influenced by the history, culture, economic and political life of the society and can endure beyond the life-span of individuals.

Social values are highly conditioned by society. Different social contexts can produce different social values, and differentiations within the structure of society produce different values.

In pre-class societies, social divisions existed in relation to age, sex, race and heredity lines giving rise to different values within society.

With the advent of privately owned means of production and the emergence of social classes differentially related to ownership of the means of production, values became strongly influenced by these major social divisions.

Core and peripheral values

In class society, values are not only influenced by class divisions but they have an important role in the maintenance of class structures.

Within a social class, not all values are shared by all members of the class. However, there exists a core value which is basic to the position of the class in society.

The core value of the capitalist class is the value of appropriating profit. This value is critical to the activity and future of the capitalist class. It is a necessary part of the thinking associated with the activity of the class.

Peripheral values are less necessary for the class. They relate to the core value but are modifiable to suit circumstances. For instance, political values concerning parliamentary voting systems are optional to the capitalist class.

Throughout the history of class societies, the class in power has maintained core values associated with its role as oppressor and exploiter of the toiling people. This value has taken on different forms in each historical period and with each successive ruling class — slave owners, feudal lords and capitalists. The core value associated with exploitation persists as long as private ownership of the means of production persists.

The toiling masses throughout history and today the modern working class possess a core value that there be a decent livelihood in return for labour expended.

Other classes also possess core values. Class society provides for the existence of small business people, with a core value of self-employment and independent decision-making, and intellectuals with a core value of freedom of intellectual activity.

Peripheral values are utilised by the ruling class to back up their interests when conditions demand. For example, the value of women being in the workforce is invoked when additional labour is required by the capitalist class.

The class in power invariably seeks to have values which reinforce its position dominant throughout society and adopted by all classes. As well, the capitalist class seeks to have its core value of appropriating profit accepted by others, particularly the working people.

However, throughout the history of class society, values have conflicted because of the class nature of societies. The core value of the ruling class has been in contradiction with the core value of those who provide labour.

In modern capitalist society, state-monopoly domination of the economy and society as a whole conflicts with the values of non-ruling classes and strata — intellectuals, small business people, farmers and students as well as the working class.

Values and behaviour

Thought content on its own — whether it be perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, values or ideology — is not sufficient to produce behaviour. There are other ingredients necessary for activity to take place.

One is that there must be a capacity — a physical capacity --for the behaviour to take place. Secondly, and importantly, there must be a **need**.

Thought content sets the parameters or directions of behaviour. It provides for the rational, goal-oriented and planning activities of people, but does not itself produce behaviour.

For instance, if I believe there is food in the kitchen, my behaviour to obtain that food requires a capacity and a need to get it.

Likewise, whatever values one may possess will not be acted upon unless associated with a need.

Needs are the motive force of behaviour. They initiate and drive behaviour. Without need, there is no behaviour.

There are levels of needs. Biological or primary needs provide for the functioning of the organism, such as needs for sustenance, shelter and procreation.

Secondary needs include the need for social interaction, personal respect, achievement and enjoyment, as well as the need for control over one's destiny.

Needs relate to actual conditions of life. They are not fixed or absolute but are shaped by the physical and social environment. Needs for food, for instance, are different in form in the impoverished third world compared with the advanced capitalist countries.

The activity of people to satisfy needs serves to modify the needs and create new or additional needs. Having fulfilled a need for a two-bedroom home, a family may need a study or children's playroom.

Needs should not be confused with values, although the terminology often used may equate the two. A person may feel a need for religion, perhaps because of personal distress. He therefore says: "I value religion". However, religious values are not in the same dimension as needs, as they are a prescription for the behaviour of oneself and others. "Love thy neighbour" is a value, expressing a judgement on how people should interact, arising out of the perceived existence of some people who do not love their neighbours.

Consider the threat of destruction of life by nuclear warfare. The emergence of this possibility has created a need for humanity's survival. Values are generated by this need, such as the value of peaceful international relations, the value of "conflict resolution" and so forth. Such values are formulated and acted upon in different ways by different people.

Needs generate values. While needs are shaped by actual conditions of life, values are in the realm of ideals and what is thought to be the best response. There may or may not be a correspondence between specific needs and the values held, for the same need may produce different values.

There is thus a relationship between needs, values and other thought content, and behaviour. There are interconnections between each of the three which must be determined by study of the actual situation. However, values and behaviour cannot be comprehensively assessed without recognition of

the primary role of needs.

Class struggle

All of human history consists of an ongoing process for the fulfillment of ever-increasing human needs. The forces of production (means of production and people's contribution to production) are constantly developing.

Within society, differential opportunities for the fulfillment of needs arose with class divisions arising from private ownership of the means of production.

The needs of constituent classes are shaped particularly but not only in regard to material conditions of life. Capitalism operates in a way that the requirements of workers and their families are set at levels sufficient only for the workers to keep up their labour.

At the same time, values are thrust upon the workers (by mass media, employers, governments, and so on) to hold down workers' needs in comparison to the upper classes or to distract workers from pursuing their needs.

Frustration of workers' needs under capitalism (through unemployment, job insecurity, low wages, price rises, dangerous work conditions, impoverishment of and discrimination against sections of the working class, and so on) leads to the development of attitudes, values and ideology which brings forward struggle between the classes.

Class struggle is waged through actions such as strikes and demonstrations and through the battle of ideas. Struggle is waged at local, national and international levels.

But basic to the class struggle and the kind of social order that ensues is the struggle for the fulfillment of social needs.

Essentially it is the pursuit of human needs which propels the change and development of society.

Values on their own do not produce class struggle nor are they the sole subject of class struggle. Nor can values override the inevitability of class struggle based on conflicting social needs.

Human values

The doctrine of human values, sometimes referred to as "universal human values", presupposes firstly that such values are "supra-class", i.e. existing above class interests and are held to some degree by all people, and secondly that such values are important above all other factors in a society.

The values usually advanced are such things as peace, love, humility, justice, democracy, freedom, and so on.

From where do such values come? Are they imposed from above, guiding human history towards utopia? Are they perhaps inherent in human nature?

No value can exist outside the realm of the human mind, whether it be con-

scious or sub-conscious thinking. All values are generated through the activity of people, based ultimately on socially conditioned human needs. Those who postulate "human values" do not have a divine source for their ideas; the ideas they express are a result of their own activity and experiences.

To maintain that human beings have an inherent nature presupposes the existence of a pure or ideal state of humanity which is immune to social influences and emerges only in ideal social circumstances.

Capitalist leaders who speak of human values maintain that such values already exist or are possible only in capitalism. It is true that capitalism places enormous emphasis on values, not for altruistic purposes but for the purpose of holding back the needs of the working people.

In capitalist industries, there are subtle uses of what is termed the "human relationships" approach, designed purely to increase the exploitation of workers.

A formulation coming from some socialist and social democratic circles is that there can be a type of society, neither capitalist nor socialist, that will be established on the basis of human values.

The concept here is that all members of society, irrespective of class affiliation, have or can have common human values. In such society, other issues such as class struggle will have a non-significant role if any. The theory of the convergence of socialism and capitalism is akin to this kind of thinking.

Can values be shared by different social classes? In as much as they relate to the core values of the class, values cannot be shared. The contradictions in class interests do not allow the capitalist class to forgo its core value which is necessary for the maintenance of its position in society. Likewise, the working class, which is in a day to day struggle for betterment of life, cannot abandon such struggles for they relate to basic needs.

In the sphere of peripheral values, there may be or appear to be a sharing of some such values. However, each class formulates, interprets and responds to such peripheral values in terms of perceived class interests at the time. This is amply demonstrated in regard to peace, environment, trade, poverty and other such world phenomena which are put forward as "supra-class" issues.

The fact that such world problems may be of concern to all nations and political trends does not mean that differential class approaches will not be adopted in regard to these problems.

