

On The Question Of Peace

PART THREE OF C.L. RESPONSE TO R.U. ATTACK

One of the major questions facing the proletariat today is the question of peace. Throughout the world the toilers yearn to be free from hardships, death, and suffering caused by war. It is precisely because this issue is so important that the revisionist

betrayal on the question of peace is so dangerous. Recently the "Revolutionary Union", acting as the spokesmen within the "movement" for the CPUSA, attacked the Communist League and issued notice that we were not invited to take part in their "anti-war" movement, our participation, they said, would be "self-

defeating". What the revisionists overlook, however, is that what will defeat their opportunist position on the question of peace is the internal contradiction within that position, the fact that their position of bourgeois pacifism in the "anti-war" movement fundamentally opposes Leninism and the direction of history.

For the imperialists peace is only a continuation of war by other means. They accept peace when they think they can obtain their objectives through it and/or make further preparations for war. Joseph Stalin pointed out that the imperial-

ists "have only one aim in resorting to pacifism: to dupe the masses with high-sounding phrases about peace in order to prepare for a new war." (CV FLP Moscow, 1953, V VI p. 297) Further, Lenin once said, "There are symptoms that such a turn has taken place or is about to take place; that is, a turn from imperialist war to imperialist peace." (Lenin on War and Peace p. 73) For the imperialists, "pacifism is an instrument for the preparation of war and for disguising this preparation by hypocritical talk of peace." (Stalin, Vol. 11, p. 209)

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Historically the revisionists and opportunists have consistently masked themselves, relying on the proletariat's desire for peace, with the cloak of bourgeois pacifism to help the imperialists cover up the new danger of war and to blunt the fighting class consciousness of the people. Before the first World War, the revisionists of the Second International, led by Bernstein and Kautsky, tried to poison peoples' minds and prevent revolution by introducing bourgeois pacifism into the working class of Russia. They separated the question of peace from the class struggle, regarding it as a thing unto itself. They threatened the people with the fear that war would destroy mankind. They did not separate the just from the unjust wars but instead propagated the theory that weapons decide everything. Kautsky and Bernstein preached that disarmament would not only assure equality of nations but would save money so that the imperialists could aid the "backward" countries. Lenin replied to these characters that pacifists and their 'Socialist' imitators or followers, have always pictured, and now picture, peace as being something in principle distinct from war, for the pacifists of both shades have never understood that "War is the continuation of the politics of peace and peace is the continuation of the politics of war."... (War and Peace, p. 95)

Khrushchev and the modern revisionists brought back many of the former arguments of the Second International. Khrushchev, Tito, and Togliatti all sprouted the bourgeois trash of the reasonableness of the imperialists, the need for nuclear containment, the position that wars of national liberation should be curtailed for fear of starting a world war. Khrushchev took the concept of peaceful transition and used it to call for the halt of wars of national liberation. This was the opposite of the line of Stalin who said in Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR, that "To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism." (p. 52)

Presently the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party USA have taken up the mantle of Kautsky and Khrushchev. The leaders of the Soviet Union and the USNA have recently accelerated their collusion to a formal basis. Based on "common interests", President Nixon and party leader Brezhnev have formally met, signed treaties, and made agreements and decisions on the division of the world. This is truly carrying on the designs of imperialism. One of the major planks in this collaboration of the super-imperialist powers is the issue of bour-

geois peace. Now each group is spreading through the world, backed by the other's agreement, trying to interject the questions of bourgeois pacifism into the national liberation struggles. This rapprochement of the social-imperialists and the imperialists is an extremely serious question facing the toiling masses of the world.

The CPUSA, faithful running dogs of the Soviet and USNA imperialists, bases all its hopes on the success of the "March Moscow agreements". They have for some time interjected into the USNA working class, not the Leninist position on the question of peace, but instead, bourgeois pacifism. They have attempted to take the revolutionary character out of the heroic war of National Liberation waged by the Vietnamese people and replace it with a question of "morality" and "ethics". They have not projected to the proletariat the need to struggle against the war of aggression by USNA imperialism as a fundamental task in turning the reserves of imperialism into reserves of revolution, but instead have whined about "inflation" and the "disillusionment of the youth" that the war has caused. Now, as the most counter-revolutionary alliance of imperialist forces ever seen is quickly consolidating, the CPUSA tries to focus the hopes of the masses upon this alliance, instead of pointing out the true character of the current situation. Instead of seeing the temporary strength both the USNA imperialists and the bourgeois rulers of the Soviet Union have gained from this entente, the CPUSA points to the collusion as "reasonableness" and "hope for the future".

Likewise, the "new left" revisionists, principally represented by the RU have clamored not to raise the consciousness of the most advanced sections of the proletariat, but to unite with the CPUSA in the bourgeois pacifism of the "anti-war" movement. These groupings represent the right and the left of the liberal bourgeoisie, but the liberal bourgeoisie all the same. What reasoning can they have for their "anti-war" movement? They can claim ignorance, a claim we fully grant them, but ignorance on the principle questions of Leninism is criminal at a time when clarity, clarity and more clarity is needed within the revolutionary proletariat.

