

People's War

DIGEST

No. 1
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*"Without a People's Army
the people have nothing" (Mao Zedong)*



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ISSUED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY
(ORGANIZING COMMITTEES)

Presentation

PEOPLE'S WAR TODAY IS THE KEY STRATEGIC LINE on which a new generation of revolutionary organizations are now building their foundations. Through Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ideology, the strategy of people's war is a political perspective that unifies the revolutionaries and puts the grounds for the next wave of revolutions and peoples' victories.

People's War Digest (PWD)—of which you hold the first issue—is a Canadian publication entirely dedicated to advocate and promote peoples' war. This publication is for struggle and is truly internationalist. But at the same time, it is totally devoted to the Canadian working class, to its struggle for socialism and for its own liberation.

Between World War II and the end of the 20th Century, and being misled by the “legal comfort” provided by bourgeois society, the official Left in the imperialist countries believed to a certain form of “imperialist exception”. Most of these official Leftists gave in to the illusion that socialism would come without fighting or still, that it would be brought to us by the struggles of others. It seems for them that revolution is like anything else under capitalism: all the good belongs to the rich (imperialist countries), but the sweat and the efforts come from the poor (oppressed countries).

This so-called Left (revisionist communist parties, social-democrats, Trotskyist organizations) has merged progressively with the bourgeois State, giving birth to one “socialist civil servant” instead of a socialism with a true revolutionary nature. Because of this merger, it benefited from some assets, such as good visibility and institutionalization with an easy mind. On the other hand though, this left is now facing the drawback of its move: it is now being discredited, unable of any initiative, only copying itself in a stilted style. Alike the bourgeoisie—today unable to resolve the contradictions she is struggling with—the legal Left is totally disabled for looking at any step forward to the working class, who need a clear strategy to reach socialism.

It is the Maoist political current that progressively exposed, in the 80's and 90's the futility of this official Left, and held high the red flag of revolution and people's war. From the Andes to the Himalayas, the Maoist activists becoming wiser and stronger in the midst of the fight and of the armed struggle, have open new and courageous paths where they now walk with resolution in Asia, Africa, towards Europe and America.

With *People's War Digest*, we want to propose to the revolutionary activists in Canada a selection of articles and documents produced by a variety of Maoist parties and organizations or by other revolutionaries if it happens, that will help to understand and to give a wide overview of what the strategic line of people's war is all about. You could find in one article or another, some different points of view or conceptions. Good! This is precisely the goal we have with this selection: to produce progressively a clear and

solid understanding of the people's war, by enlightening the weaknesses and hesitations here and there with the strongest we can find elsewhere. That is the first goal of PWD.

We agree to say that this clear and solid understanding would be with no effect if we don't bring it to the heart of the Canadian reality, in the most complex sides of the class struggle, in the revolutionary fight that we wage in our cities, our neighborhoods, our factories. The second goal we have at PWD is to also publish articles and documents that will enable us to confront the general perspective of the people's war, to some of our most concrete facts of life, such as:


- the reality of exploitation in Canada, something that is hidden too often by the bourgeois media and by the empiricism that rules in universities;
- the revolutionary struggle of the First Nations against the Canadian imperialist State;
- the struggle against the class-type democracy of the bourgeois State.

The third goal which is obvious for a Maoist publication is to produce the concrete, i.e. to transform ideas into actions. Mao Zedong rightly wrote the following: “*It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying it.*” (in *Rectify the Party's Style of Work*) The Maoists can not caution “stay-at-home” Marxism, the reformist chit-chat of the pseudo-communists for whom Marxism is only a topic of conversation. Again, Mao stated with reason: “*If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance.*” (in *On Practice*)

With *People's War Digest*, we want to bring our contribution in producing a true and genuine liaison between the Maoists across Canada, a tool at the service of all activists who wish to develop a true and significant revolutionary practice, like what our comrades from the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP[OC]) are doing in Québec.

We are ruled by the political situation. We must clean the thick smog of Canadian reformism which lead us to blindness. We must contribute from our own experience to the fair struggle of the workers, to people's war and to worldwide revolution!

The People's War Digest Committee

	To reach the PWD Committee: pwd@pcr-rcpcanada.org
	Comptoir Saint-Clément C.P. 60556 Montréal (Qc) H1V 3T8
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RCP(OC)'S FIRST CONGRESS:

Building the Party, fighting bourgeois ideas, preparing for revolution!

REVOLUTION! THE ONLY SOLUTION! Members, supporters and friends attending the First Congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party (Organizing Committees) held in Montréal, Québec last summer (2003) ended their works with this unifying slogan, along with singing the revolutionary anthem *The Internationale*. The attendees carried the very first Programme of the RCP(OC) and a detailed implementation plan to develop the Party and the conditions for revolution in Canada. By doing so, they made that slogan more than a will. It became a precise goal, a unified commitment and a concrete action plan.