That class struggle can be put in the background may seem feasible in conditions of less intense or less open forms of class struggle. In recent times, a relative decline in class struggle may give the impression that class peace and conciliation has been achieved and therefore issues such as values can now receive attention. However, as long as contradictions in class interests persist on a national or international scale, i.e. until the elimination of class societies, class struggle will necessarily ensue in one form or another.

The human values doctrine fails to take account of social needs as a factor in social processes. It also errs by considering only one form of ideas, i.e. values, and completely dismisses the role of ideology.

Marxism and values

Many false claims have been disseminated about the approach of Marxists to the question of values.

It is claimed that (a) the theory and philosophy of Marxism does not and cannot encompass values and that (b) the activities of Marxists and the societies formed under Marxist leaderships neglect and denigrate human values.

The theory of Marxism concerns all of society, indeed all of reality. The subject matter of Marxism includes all individual and social phenomena and is not bound to any particular historical period. Dialectical and historical materialism sets out principles for the analysis of all phenomena, including people's values.

The class approach in analysis of society does not demand that everything be reduced to class struggle or economics. The point of Marxism is not to reduce phenomena back to classes but to use class concepts to open up and guide the study of social phenomena.

It is Marxism which explains the materialist basis of values, showing that values are not divine but arise from the material conditions of life and can be subject to scientific appraisal.

The claim that Marxism is outdated or irrelevant to the question of values (arguments are similarly raised in regard to women's rights, problems of race, nationalism and so on) indicates an unwillingness to apply basic principles of Marxism to such issues or a rejection of such principles in favour of non-class approaches. As with other spheres of social science, the Marxist study of values is an ongoing task.

Even a cursory examination of the activities of Marxists in each country will show that they have always projected values, although not couched in the terms of human values advocates.

Marxists speak not of democracy in general but a democracy with a form and content that serves the interests of the mass of the people, particularly the working class. Not freedom in general, but a freedom which will allow exploited and oppressed peoples to be collective masters of their destiny. Not love and friendship in general but relationships which will bond the fraternity of the working people. Does partisanship in favour of the exploited and oppressed mean that there is no interest in values?

Marxists seek to put forward values which are in line with people's needs and the progress of humanity. They oppose values which hold back the fulfillment of needs.

Marxists have long been accused of not being genuinely interested in world

peace, as if there was a "hidden agenda". Programs for children and youth are called "manipulations". Standing at the forefront of struggles for national liberation, for workers' rights and against racism are portrayed as usurping the leadership of mass movements. Visions for the all-round development of human potential in socialism and communism are viewed as plans to dehumanise society and subjugate the people under party rule.

Each political movement projects values applicable to the whole of society. The values of Marxism, based essentially on human dignity and the end of oppression and exploitation of people by people, are supported by scientific philosophy. The values are borne out by the enormous successes of Marxists in popular mass movements in a wide range of political and social circumstances.

In regard to socialism, Marxists have at no stage promised a "land of milk and honey" once socialism is achieved. There was no promise of absolute freedoms such as those promoted under the name of human values. Despite the difficulties and shortcomings in some socialist countries and the necessity to correct past errors, Marxism provides the framework for the achievement of the highest and most dignified of social values.

The state of apartheid

Mandela is free. The African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) are unbanned. This has been achieved principally by the determined and heroic struggle waged by the people of South Africa.

By why did Mr de Klerk respond to the struggle in this way? Has he suddenly become a “nice guy”? Has he suddenly developed an understanding of “human values”? Has he too been struck by the powerful philosophical principles of “new thinking”?

Far from it. Mr Frederick de Klerk, the apartheid regime's latest front man, is hopping to a new tune in the same old opera --the dead opus of apartheid and its desperate attempts to prolong its hideous existence. The gun and torture have not stemmed the tide of change. Time for a shift in tactics.

The apartheid regime has resorted to the most spectacular manoeuvre for quite some time. In declaring apparently significant reforms during the opening of the latest minority white government, Mr de Klerk has taken a gamble forced upon him by the tremendous upsurge in the black struggle for freedom and democracy and by the overall and profound crisis of the apartheid system.

The manoeuvre is not without cunning and is carefully targeted to achieve specific results. It is the culmination of patient and painstaking preparations and is entirely in keeping with the regime's ruthless attempts to preserve the system. The regime has taken both national and international factors into account in developing its latest ploy.

The regime cannot rule South Africa in the old way any longer and all attempts to smash the people and their organisations have failed. The struggle continues to deepen in all aspects of South African life with the prospects of a revolutionary breakthrough greater than ever before.

Despite being one of the richest countries in the world and despite surreptitious aid from its imperialist allies, the South African economy is in deep crisis. Aggravated by sanctions, disinvestment, high interest rates, a collapsed rand, high national debt and a massive brain drain, the economy continues to be severely hit by the most broadly based industrial action taken by

the black working class in the country's history.

Black union membership is at its highest level and strikes and stay aways have become mass movements with clearly defined economic and political goals.

In addition, South Africa's military expenditure — expenditure on its internal security forces, police, prisons, the apartheid bureaucracy — has grown enormously over the past decade adding further pressure to the economic crisis. The current "defence" budget is one of the highest in the country's history.

South Africa was defeated in Angola and Namibia despite having committed huge resources in attempting to win. Defeat, no longer being able to commit such resources and unrest in the white community over the growing number of whites killed in action or taken prisoner forced the regime to negotiate a settlement.

The victory of the national liberation movements around South Africa's borders has had a powerfully inspirational effect in South Africa. The "boer" can be defeated after all.

Recent developments within the National Party saw Mr Botha replaced by Mr de Klerk, signifying a rise to power of a section of the party more closely attuned to the wishes of big business.

Big business, seeking a pragmatic way out of the crisis and prepared to negotiate in search of a solution favourable to their interests, have for some time being pressing the government to seek alternatives.

Recent white elections, while increasing the vote for the extreme right, also increased the vote for candidates to the left of Mr Botha permitting Mr de Klerk to consolidate his grip on power. The regime switched its attention from looking for outright oppressive methods of smashing the struggle to more subtle means.

The primary aim was and is to create the impression of accelerated reform of the system so as to convince sections of the liberation movement to forsake struggle for negotiations and the international community to ease sanctions and the isolation of South Africa.

Prior to Mr de Klerk's recent announcements, the ideological campaign against the ANC and the SACP was greatly intensified.

The aims were to create a section in the ANC willing to negotiate immediately without insisting on the government's adherence to the terms of the Harare agreement, to split the ANC leadership, to give the impression that Comrade Nelson Mandela favoured the negotiations road, to split the SACP from the ANC, to discredit various leaders (like Comrade Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the SACP) and to discredit socialism.

If the regime succeeds in creating this split, it will be able to negotiate from a position of strength and will severely set back the revolutionary struggle in

South Africa.

Another factor that influenced the regime's timing is the current international situation. The particular problems facing the socialist countries and imperialism's response form the background to the South African regime's manoeuvres.

Imperialism is trumpeting the end of socialism and the regime is no exception in using this line to paint the struggle for socialism as futile, to create ideological disunity in the SACP, to portray the party as irrelevant.

One of the "angles" the regime is exploiting are some inevitable differences in strategic aims between the ANC and the SACP. The Party is struggling for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. It sees the process occurring in two stages. The first is the victory of the national liberation struggle and implementation of the Freedom Charter by the ANC. Subsequently, there will be a struggle in post-apartheid South Africa for the replacement of capitalism by socialism.

While many in the ANC would agree with this program, some may not since the ANC has affiliated to it many different organisations. It is important to remember that the ANC is struggling to smash apartheid but not necessarily for socialism as such.

The regime's last position, its bottom line, is defence of the capitalist system. After all, apartheid was spawned by "civilised", "democratic" capitalism. Displaying a subtle understanding of these different positions, the regime is trying to use them too as a lever to split the ANC and to split the SACP from the ANC on basically pro-capitalist anti-socialist lines.