It is clear that the world situation is rapidly changing and that the collaboration between the Soviet Union and the USNA is one of the most significant events in current history. The CPUSA attempts to lull the USNA proletariat with false hopes in the Soviet leadership and the line that USNA imperialism is growing weaker and weaker, approaching a point when a "united front" of anti-monopoly forces can be voted into power. The leadership of the RU makes

basically the same projections. One of the keys to this counter-revolutionary scheme is the blocking of any efforts of the advanced proletarians to build a party or to spread the fundamental positions of Marxism-Leninism within the proletariat. This is why their united front efforts are always toward the banal, the slogans and positions which are most acceptable to the bourgeoisie and least acceptable to the proletariat. Their "united fronts" and "anti-war movements" do not in quality represent anything different than the Youth for McGovern, despite their tremendous financial backing, with the proletariat just as disinterested in one as the other.

What then is the position of Marxist-Leninists on the question of war? Marxists despise war, for it is the toilers who bear the suffering during war. We denounce war as a means to settle political differences, yet we realize that as long as classes exist the exploiters will begin and perpetrate war to maintain their exploitation. War is a continuation of politics by other means. While we are opponents of war we are not unqualified opponents of all war, for us the fundamental question is the class content of the war and the advantage for the proletariat of the world. The hideous crimes of the imperialist wars invariably revolutionize the masses and likewise the will of the masses in the final analysis will determine the outcome of the wars. It is the duty of the communists to point out the class nature of the wars, and to rally the proletariat in their own interests and against the interests of international capital.

Modern war is born of imperialism. It is the imperialists who start and perpetuate modern wars. War is a natural and inevitable outgrowth of imperialist development. For the imperialists, peace is merely a continuation of their war policies. The role of the opportunists is to cover and conceal these facts under a blanket of "peace" as an abstract and declassified issue.

For the socialists, both those within the socialist and capitalist countries, the unwavering position is to fight against imperialist war until it is impossible to carry out the struggle against imperialism without it. At certain times in history it is necessary to make peace with the imperialists. Lenin clearly outlined the difference between this position and opportunism when he stated concerning the Treaty of Brest Litovsk,

"Here, by the way, there arises the question of opportunism. Opportunism consists in sacrificing basic interests while making temporary, partial gains. Here, if one takes the theoretical definition of opportunism, is the essence.

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Many have gone astray on this. At the peace of Brest we sacrificed precisely those interests of Russia, as they are understood in the patriotic sense, which were secondary from the point of view of Socialism. We made gigantic sacrifices, but still they were sacrifices of secondary things." (Lenin on War and Peace, p. 47-48)

For Marxist-Leninists peace can only be won through struggle. Lenin stated that "Now, the struggle for peace has begun. This struggle is hard. Whoever thought that peace can be achieved easily, that one has only to start mentioning peace for the bourgeoisie to bring it to us on a platter, is a completely naive person." (LWP p. 53) This concrete expression of Leninism is well known to the Vietnamese people, who for decades have struggled against the aggressive policies of the USNA imperialists and who have continually fought for a peaceful reunification of their country.

Contrary to the position of the opportunists, which is that the National Liberation struggles must be limited in order to prevent world war, the position of Marxist-Leninists is that the National Liberation movement is an active factor in the struggle for peace and for the overthrow of imperialism. Finally, it is not the collaboration nor the "reasonableness" of the imperialists which will prevent war but the elimination of imperialism by the victorious proletariat.

We offer the modern revisionists and opportunists the same words Lenin reserved for the Second International. "Marxism is not pacifism. It is necessary, of course, to fight for the speediest termination of the war. But only if a revolutionary struggle is called for does the demand for 'peace' acquire proletarian meaning. Without a series of revolutions, so called democratic peace is a philistine utopia. The purpose of a real programme of action would be served only by a Marxian programme, which gave the masses a full and clear explanation of what has occurred, which

explained what imperialism is and how to combat it,...." (Lenin On War and Peace, Three Articles, FLP, Peking, p. 43)

It is this question of the Marxist position on the question of peace which the opportunists are trying to mask. Joseph Stalin, in an interview with Pravda Correspondent in 1951 (FLPH Moscow) described the position of Marxists:

"How will this struggle between the aggressive and peace loving forces end?"

"Peace will be preserved and consolidated if the peoples take the cause of preserving peace into their own hands and uphold it to the end. War may become inevitable if the warmongers succeed in enmeshing the popular masses in a web of lies, deceiving them and unveiling them into another world war.

"Hence a broad campaign for the preservation of peace, as a means of exposing the criminal machinations of the warmongers is now of paramount importance.

"As to the Soviet Union, it will continue unswervingly to pursue its policy of preventing war and preserving peace."

Regardless of the boasts of the opportunist leadership of the CPUSA and the RU, their actions are sharply hurting the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam have consistently displayed steadfast allegiance to the principles of Lenin and to the struggle against the USNA imperialists. The recent negotiations for peace in Vietnam may yield an end to the direct armed aggression of the imperialists. But the role of revolutionaries within the USNA is not to confuse the issue of peace, but make it clear, is not to support the CPUSA but to struggle to build a proletarian communist party which will lead the struggle against imperialism. In this light we of the Communist League pledge unwavering support to our comrades in Vietnam and unwavering opposition to the tricks, manoeuvres, falseness and aggression of USNA and Soviet imperialism.