The carrying of that Programme was following discussions and improvements around a draft that had circulated since a first Revolutionary Conference held two years ago. At that time, the conference had also created the Revolutionary Communist Party (Organizing Committees) as a first step before the official foundation of the RCP still to come. The participants had acknowledged the need to build such a Party, and to rely on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in order to unify those who were the most determined and conscious among the working class—that is to say, the vanguard. Fighting the capitalist bourgeoisie requires such Party and ideology in order to give power to the workers, employees, Native people, the youth, all those men, women and migrants exploited by the capitalists and who are the vast majority of people in Canada that we name *the proletarians*.

Our Programme: a guide for revolutionary action

So it is with great enthusiasm that the RCP(OC) members held their Congress. With a first Programme in hands, the attendees not only reaffirmed the revolutionary strategy and line already stated in the draft version but they carried as well three important additions:

- A new section defining the meaning and origin of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the ideology on which the RCP(OC) relies.
- A new section describing what measures and tasks should the proletariat put in place and realize once it will conquer political power. Far from being some bourgeois “electoral type” promises, it describes the concrete measures that will allow the true elimination and transformation of the capitalist production mode, in order to prepare the transition to communism, as well as to revolutionize the social relations between classes, men and women, the city and the countryside, and also between countries.

- A new chapter on the immediate demands of the proletariat for which we must fight today. Those demands are the ones which contribute to workers' unity around the interests of the most exploited people, and unmask and isolate the bourgeois State and clearly distinguish proletariat and bourgeoisie's sides.

On top of that, there will be an additional chapter with some facts and figures exposing the damage done by the capitalists and their system, to not only the billions of human beings around the globe but also to their environment and to natural resources.

The attendees also strongly reaffirmed their support of the Communist programme on the matters of nations in Canada, by upholding the general objective we must have to detach ourselves from the “national” programme of the bourgeoisie (whether in Canada or in Québec) and to put forward a programme to fight against national divisions and for workers' unity across the country. The comrades strongly reaffirmed their position that nothing in the project of Québec independence can represent any hope for workers' emancipation. The only way to liberate ourselves and solute the bourgeoisie dead-end on this issue is by struggling without compromising against all forms of national oppression, for the right to self-determination for the Natives and for absolute equality between nations and languages.

In the fight against women's oppression, the participants had an in-depth discussion around a new chapter upholding the need to build a movement of proletarian women. This perspective rallied the attendees to a large extent, particularly on the following aspects:

- to develop the Communist program for women's liberation, by fighting for all immediate demands with respect to women's rights, and against all forms of sexism and chauvinism, including within the proletariat itself;
- to foster by specific means the participation of proletarian women in the Party and their leadership capacities by education and propaganda so they can join the side of socialist revolution.

Although the Congress chosen to publish the new Programme with the chapter as proposed, members will continue the discussion in order to clarify and unify the different points of view as discussed, particularly with regards to patriarchy. A new version of the chapter should be carried within the next year (2004).

The English version of the new RCP(OC)'s Programme will be available on July 1st, 2004 (see www.pcr-rcpcanada.org).

We join the fight for a new International!

At the end of the Congress, the participants also carried a resolution on the International Communist Movement stating among others:

- A strong support and enthusiastic greetings to the comrades of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), who are waging people's war against the reactionary monarchy and building a red fortress in South Asia.

- Our solidarity with other Maoist parties around the world, notably in Peru, in the Philippines, in India, in Bangladesh, in Bhutan, in Turkey, in Iran and in Afghanistan.
- Greetings to Maoist organizations that lead the struggle in the belly of the beast, in imperialist countries like in Italy, Spain and United States.
- Support to efforts made by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) in upholding Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, building new Maoist parties, supporting, developing protracted people's war and world revolution as well as to build a new Communist International.
- A commitment to work for ideological and political unity among Maoist forces by going forward in the way of the People's War. In order to do so, the Central Committee of the RCP(OC) will take the necessary steps to eventually join the ranks of the RIM.

To gain victory over bourgeois propaganda

With that First Congress, conditions are now in place to make possible the rallying of the revolutionary forces in Canada. The new revolutionary Communist Programme will help to achieve that as comrades of the RCP(OC) will have a tool to unify and rally the men and women who are the most convinced of the necessity of destroying capitalism and of transforming by revolution the Canadian society towards communism. ***Act as a Party, in order to win the struggle for the creation of the Party!*** That was the spirit of the attendees who worked to carry the first comprehensive implementation plan of the RCP(OC) and put different timetables for the next three years to come.

In order to do so, revolutionaries must among other things **gain victory over bourgeois propaganda**, that is to say, over those ideas imposed to us by the bourgeoisie in the newspapers, on TV or radio and where the capitalists try, per se: to convince us that elections are the most achieved form of democracy, while we know it is a phony play where all the actors are trying to put all of those who resist and oppose back into the legal and parliamentary frames; to convince us that we must call for social peace rather than call for a real participation of the masses through firm struggles; or still, to convince us that the current State is a neutral referee put there to govern for the best interests of both the rich and the poor. To say it clear, we must fight continually against those ideas, which restrict our freedom of thinking and are leading us to feel powerless and fatalistic. We must fight **by propagating and agitating proletarian and revolutionary ideas**. We must convince but above all, spread and distribute widely revolutionary ideas and anti-capitalist spirit and show that revolution is much more powerful than resistance!