The regime is quite aware of various "reassessments" in some Soviet circles of the struggle in Southern Africa and is not without its own ambitions in exploiting new possible trade opportunities in Eastern Europe.

It is quite aware of the arguments of "new thinking", especially pertaining to the settlements of conflicts, the national liberation struggles, the struggle for peace and so on. These ideas must also be in the minds of some Soviet "reassessors" who seem to think that "rejoining" the "civilised world" may permit them to entertain the idea of commencing negotiations with the South African regime.

During 1989 a group of white South African businessmen visited Moscow apparently unofficially — but they were not locked up when they returned home even though they had trod where no other "respectable" white had before! For the first time, a socialist country, Hungary, has developed relations with the regime.

The ideological advantage all this gives to the regime is potentially very damaging for the South African struggle. It gives them the opportunity, by exploiting these ideological differences, of provoking a rift between the ANC and the SACP on the one hand, and the USSR on the other. The USSR has been a loyal supporter of the struggle up to now and any reversal of this would

have a negative effect.

One could almost imagine the next step to this possibility --an invitation by the regime to the “big powers” to become the “honest brokers” in helping to negotiate a settlement in Southern Africa, thereby neatly taking the struggle out of the hands of the national liberation movements.

This is one of the main reasons why the regime legalised the ANC and the SACP — to send a clear signal to Moscow that the “reassessments” are valid, that the regime can also grasp the essence of “new thinking” and that therefore material support to the ANC and SACP is no longer necessary.

The regime will try to bypass the SACP and prove it a redundant political force. Should this succeed, it will have an adverse impact on the ANC.

The current situation, while full of many opportunities for the struggle, is also fraught with danger and traps. The bourgeois media, subtle and extremely clever, is beautifully orchestrating the imperialist melody.

As part of a comprehensive onslaught on the national liberation struggle in general and the ANC in particular, the media, apparently hailing the release of Comrade Nelson Mandela, was sowing division, doubt, illusions and misconceptions. From his first step outside prison, provocateurs swung into action in front of the world media while the fascist South African police as usual revealed the true intentions of the apartheid regime.

As Comrade Mandela stated in his first speech, the conditions that created the necessity for the armed struggle against apartheid have not changed. The struggle must be maintained and intensified on all fronts and only when the regime accepts the conditions laid down in Harare can the question of negotiations be considered.

Forward to victory!

Viva Tambo! Viva Sisulu! Viva Mandela!

Amandla! Wetu!

Long live the ANC!

Long live the SACP!

o! Viva Sisulu! Viva Mandela!

Amandla! Wetu!

Long live the ANC!

A turning point in history

Excerpts from the report by
Gus Hall, National Chairman,
Communist Party of the USA
to CPUSA National Committee meeting
January 27 and 28, 1990

I believe that we can all agree that we are dealing with one of history's most difficult and unparalleled moments. It is a moment that calls for a deep, probing, scientific and most sober assessment by all of us. Second thoughts, objectivity, a sense of responsibility, socialist partisanship and concern for party unity are very much on the order of the day.

There is no question that world developments, especially in the socialist world, are of great significance. Of course we must keep up with and study the ever-developing events.

However, I think it would be a serious mistake to make them the centre of our attention and the focus of our work. The source of the solution to our problems lies here at home. The source of our strengths and weaknesses is here. Besides drawing lessons, there is very little we can do about the developments in the socialist countries — while there is much we can and should do about the problems our people face.

There must be a balance and a focus in our work. We must not permit a lop-sided focus or preoccupation with the socialist world to become a rationale to avoid dealing with our own problems.

This is especially true because our focus must be mainly on a most extraordinary moment that is unfolding in our country's domestic affairs. Today we are seeing the coalescing of a number of important circumstances that, taken together, are creating a new economic situation. We have to measure what we are doing, or not doing, in the context of this new situation.

First, there are the factors creating the turning point in history. Slowly but surely the cold war and the nuclear arms race are receding into the

background. This has a number of domino effects.

We must take advantage of the potentials of the turning point, including the coming meeting between President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The June summit will be based on signing agreements on further reductions in nuclear weapons and the first mutual cutbacks in conventional arms.

Our focus must be on the Bush administration's footdragging. We have to keep up the pressure against its policies of aggression in Central America, Cuba and Africa. We have to mobilise for struggles around the concept of the peace dividend and conversion.

Second, and simultaneously, there is a growth of the factors producing what some call stagflation — which in reality is the onset of an economic crisis.

As more and more signs point downward, even capitalists are predicting gloom and doom. Felix Zulaus, a banker, says: "The stronger economies have a good chance for a soft landing. But in the deficit countries the recession risk is very high. We are on the way to recession in the United States. Even if the economists do not finally call it that, there will be a lot of pain."

Three basic elements are bringing on this crisis. One is the growing and sharpening contradiction between overproduction and consumption, elements that usually bring on a crisis. The other is the cutbacks that are just beginning in the military-related industries. And thirdly, the hiring freeze by cities across the country and the Pentagon. This situation is further aggravated by the continuing decline in US competitiveness in the world market.

As a result, we are experiencing the first wave of mass layoffs. There is a new wave of plant closings, a big jump in Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings and bank failures all across the country. The crisis of the cities is deepening, resulting in cutbacks in services. School systems are at a new level of crisis. There are more homeless, new levels of unemployment and growing hunger.

The new layoffs are across the board — in industries and among white collar workers. Both old and new tech industries are affected. And the decline in living standards is accelerating.

Housing

The Bush administration is continuing its policy of no housing for the poor and working people.

Therefore, what is called for is the launching of a mass campaign for a National Housing Rights Act. There is no equivalent issue which so directly impacts on the mutual economic and political interests of African-Americans, whites, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, unemployed and employed alike. It is an issue that cuts across the board, from the homeless shelters to the factories.

Health care

Forty million Americans have no health care coverage. For these millions

this is already a crisis. With the new wave of layoffs and plant closings, the number will increase dramatically. We must focus our attention on this crisis.

Education

The third critical area that is already in a crisis, and will be even more sharply affected in the future, is education.

Housing, health care and education are areas where racism and discrimination and every other kind of inequality are pervasive. These are areas where an economic crisis can quickly become a disaster.

These are issues around which broad coalitions can be built. They are front-line issues in every election campaign. They are also issues in which the party can inject its political plus.

The new moment

This is a time that tests our ideological and political souls. Adding to the difficulty of arriving at conclusions and making judgements about events in the socialist countries is the fact that the situation, especially in Eastern Europe, is changing daily. No one has all the answers. Situations become more complex. Information is often unreliable and there is a lot of misinformation.

A few months ago the largest demonstrations were in support of a more democratic socialism — not for a return to capitalism. As the demonstrations continue, the crowds become smaller but the slogans and demands increasingly become more anti-communist and anti-socialist. There are more demands to eliminate the communist party's leading role and remove communists from power. Thus, in some countries, the danger of a longer-term setback to socialism has gradually become a more clear and present danger.

This period did not spring from an empty history book. The changes taking place in the socialist world today were made possible and necessary by the achievements and mistakes of the socialist states.

We are dealing with the capitalist system, which continues to degenerate, and a socialist system going through a period of turmoil, regeneration and reconstruction. And in some countries we are dealing with a new challenge to socialism's very existence.

We are dealing with the old class struggle that continues as the centrepiece, but is reflecting the new changes that the new level of science and technology brings into being. There are some setbacks, but we are still dealing with developments in the framework of the world revolutionary process.

We are dealing with new ideas, lessons, conclusions and new projections. But to be accurate they must be based on the time-tested science of Marxism-Leninism — the laws of change that bring on the new, both in nature and human society. Those laws are as valid today as when they were discovered.

We are still dealing with the same old imperialism, but an imperialism drunk on the idea that the forces of the world revolutionary process are greatly weakened — and thus the new brazenness of the US invasion of Panama and

its aggressive policies against Cuba and Nicaragua. It is an imperialism forced to reluctantly and haltingly wind down the nuclear arms race and the cold war.

