

Which path to liberation?



In many parts of the world oppressed people are engaged in open, armed struggle against their oppressors. This is so in Peru, Nicaragua, Azania (S. Africa), Eritrea, Ireland, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Kampuchea and the Philippines, just to mention a few of many cases. "Wherever there is oppression there is resistance." It is in countries dominated by various imperialist powers, both of the U.S. bloc and the Soviet bloc, that the struggles of the oppressed are at their sharpest. This is excellent but it is still important to ask whether or not these uprisings can lead to real liberation for the great mass of people in these countries, the workers and peasants.

NATIONAL LIBERATION?

During the last forty years there have been many hard fought struggles by the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialist domination from without and feudal oppression from within - in Cuba, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Indonesia, for example. While these struggles have dealt some heavy blows against imperialist powers, including British imperialism, they have not resulted in the total defeat of imperialism in those countries and neither have they brought about the liberation of the toiling masses. Despite nominal political independence from colonial rule either the old imperialist power has continued to dominate and exploit, as in Zimbabwe, or a new imperialist master has replaced the old one, as in Cuba and Indonesia. In many of these countries imperialist exploitation of the people is at a higher level than it was when they were formal colonies! By and large it is only the capitalists, bureaucrats and military chiefs in these countries, who are in league with imperialist powers, who have actually benefitted from the heroic struggles of the masses against imperialism and feudalism. So are the national liberation struggles taking place now likely to be any more successful?

THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

Whether or not a national liberation struggle results in fundamental changes in the lives of the masses is a question of which class is exercising political leadership in the fight against imperialism and feudalism. Is it the working class, as represented by an authentic communist party, or is it various combinations of local capitalists and middle strata elements? Experience in many oppressed countries has shown that when the national liberation movement is led by capitalist and petit bourgeois parties the struggle against imperialist and feudal oppression and exploitation is not carried through to final victory. At a certain point in the struggle the national bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie do a deal with the imperialists which greatly enhances the position of this minority but leaves the masses in essentially the same position as before. This can be clearly seen in Zimbabwe where British and U.S. imperialism are as strong as they ever were. The national bourgeois and petit bourgeois leaders of ZANU have become the accomplices of imperialism, riding around in big cars and living in mansions, while the peasant masses have been denied possession of their land which they fought so bravely and hard to win back. In Azania it is obvious that the African National Congress, led by bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements, is trying to lash up some sort of deal with the local white bourgeoisie and various imperialist powers which while bringing a formal end to apartheid will leave imperialist domination intact and the black workers and peasants in essentially

the same position they are in now. History has shown that national liberation struggles led by bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements are incapable of even totally defeating imperialism and feudalism let alone advancing forward to socialist transformation.

PROLETARIAN LEADERSHIP

The Marxist-Leninist line on national liberation struggle insists that total victory against imperialism and feudalism will only be achieved if the movement is under the leadership of the working class, the proletariat, in alliance with the poor peasantry. This line was developed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in the course of the struggle of the Chinese people for national liberation. The reasoning behind it is very simple. Unlike the national bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie the workers and poor peasants have no objective interest in allowing any vestiges of imperialism and feudalism to remain. Liberation for the toiling masses depends upon total defeat of these reactionary forces. The national bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie can play a positive role in national liberation struggle but only up to a point. Unless the movement is under firm proletarian communist leadership the bourgeois elements in it will eventually sell it out.

PHILIPPINES

A current negative illustration of the correctness of the line of Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Tse-tung Thought on national liberation struggle can be seen in the Philippines. In 1968 the Communist Party of the Philippines was founded with a Maoist political line which insisted on the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance in a broadly based liberation movement including national bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements. The New People's Army was built up to wage armed struggle against the Marcos regime, a tool of U.S. imperialism. As a result of their revolutionary warfare the Marcos regime became unstable and the U.S. imperialists found it convenient to install another of their local agents in his place, Cory Aquino. But just at the moment when the popular national liberation movement could have intensified the armed struggle and made great political advances they drew back, agreed to a cease fire and entered into negotiations with the pro-imperialist Cory regime. The leaders of the CPP departed from the line that true liberation for the masses can only come as a result of the total victory of their own people's army. As Mao said, "Power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Instead the CPP leadership hoped to gain advances by means of political negotiating and manoeuvring with the local agents of imperialism. It was the Aquino regime that benefitted from this error, not the popular forces, and now they have returned to the armed struggle. Only if the CPP carries forward the national liberation struggle in accordance with the line of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought is it likely to succeed.

PERU

In Peru a people's war against imperialism, semi-feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism is being waged under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru "Shining Path". This party is under the firm guidance of a Maoist line, as developed by their Chairman Gonzalo, and the revolutionary forces have made great advances since they took up the armed struggle in 1980. The pro-imperialist regime, headed by the social democratic demagogue Alan Garcia, is crumbling under the force of the growing revolt of the masses. Already the basic structures of a new democratic people's state have been established in the areas liberated by the

revolutionary forces. The national liberation movement in Peru does not try to lean on one imperialist bloc to oppose the other but takes a firm stand against both US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. While the Communist Party of Peru certainly wants to mobilise national bourgeois and petit bourgeois forces against the pro-imperialist regime it is emphatic that leadership of the movement must be firmly in the hands of the worker-peasant alliance. They are determined that their movement will not repeat the mistakes which have occurred in so many other oppressed countries.

REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT

During the last few decades the world communist movement has suffered some major defeats, especially the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China. But the struggles of workers and other oppressed people for true liberation continue. In 1984 a number of Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations came together to found the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, a significant step towards the reconstruction of the communist international. The Communist Party of Peru is a participant and so is the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent in Britain. Here in Britain our task is to build a communist party to lead the working class in revolutionary insurrection to establish their rule and commence socialist transformation. Although the immediate task in an imperialist country such as Britain is socialist revolution this is intimately related to the national liberation struggles of the peoples suffering imperialist oppression. We share the same enemies - the monopoly capitalist classes of the imperialist countries. Victory in the national liberation struggles weakens imperialism while socialist revolution in imperialist countries also defeats the oppressors.

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