The cold war thaw and turning point in history does not end US imperialism's aggressive designs. Under the spell of illusions, it thinks it can once again have its way with the world, through military means, whenever and wherever it deems necessary.

When, momentarily, imperialism does not feel it is ready for a military confrontation in some area, this does not end the danger of imperialist moves. In fact, this is exactly when it places a greater emphasis on the softening up process. In such areas it multiplies its efforts in subversion, infiltration, provocation and sabotage.

US and world imperialism have trained personnel on the spot ready to move — openly or covertly — whenever the softening up process reaches the point where there is enough confusion to move. Such forces are ready and in action for every Third World and socialist country in the world.

In other words, we must not deal with what is new as if the old has disappeared, because that is not the real world. Ability to deal with and reflect on the new reality depends on whether we keep in mind the laws and processes that give rise to the new.

Opposite forces, same direction

Adding to the uniqueness of this moment is the fact that there are a number of developments within which there are opposing, contradictory trends. This is understandable because we are at a turning point in history in which opposite forces are moving in the same direction.

On the one hand, the cold war is fading into the background. The nuclear arms race and the danger of a nuclear war has subsided and the tensions between the United States and USSR, and between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty nations, are easing.

At the same time, the Bush administration — with the full support of British, French and West German imperialism — is carrying out a brutal military aggression against Panama.

On the one hand, anti-Sovietism and anti-communism is more muffled. The old big lie — based on the Soviet military threat and the Soviet Union as the centre of a world-dominating evil empire — has lost much of its clout. The old big lie that was hatched in Hitler's bunkers and was adapted by world capitalism as its political and ideological bible has lost much of its credibility.

On the other hand, as the old big lie was dying up, the same corporate forces in the ideological stables of big business were busy designing a new, improved version of the big lie. The slogans give the content: "The 1980s will go down in history as the demise of socialism"; "Socialism is brain-dead"; "Socialism has not sustained its theories, philosophies or thought".

Contradictions of the moment

There is another seeming contradiction. On the one hand, evil empire anti-Sovietism has declined. However, having failed to sustain the cold war and the big lie, the ruling class and its ideological lackeys have decided to go for the jugular — the socialist system itself. They have declared ideological war on socialism, the ideology of scientific socialism and the very existence and idea of communist parties.

On the ideological level, this is an even more serious challenge to our party. They have seized on the turmoil in the socialist world to prove that socialism has failed and capitalism is the way of the world. This forces us to defend not only the achievements, but the very concept of socialism.

There is more than enough proof that ideological penetration has succeeded in distorting the perceptions and ideas of leading personalities in both the capitalist and socialist countries.

The dynamics of the turning point in history are: the receding of the cold war and the ascendancy of the era of peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism, the acceleration in the decay of capitalism, the onset of a US crisis and the renewal of socialism.

The main driving force of the turning point is the Soviet Union, together with the forces of peace and national liberation.

Thus, we have our task laid out for us. We are the one force in the country with the will and ability to take on this immense challenge and mount an ideological counter-offensive — and at the same time to take advantage of the turning point in history.

Developments in the socialist countries

It is clear the turmoil, conflicts and changes going on in the socialist countries are not over. It would be easier, and probably wiser, to wait until the dust settles before making assessments, drawing conclusions and making judgments. But there are reasons why we must try to explain now what is happening.

The ideological sections of the FBI and CIA and the propaganda departments of universities are in high gear spreading the new big lie about the death throes of communism. However, based on past experience, people are not so ready to accept another big lie.

Although there is a developing consensus in the world communist movement on some questions, a world meeting of parties to collectively draw some basic conclusions is not on the horizon.

While we should not sit in final judgement on the parties in the socialist world, we need to appraise factors that in one way or another affect our work. We have to make such an effort even knowing that we do not have the necessary background materials and that we are being flooded with misinformation.

The developments and turmoil

The developments in the Soviet Union are on one level. They have their own set of problems. China has its own set of problems. Because socialism in Rumania has a different history the present situation there must be seen differently. Cuba, surrounded, blockaded and partly occupied by US imperialism, is forced to take this into account in building socialism.

The same applies to North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. Each has its own set of problems in building socialism according to its own history, culture and traditions.

The new five-year plan (in the USSR) returns the building of socialism to a more carefully planned, stage by stage approach. It is based on the concept that perestroika will begin to produce concrete results. In fact, it has already produced some results, but they are not yet being felt in the everyday life of the Soviet consumer.

At a recent two-day special meeting of 1,200 people from workplaces throughout the country, to review the current social and economic conditions in the country and consider how to remove obstacles blocking the current economic reforms, progress was cited in increasing quantities of consumer goods and food products. But, as Mikhail Gorbachev said, people see little improvement in the market because the rise in supplies is eaten up by snow-balling incomes.

China has decided that it went too far along the path of private enterprise, both foreign and domestic. It is taking steps to curtail excessive privatisation. The Chinese are undertaking the task of building an economy that has a balanced mix of some central planning, independent socialist enterprises, private and joint ventures. What is new is the re-introduction of some central planning and direction, including some control over inflation, along with a list of priorities.

To one extent or another all socialist countries have undertaken the path of decentralisation and democratisation. Some more, some less. Such steps were inevitable at some point along the path of creating a more democratic society. Mainly objective, but also some subjective, conditions have changed to make this shift possible. Some questions have emerged as to whether the subjective element — the people — were prepared for such a shift. It seems that most, if not all, of the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, did not think through the possible domino effect of some actions. As a result, unnecessary, avoidable distortions and dislocations occurred in their economies.

There appear to be similar problems with the steps towards greater democracy. It seems there was not enough ideological education and general preparation of the people. As the Soviets say, the steps towards glasnost were not accompanied by the necessary parallel steps to increase responsibility and discipline. Not enough was done to explain what the people's responsibilities are in the new democratic structure.

Patriotism and nationalism

The available information leads us to believe that the appeals against strikes, slowdowns and mass demonstrations during working hours were not done on the basis of the damage they would do to production, to the building of socialism. The appeals for unity and the work ethic were not based on the ideology of socialism, but on general appeals to loyalty and patriotism.

These are appeals to a thin, delicate veneer that easily wears off when it does not have a strong coating of ideological-political polish. An appeal to people without reference to the working class and class struggle is an appeal to surface, shallow sentiments. The influence of nationalism has overshadowed feelings of patriotism based on socialism and internationalism.

An ideology based on internationalism has to be one of the stable pillars of support in a socialist society, especially when a country is made up of many nationalities. Without an ideological struggle that includes internationalism, national pride turns into self-centred nationalism and national chauvinism.

The negative features in the socialist world cannot be explained without taking into account some long-term weaknesses, including the vacuum created by a lack of ideological struggle, which in turn leads to weaknesses in political leadership.

Lithuania's nationalist movement, led by Sajudis, is provoking calculated moves towards secession. The Lithuanian Communist Party has already separated from the Soviet party and declared an independent, multi-party republic — another case of extreme nationalism devoid of class and socialist ideology.

In the midst of a nationalist fever, with entrenched elements of anti-Sovietism and anti-socialism, what is missing is an argument on sound ideological grounds. What is missing is an argument based on the benefits of preserving and advancing socialism in Lithuania. What is missing is a rejection of capitalism.

Self-determination

Communists have always stood for the self-determination of nations. But they never viewed this right unconditionally and in all circumstances. Communists have always placed this on a class basis, because the basic solution to the full right of nations will be solved by socialism. Does it solve the interests of the working class and socialism or hurt it? At times, and for certain countries, Marx opposed self-determination where it might hurt democracy and socialism.

And Lenin always placed it in the context of overall struggle. It seems to me that a class appeal to the workers and peasants of Lithuania — on the basis of preserving and expanding socialist democracy, the superiority of the socialist system and internationalism — is the only way to convince the healthiest working class forces in Lithuania.

Even where there is loyalty to the idea of socialism, it must be organised to

fight anti-socialist elements. Unless this is done there is no assurance that pro-socialist forces will defend socialism. Loyalty is only a feeling that must be organised and mobilised before it becomes political power.

Some parties in the socialist world make their appeals to the nationalism of the people rather than on the basis of class, internationalism and socialism. In doing so they try to skip an ideological stage. They do not build a reservoir of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist ideology. A nationalist appeal — even an appeal on the basis of patriotism and loyalty to country --leaves the ideological door wide open.

The appeals for unity, for internationalism, are not based on the superiority of the socialist system. On the contrary, some appeals are based on the idea that capitalism is a superior system. Without convincing people that socialism is a better system, parties cannot win the support of the majority of the people.

What has been and is missing in the Baltic Republics is class consciousness, class unity. What is missing is an ideology that would build a sense of unity, an ideology that would transform national pride into a positive, progressive internationalist consciousness. What is missing in the people's consciousness is the ideology of socialism.

The ideology of internationalism is a many-sided body of thought. It must burn out and replace both great power chauvinism and petty bourgeois nationalism.

Although we do not have all the facts, I think we can assume that both petty bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism are present in the socialist countries. The prevalent idea that the national question has been resolved opened the doors to the mistaken notion that there was no longer a need to struggle against either nationalism or chauvinism. Again this left the ideological doors open. In such an atmosphere, both will flourish.

The socialist system is not the culprit. And it is too easy to blame Stalin for the pogroms of today. It seems to me the Soviet leaders, past and present, have to take the blame for such cultural and ideological backwardness.

History

No one factor explains the events in the East European socialist countries either. No one single factor could have created the situation. It was rather a number of negative factors that all came together and spread.

Among them is how socialism emerged in these countries. Many years ago, when Nikita Khrushchev was head of the CPSU, an informal meeting of the leaders of the world communist parties was held. Some leading comrades from the parties of Eastern Europe were rather critical of the parties in the capitalist world, including our party.

Khrushchev took issue. Among other things, he said: "You comrades from the socialist countries should not be so smug. You should be more understanding of the problems the parties in the capitalist countries face. You

should be more helpful because you must not forget that history and the Red Army handed you socialism on a red silver platter.”

In a recent speech about these kind of matters, Comrade Fidel Castro observed: “Cuba is not a country in which socialism came in the wake of the victorious divisions of the Red Army. In Cuba our people created our socialist society in the course of a legitimate heroic struggle. For 30 years we have stood firm against the most powerful empire on earth that sought to destroy our revolution.”

How socialism emerged in Eastern Europe

How much the question of how socialism emerged in Eastern Europe has influenced the developments in these countries is hard to say. But it most likely was a factor determining the style of leadership.

Coming as it did, the new system was saddled with thousands of years of backwardness. Bringing agriculture from the wooden plough to the modern tractor and from blacksmith shops to modern steel mills is a big challenge.

Just as important and difficult was the task of simultaneously developing class and socialist consciousness. Human nature changes slowly. To prepare people a country must carry out an advanced system of ideological education and training. The countries which did not experience capitalist exploitation were under a big handicap in building socialism. Creating class consciousness in a non-class conscious society is a formidable task.

In December 1917, Lenin well understood the herculean task of building class consciousness in the workers and peasants. He explained: “They have not yet become accustomed to the idea that they are now the ruling class.... The revolution could not at one stroke instill these qualities into millions and millions of people who all their lives had been compelled by want and hunger to work under the threat of a stick.” But, Lenin said, the revolution “is strong, viable and invincible because it awakens these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles and leads the working people onto the road of the independent creation of a new life”.

But that was just the beginning. A long and winding road lay ahead, especially in the arduous task of creating class and socialist consciousness. For this, there was no substitute for the vanguard role of the communist party.

It appears that many of the parties thought that the benefits of socialism, alone, would spontaneously transform the people into supporters of socialism and that the experience of building real socialism would create the political and ideological support base for socialism.

Recent events would indicate that not nearly all the people, even after 70 and 40 years of socialism, have become conscious supporters of socialism. There are many more people in the socialist countries who are not convinced that socialism is superior to capitalism than anyone previously thought, A residue of anti-socialism is left over from the days when fascist ideology was dominant in most of the socialist countries.

After all, the ideology of fascism is the original big lie of anti-Sovietism and anti-socialism. That was the ideological underpinning of Hitler's grand design — to rid the world of communists, socialism and Marxist-Leninist ideology and replace it with fascism and the fascist ideology.

And one cannot ignore the fact that there is a massive radio, TV and press network of hundreds of radio and television stations — from the CIA's *Voice of America* to dozens in West Berlin and throughout West Germany, Great Britain, France and dozens of other countries — beaming round-the-clock propaganda to the people in the socialist countries. I think that communist parties have underestimated the influence and sophistication of this endless propaganda barrage.

In the turmoil today, it is precisely the non-supporters and anti-socialist elements who are the main forces now demonstrating against socialism.

Ideological penetration

The ideological penetration of socialist Europe is being carried out on many levels. For example, after a three-day advisory trip to Poland, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a Paris-based group representing 24 Western capitalist countries, concluded that “radical changes in workers' attitudes would be necessary” and that Poland would have to “focus on maximising profits and minimising costs ... stop worrying about maintaining high levels of employment and wages ... and make structural changes toward a market economy aimed at encouraging entrepreneurs and competition”. Any pause in this process, they warned, “would hold up the process of moving from one economic system to another”.

And “political consultants” are rushing to Eastern Europe to “advise Eastern Europe countries how to make the transition to western style democracy”. Last month a representative of the Democratic Party, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy --who was, ironically, the foreign policy adviser in the Dukakis presidential campaign and a long-time friend of Czech Civic Forum dissidents — started a tour of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania, with a delegation of specialists, to teach their governments how “to propagate pluralism” and organise “bipartisan workshops on democracy”.

The West German Social Democratic Party has offered “strategy money, duplicating machines and speakers to East Germany”, while the Free Democrats and Christian Democrats are making plans to offer their “help”.

Rupert Murdoch's ultra-right newspaper conglomerate moved to establish a major ideological beachhead in Eastern Europe with his recent purchase of 50 per cent of two Hungarian “reform” newspapers and plans to “train managers and reporters from other countries”. These are papers that appeal to the lowest political and cultural tastes, with pornography, articles about gold-plated limousines, caviar, perfume and Paris fashions, interspersed with anti-socialist coverage and commentary. Other capitalist media are also “exploring opportunities” to make anti-socialist ideological inroads.

The class struggle in the socialist countries will be fought out under the

most unusual conditions. It is the working class in these socialist countries that will save socialism. The struggle will be mainly over privatisation, exploitation, profits and cutbacks in wages and social security.

A quote from Lenin is pertinent here: "The socialist revolution can only be lasting when this new class learns ... from the practical work of government. Only when it enlists the vast mass of working people for this work, when it elaborates forms which will enable all working people to adapt themselves easily to the work of governing the state and establishing law and order. Only on this condition is the socialist revolution bound to be lasting."

How things are shaping up

Lech Walesa and others made big noises about how the Johnson and Johnson heiress to the US pharmaceutical fortune was going to buy out the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk. Her picture was posted on the front gate and she was given a guarantee of a five-year ban on strikes, a 50 cent per hour reduction in wages for the same period and a layoff of 3,500 workers.

But when the offer was put to the shipyard workers they turned it down flat and her picture was removed from the gates. That is a good story about capital investment in socialism.

Recently five mines were shut down in Poland as 35,000 miners walked off the job in protest against the new economic measures to turn their country into a "capitalist market economy". Wage controls and big price increases, 500 per cent inflation, elimination of all price subsidies, plus plans to close mines and factories are evoking angry responses from workers, while Walesa pleads with workers to "have patience with the only road for Poland".

There is an interesting turn of events in Poland. The Solidarity union is seen more and more as part of the establishment that is imposing hardship and austerity and is fast losing its influence at the grassroots, while the restructured old union has become an economic and even political force.

There are similar signs in Hungary and the other socialist countries that the working class, and especially basic production workers, are beginning to have second thoughts.

In the GDR the Socialist Unity Party called an anti-fascist protest rally and some 40,000, mainly workers, turned out. Within a month after the protests started, the ratings of the GDR party, in a public opinion poll conducted by a West German outfit, went from ten per cent to 35 per cent.

In Lithuania the nationalist forces rigged the party congress that voted to separate from the CPSU, manoeuvring to ensure that only two per cent of the delegates were workers and farmers and that the overwhelming majority, 98 per cent, were intellectuals, artists and students. Excluding workers and farmers was the only way the petty bourgeois nationalists could ensure a vote for separation. It is clear the working class of Lithuania will have to save socialism.

As it should be, the advanced forces in the struggle for socialism in the

socialist states will be mainly the workers.

The long-range perspective for socialism

The turmoil in the socialist countries raises the question of whether these developments are setbacks for socialism. I think they are. How long they will remain a negative factor is hard to say. In some countries, the setbacks will be more severe and longer lasting; in others the process of revitalisation will be shorter.

In some countries the communists may lose the first election, but win the second election based on second thoughts.

The developments are setbacks for the socialist economies. They are also political setbacks. They are short-term setbacks that are preparing the soil for long-term gains, creating the basis for a new and higher level of a more democratic socialism. Nevertheless, the process is painful.

Do the recent events negate the concept that socialism is an inevitable historical process? They absolutely do not. Socialism is inevitable because the decay of capitalism is an inevitable process. Socialism is a response, a reaction to the crises and problems of a degenerating system.

We must even ask if it is possible that socialism will temporarily lose out in one or another country. I do not think this is going to happen, but it cannot be completely ruled out. There is a tendency, even within our party, to become so immersed in the problems and setbacks that we forget the positive achievements of socialism. The workers in the socialist countries will not.

Perestroika has problems, but American workers respond positively to the fact that perestroika completely turned over ownership of the plants to the workers. They are hearing much about the social benefits of socialism. American workers are curious and they are asking us what the workers and trade unions are thinking and doing in the new situation. This is an open door for us to talk to them about existing socialism.

Glasnost also has adjustment problems, but the American people generally respond positively to any measures toward more democracy. And they view, with admiration and envy, the free education, medical and health care, maternity leaves, child care, paid vacations at workers' resorts, pensions and many other social benefits of socialism.

Socialism is light years ahead of the capitalist world. These benefits are what the workers in socialist countries will defend and fight for.

How do the developments fit into the longer range perspective? My present view is that socialism will go through a difficult period in all areas — economically, politically, ideologically and culturally. Socialism will go through a painful transition to a higher stage of socialism.

Will the socialist countries make it through the present stage without making at least a detour into capitalism? I think they will all make it without a detour. Some, if not all, will experiment with features of capitalism.

The turmoil will settle down. Perestroika will start to produce results. The Soviet economy will come to life and play a positive role, especially in the struggle between the two systems.

The processes of democratisation will continue in all the socialist countries. However, some mistakes will be made, especially in trying to copy the experiences of democracy in capitalist countries. A new kind of democracy, but a socialist democracy, will emerge.

After 70 years....

There are times when current events alone do not provide enough fuel to sustain an optimistic outlook. And current events, separated from their context in the broad sweep of history, can be misleading.

At such times a positive outlook can be sustained more by understanding the long-range direction of human events — the progressive, inevitable direction of history itself.

Our sense of optimism and confidence is based on our science. We view world events from the vantage point of science, which includes the science of Marxism-Leninism. From the vantage point of science there is no justification for pessimism. The real world does not sustain such an outlook.

Socialism may be having a difficult in the short term, but it does have a promising, magnificent future.

Capitalism may have some short-term advantages, but the undeniable truth is that it has no future.

Some have asked: "How come after 70 years of socialism in the Soviet Union and 40 years in Eastern Europe such problems, weaknesses and mistakes still happen?"

Why after 70 years? Because in 70 years you do not make a new society. You cannot yet have abundance and you cannot yet fully develop the new socialist personality.

Why after 70 years? Because after 70 years there is still world imperialism bent on infiltration, subversion and softening up.

Why after 70 years? Because the capitalist system and the class struggle remain a fact of life.

Why after 70 years? Because hostile, anti-socialist elements live that long.

Why after 70 years? Because it takes time to undo the deep damage to the human character left by capitalism. It takes time to straighten out the mess left by hundreds of years of exploitative systems.

The question is not placed correctly. The real question is: *how has it been possible to do all socialism has done in a brief 70 years?*

It is in this context that we must weigh the mistakes and weaknesses of socialist countries and their leaders. If the leaders had not committed errors,

they would have done better. We do not make apologies for the errors.

We can learn much from the remark of Comrade Togliatti to his party when the socialists of Italy broke ranks and joined the reactionary crusade against the Soviet Union during the Hungarian events.

“I would like to say this to our socialist comrades as well as to my democratic friends — the place of the working man, the place of the people who have a sense of revolutionary reality is on the side of revolution and not on the side of reaction. And then, when the battle is won, when the crisis is over, we will continue to debate about the mistakes and how to correct them. But above all, we must not lose the conception of the place of those who fight for socialism and peace.”

Partisanship, internationalism, working class and socialist consciousness — that was Togliatti’s appeal in 1956. Can we do less today?

Communist Parties in the socialist countries

One of the more difficult factors to assess is why party leaderships in the East European socialist countries fell apart with the first signs of crisis. Their collapse left these parties leaderless, confused and demoralised. Members had no way of knowing what they should do. Thus communists and other progressives and defenders of socialism literally did nothing for weeks. The membership waited for direction and received none.

This left an ideological and political vacuum which anti-socialist opposition forces immediately moved in to fill. Chaos and anarchy set in. The collapse of party leaderships then became the biggest factor fueling and prolonging the crisis.

The parties were totally unprepared for what happened. Their leaderships split into squabbling factions. Accusations against the leadership and bitter internal debates engulfed the parties. Some accusations against leaders were true. In my opinion, many were not. In all this, opportunism was a big factor, adding fuel to the accelerating crisis.

Referring to these events in a recent speech, Comrade Fidel Castro said: “In Cuba, we are engaged in a process of rectification”, their version of perestroika and glasnost. Castro said: “No revolution or truly socialist rectification is possible without a strong, disciplined, respected party. Such a process cannot be advanced by slandering socialism, destroying its values, casting slurs on the party, demoralising its vanguard, abandoning the party’s guiding role, eliminating socialist discipline and sowing chaos and anarchy everywhere. This may foster a counter-revolution, but not revolutionary changes.”

As more information comes in, it becomes clearer that there are some similarities in the weaknesses and mistakes of most parties in the East European socialist countries.

There has been a long-term communication gap between the leadership and the membership and grassroots. The leadership was unaware of the

mass thought patterns. They did not know the nature of people's complaints and criticisms. They were isolated, both physically and politically.

Because of outstanding achievements in the building of socialism, party leaderships developed attitudes of complacency, smugness, elitism, bureaucratic and demagogic methods. In most socialist countries a special kind of bureaucratic style, reflective of socialist development, developed out of objective as well as subjective conditions. In Rumania this was taken to the extreme, where Ceaucescu built a corrupt ruling family dynasty. Incidentally, ABC-TV now admits that the pictures of mass graves in Romania were faked.

It is not clear how much truth there is to the charges of corruption — but in a socialist society there should be no corruption in the party leadership. Therefore, it seems that one conclusion, based on recent events, is that socialism needs some forms of grassroots checks and balances against bureaucracy and corruption.

The call for more democracy is the priority demand communist parties must respond to. This includes responding to demands by non-communists for a greater piece of the socialist action. Until now, communist parties have been too slow in sharing political power with other parties, especially with the millions of non-communists who want to participate fully in building socialism. They will be sharing socialist power.

The leadership hung onto old over-centralised, administrative structures and habits rooted in the past. They could have instituted more coalition-type, power-sharing structures earlier. They underestimated the millions of non-communists who were ready and willing to take part in building socialism. There is a need to build a communist and non-communist superstructure for socialism.

Now popular demonstrations are forcing the parties to do what they should have done earlier. If they had been closer to, and more attuned to, the grassroots, to the people, many of the problems and much of the upheaval could have been avoided.

The demonstrations are proof that there is room — indeed, a need — in socialist democracy for grassroots expression. Demonstrations are necessary counter-measures against overcentralised administrative structures, bureaucracy, complacency, isolation and corruption.

On the political and ideological front the communist parties face some new challenges. They will have to work in a united front with non-communists, in coalition governments, which is very different from the past. They will not be able to rely on the structure to guarantee their leading role. Instead, they will have to win this role on the basis of political and ideological persuasion. They will have to shake off the barnacles — the complacency, isolation and bureaucratic style that grew over the past years. Cliches do not win people. The party will have to earn its leading role by winning popular support. They will have to win their positions in competitive elections with opposing parties, with non-communists. This means they will have to up the ideological ante.

It is not only that leading party cadres did not give ideological and political leadership. Many of them were not themselves ideologically motivated. There was low level or no ideological work within the party. They will not be able to win their wings in the new conditions without raising their ideological level.

With peaceful competition the order of the day, communists will have to rid themselves of illusions about capitalism. They will have to convince people of the benefits of socialism and the true nature of capitalism. They will have to defend socialism and inspire people to ever higher levels of production. Communists will have to creatively, and in a new way, teach the science of Marxism-Leninism, inside and outside the party structure.

They will have to listen to the people. But they will also have to discuss, argue and debate among the people. This calls for ideological sophistication, maturity, creativity and socialist humanism.

The glorious revolutionary history, legacy and traditions of the communist parties in the transition to and building of socialism will stand them in good stead as they prepare for new roles in renewing, revitalising and restructuring democratic socialism.

Socialism's future cannot be separated from the future of the communist parties — whatever name they go by. In many ways, the restructuring of socialism and the restructuring of the vanguard parties will take place simultaneously.

The nature of the relationship between the two will also change. In general the vanguard parties will influence the building of socialism by way of coalitions. Because the parties will not be the only political force, the structure will have to be democratic enough to make room for more than one line of thought. It won't happen overnight. The restructuring will be a process, that is already underway.

Economics and politics in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat

Article by Lenin
dated October 30, 1919
published in *Pravda*
(no.250, November 7, 1919)

Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period which must combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period has to be a period of struggle between dying capitalism and nascent communism — or, in other words, between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but is still very feeble.

The necessity for a whole historical era distinguished by these transitional features should be obvious not only to Marxists, but to any educated person who is in any degree acquainted with the theory of development. Yet all the talk on the subject of the transition to socialism which we hear from present-day petty-bourgeois democrats (and such, in spite of their spurious socialist label, are all the leaders of the Second International, including such individuals as MacDonald, Jean Longuet, Kautsky and Friedrich Adler) is marked by complete disregard of this obvious truth. Petty-bourgeois democrats are distinguished by an aversion to class struggle, by their dreams of avoiding it, by their efforts to smooth over, to reconcile, to remove sharp corners. Such democrats, therefore, either avoid recognising any necessity for a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to communism or regard it as their duty to concoct schemes for reconciling the two contending forces instead of leading the struggle of one of these forces.

2

In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from what it would be in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces — and the basic forms of social economy — are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that the peculiarities can apply only to what is of lesser importance.

The basic forms of social economy are capitalism, petty commodity production, and communism. The basic forces are the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry in particular) and the proletariat.

The economic system of Russia in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the struggle of labour, united on communist principles on the scale of a vast state and making its first steps — the struggle against petty commodity production and against the capitalism which still persists and against that which is newly arising on the basis of petty commodity production.

In Russia, labour is united communistically insofar as, first, private ownership of the means of production has been abolished, and, secondly, the proletarian state power is organising large-scale production on state-owned land and in state-owned enterprises on a national scale, is distributing labour-power among the various branches of production and the various enterprises, and is distributing among the working people large quantities of articles of consumption belonging to the state.

We speak of “the first steps” of communism in Russia (it is also put that way in our Party Programme adopted in March 1919), because all these things have only been partially effected in our country, or, to put it differently, their achievement is only in its early stages. We accomplished instantly, at one revolutionary blow, all that can, in general, be accomplished instantly; on the first day of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for instance, on October 26 (November 8), 1917, the private ownership of land was abolished without compensation for the big landowners — the big landowners were expropriated. Within the space of a few months practically all the big capitalists, owners of factories, joint-stock companies, banks, railways, and so forth, were also expropriated without compensation.

The state organisation of large-scale production in industry and the transition from “workers’ control” to “workers’ management” of factories and railways — this has, by and large, already been accomplished; but in relation to agriculture it has only just begun (“state farms”, i.e., large farms organised by the workers’ state on state-owned land). Similarly, we have only just begun the organisation of various forms of co-operative societies of small farmers as a transition from petty commodity agriculture to communist agriculture. (★) The same must be said of the state-organised distribution of products in place of private trade, i.e., the state procurement and delivery of grain to the cities and of industrial products to the countryside. Available statistical data on this subject will be given below.

Peasant farming continues to be petty commodity production. Here we have an extremely broad and very sound, deep-rooted basis for capitalism, a basis on which capitalism persists or arises anew in a bitter struggle against communism. The forms of this struggle are private speculation and profiteering versus state procurement of grain (and other products) and state distribution of products in general.

3

To illustrate these abstract theoretical propositions, let us quote actual figures.

According to the figures of the People's Commissariat of Food, state procurement of grain in Russia between August 1, 1917, and August 1, 1918, amounted to about 30,000,000 poods, and in the following year to about 110,000,000 poods. During the first three months of the next campaign (1919-20) procurements will presumably total about 45,000,000 poods, as against 37,000,000 poods for the same period (August-October) in 1918.

These figures speak clearly of a slow but steady improvement in the state of affairs from the point of view of the victory of communism over capitalism. This improvement is being achieved in spite of difficulties without world parallel, difficulties due to the Civil War organised by Russian and foreign capitalists who are harnessing all the forces of the world's strongest powers.

Therefore, in spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their open or masked henchmen (the "socialists" of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute — as far as the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat is concerned, the victory of communism over capitalism in our country is assured. Throughout the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organising military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks, because it realises full well that our success in reconstructing the social economy is inevitable, provided we are not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding.

The extent to which we have already vanquished capitalism in the short time we have had at our disposal, and despite the incredible difficulties under which we have had to work, will be seen from the following summarised figures. The Central Statistical Board has just prepared for the press data on the production and consumption of grain — not for the whole of Soviet Russia, but only for 26 gubernias.

(In the original article, a table showing the results is included here.)

Thus, approximately half the amount of grain supplied to the cities is provided by the Commissariat of Food and the other half by profiteers. This same proportion is revealed in a careful survey, made in 1918, of the food consumed by city workers. It should be borne in mind that for bread supplied by the state the worker pays **one-ninth** of what he pays the profiteer. The profiteering price for bread is **ten times** greater than the state price; this is revealed by a detailed study of workers' budgets.

A careful study of the figures quoted shows that they present an exact picture of the fundamental features of Russia's present-day economy.

The working people have been emancipated from their age-old oppressors and exploiters, the landowners and capitalists. This step in the direction of real freedom and real equality, a step which for its extent, dimensions and rapidity is without parallel in the world, is ignored by the supporters of the bourgeoisie (including the petty-bourgeois democrats), who, when they talk of freedom and equality, mean parliamentary bourgeois democracy, which they falsely declare to be "democracy" in general, or "pure democracy" (Kautsky).

But the working people are concerned only with real equality and real freedom (freedom from the landowners and capitalists), and that is why they give the Soviet government such solid support.

In this peasant country it was the peasantry as a whole who were the first to gain, who gained most, and gained immediately from the dictatorship of the proletariat. The peasant in Russia starved under the landowners and capitalists. Throughout the long centuries of our history, the peasant never had an opportunity to work for himself: he starved while handing over hundreds of millions of poods of grain to the capitalists, for the cities and for export. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat the peasant **for the first time** has been working for himself and **feeding better than the city dweller**. For the first time the peasant has seen real freedom — freedom to eat his bread, freedom from starvation. In the distribution of the land, as we know, the maximum equality has been established; in the vast majority of cases the peasants are dividing the land according to the number of "mouths to feed".

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, first, to overthrow the landowners and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, **not** the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference between factory worker and peasant, to make **workers of all of them**. This cannot be done all at once. The task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity take a long time. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. It may only be delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative and legislative measures. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to effect an immense improvement in his whole farming technique, to reform it radically.

In order to solve the second and most difficult part of the problem, the proletariat, after having defeated the bourgeoisie, must unswervingly conduct its policy towards the peasantry along the following lines. The proletariat must

separate, demarcate the working peasant from the peasant owner, the peasant worker from the peasant huckster, the peasant who labours from the peasant who profiteers.

In this demarcation lies the **whole essence** of socialism.

And it is not surprising that the socialists who are socialists in word but petty-bourgeois democrats in deed (the Martovs, the Chernovs, the Kautskys and others) do not understand this essence of socialism.

The demarcation we here refer to is an extremely difficult one, because in real life all the features of the "peasant", however diverse they may be, however contradictory they may be, are fused into one whole. Nevertheless, demarcation is possible; and not only is it possible, it inevitably follows from the conditions of peasant farming and peasant life. The working peasant has for ages been oppressed by the landowners, the capitalists, the hucksters and profiteers and by **their** state, including even the most democratic bourgeois republics. Throughout the ages the working peasant has trained himself to hate and loathe these oppressors and exploiters, and this "training", engendered by the conditions of life, **compels** the peasant to seek an alliance with the worker against the capitalist and against the profiteer and huckster. Yet at the same time, economic conditions, the conditions of commodity production, inevitably turns the peasant (not always, but in the vast majority of cases) into a huckster and profiteer.

The statistics quoted above reveal a striking difference between the working peasant and the peasant profiteer. That peasant who during 1918-19 delivered to the hungry workers of the cities 40,000,000 poods of grain at fixed state prices, who delivered this grain to the state agencies despite all the shortcomings of the latter, shortcomings fully realised by the workers' government, but which were unavoidable in the first period of the transition to socialism — that peasant is a working peasant, the comrade and equal of the socialist worker, his most faithful ally, his blood brother in the fight against the yoke of capital. Whereas that peasant who clandestinely sold 40,000,000 poods of grain at ten times the state price, taking advantage of the need and hunger of the city worker, deceiving the state, and everywhere increasing and creating deceit, robbery and fraud — that peasant is a profiteer, an ally of the capitalist, a class enemy of the worker, an exploiter. For whoever possesses surplus grain gathered from land belonging to the whole state with the help of implements in which in one way or another is embodied the labour not only of the peasant but also of the worker and so on — whoever possesses a surplus of grain and profiteers in that grain is an exploiter of the hungry worker.

You are violators of freedom, equality, and democracy — they shout at us on all sides, pointing to the inequality of the worker and the peasant under our Constitution, to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, to the forcible confiscation of surplus grain, and so forth. We reply — never in the world has there been a state which has done so much to remove the actual inequality, the actual lack of freedom from which the working peasant has been suffering for centuries. But we shall never recognise equality with the peasant profiteer,

just as we do not recognise “equality” between the exploiter and the exploited, between the sated and the hungry, nor the “freedom” for the former to rob the latter. And those educated people who refuse to recognise this difference we shall treat as whiteguards, even though they may call themselves democrats, socialists, internationalists, Kautskys, Chernovs, or Martovs.

5

Socialism means the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done all it could to abolish classes. But classes cannot be abolished at one stroke.

And classes still **remain** and **will remain** in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when classes disappear. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear.

Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat, **every** class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

Under capitalism the proletariat was an oppressed class, a class which had been deprived of the means of production, the only class which stood directly and completely opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the only one capable of being revolutionary to the very end. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie and conquered political power, the proletariat has become the **ruling** class; it wields state power, it exercises control over means of production already socialised; it guides the wavering and intermediate elements and classes; it crushes the increasingly stubborn resistance of the exploiters. All these are **specific** tasks of the class struggle, tasks which the proletariat formerly did not and could not have set itself.

The class of exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, has not disappeared and cannot disappear all at once under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The exploiters have been smashed, but not destroyed. They still have an international base in the form of international capital, of which they are a branch. They still retain certain means of production in part, they still have money, they still have vast social connections. Because they have been defeated, the energy of their resistance has increased a hundred-and-a-thousandfold. The “art” of state, military and economic administration gives them a superiority, and a very great superiority, so that their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical proportion of the population. The class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious vanguard of the exploited, i.e., the proletariat, has become incomparably more bitter. And it cannot be otherwise in the case of a revolution, unless this concept is replaced (as it is by all the heroes of the Second International) by reformist illusions.

Lastly, the peasants, like the petty bourgeoisie in general, occupy a half-way, intermediate position **even** under the dictatorship of the proletariat: on the one hand, they are a fairly large (and in backward Russia, a vast) mass of

working people, united by the common interest of all working people to emancipate themselves from the landowner and the capitalist; on the other hand, they are disunited small proprietors, petty-owners and traders. Such an economic position inevitably causes them to vacillate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In view of the acute form which the struggle between these two classes has assumed, in view of the incredibly severe break-up of all social relations, and in view of the great attachment of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie generally to the old, the routine, and the unchanging, it is only natural that we should inevitably find them swinging from one side to the other, that we should find them wavering, changeable, uncertain, and so on.

In relation to this class — or to these social elements — the proletariat must strive to establish its influence over it, to guide it. To give leadership to the vacillating and unstable --such is the task of the proletariat.

If we compare all the basic forces or classes and their interrelations, as modified by the dictatorship of the proletariat, we shall realise how unutterably nonsensical and theoretically stupid is the common petty-bourgeois idea shared by all the representatives of the Second International, that the transition to socialism is possible “by means of democracy” in general. The fundamental source of this error lies in the prejudice inherited from the bourgeoisie that “democracy” is something absolute and above classes. As a matter of fact, democracy itself passes into an entirely new phase under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the class struggle rises to a higher level, dominating over each and every form.

General talk about freedom, equality and democracy is in fact but a blind repetition of concepts shaped by the relations of commodity production. To attempt to solve the concrete problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat by such generalities is tantamount to accepting the theories and principles of the bourgeoisie in their entirety. From the point of view of the proletariat, the question can be put only in the following way: freedom from oppression by which class? equality of which class with which? democracy based on private property, or on a struggle for the abolition of private property? — and so forth.

Long ago Engels in his *Anti-Duhring* explained that the concept “equality” is moulded from the relations of commodity production; equality becomes a prejudice if it is not understood to mean the **abolition of classes**. This elementary truth regarding the distinction between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist conception of equality is constantly being forgotten. But if it is not forgotten, it becomes obvious that by overthrowing the bourgeoisie the proletariat takes the most decisive step towards the abolition of classes, and that in order to complete the process the proletariat must continue its class struggle, making use of the apparatus of state power and employing various methods of combatting, influencing and bringing pressure to bear on the overthrown bourgeoisie and the vacillating petty bourgeois.

★ The number of “state farms” and “agricultural communes” in Soviet Russia is, as far as is known, 3,536 and 1,961 respectively, and the number of agricultural artels is 3,696. Our Central Statistical Board is at present taking an exact census of all state farms and communes. The results will begin coming in in November 1919.