The RCP(OC) will support any initiative that aims to bring revolutionary propaganda among the masses. It will also launch three new written tools dedicated to communist propaganda and agitation, including a new theoretical and political quarterly magazine in French, entitled **Arsenal**. In this magazine, the RCP(OC) will expose its views but will also look for a better analysis and understanding of the conditions we need in order to prepare the revolutionary struggle in Canada, as

well as to educate to MLM. **Arsenal** will also help to wage the ideological struggle against anti-Marxist trends, and to spread discussions and analysis made by the International Communist Movement. Finally, it will raise awareness around the advances of the revolutionary struggle all around the world.

In the same spirit, an agitprop newsletter called **UNITE AND FIGHT!** will be actively and widely distributed in plants, working places, schools, neighborhoods and any place where we can reach proletarian people. Some more local versions of that paper will be available as well. This bilingual agitprop paper will be used to build unity around mass political campaigns in a clear, direct and lively style.

Finally, the RCP(OC) is reaffirming its will to rally the revolutionary vanguard in the rest of Canada as well, thanks to a new publication called **People's War Digest** available in English. This newsletter is meant for organizational development and to raise awareness around revolutionary and communist ideas in all parts of the country, with a special focus for radical and revolutionary circles among Native nations in Canada.

During the Congress, the delegates also developed action plans on issues such as political education for the members, preparation for two major theoretical discussions (the socialist experience in the USSR and women's matters), the revolutionary struggle, local development, international relations, etc.

In conclusion, the delegates also carried the first Statutes of the RCP(OC), which define the principles that rule its organizational life, the terms of membership and its democratic functioning.

The delegates achieved the works of this First Congress with enthusiasm. Those who attended felt that they participated in an important event for the future of revolution in Canada. For the first time in nearly 20 years, a significant number of revolutionary communists did unify around a clear and serious political project, at the opposite of the old bourgeois plans. Moreover, they laid the foundations for a Party dedicated to the making of revolution in Canada. This is far from being nothing. And we are convinced that the months and years to come are full of promises for the RCP(OC) and for the advance of struggles and of revolution in the country.

We invite all of those who recognize themselves in this will to fight, to contact us in order to obtain a copy of the Programme, to read the RCP(OC)'s publications and above all, to get organized with it, in order to join with other comrades who share the same vision for the future: a vision where capitalism will no more exist; where men and women will live in a society not based on profit or wealth accumulation, but rather on the harmonious development of individuals in the respect of their environment, on satisfying the needs of everybody, as well as on the end of exploitation and all forms of oppression.

***Long live the RCP(OC)'s First Congress!
Let's rally revolutionary forces all across the country!
Together, we'll shake the capitalist society!***

(Summer 2003)

Resolution on the International Communist Movement

(Adopted by the First Congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party [Organizing Committees], Summer 2003)

1. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING of the communist movement, Marx and Engels had clearly stated that the development of capitalism would lead the bourgeoisie to expand “*over the entire surface of the globe*”. Class struggle in any country is thereof closely linked to one another because of imperialism and the expansion of capitalism world wide. Whether there may be discrepancies between class struggle in one country or another depending on specific conditions, the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a new socialist order bears an international character. With the famous and powerful last words of the *Communist Manifesto*—“*Workers of all countries, unite!*”—that have echoed through the decades and that call for the unification of the revolutionary masses fighting capitalism and imperialism and by upholding the First International, Marx and Engels had set the framework in which the proletarian movement was going to take place.

2. AFTER THE DISSOLUTION of the International Workingmen’s Association and the establishment of the Second International that Engels helped to set up, the triumph of the Russian revolution at the beginning of the 20th century strongly helped to propel the international communist movement. Witnessing the failure of the Second International that had become a tool for imperialist war, Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought with all their might on the practical as well as on the theoretical front, to build a new international organization that would truly serve the interests of the world revolution. The Third International, or Comintern, that they had put together, still symbolizes the triumph of the Russian revolution and the remarkable insight of Lenin when he stated that under the conditions of imperialism, the people’s liberation movement is linked with and part of a same and single movement toward socialism and communism. Since Lenin’s time the international communist movement has never ceased to play a central role in world events, entertaining the hopes and the struggles led by the proletariat and the oppressed people. The ICM wrote brilliant pages of history; huge victories swept the planet; terrible failures also marked the struggle, yet again these setbacks were quite instructive. The international communist movement has always pursued its tumultuous and courageous struggle from which we can and must learn from.

3. AFTER STALIN’S DEATH in 1953 and the take over of state power by the Khrushchov’s revisionist clique in the Soviet Union in 1956 at a time when the Communist International didn’t exist any longer, some negative tendencies had cropped up in the international communist movement and became more and more prevalent, notably in North America, Yugoslavia, as well as in France and Italy, not excluding within the CPSU itself. Following the line put forth by the CP of the Soviet Union, several communist parties and organizations had espoused revisionist and pacifist theses and had betrayed the revolution. Mao and the Chinese communists were the ones who then raised the revolutionary line within the ICM. Inspiring themselves from the rich experience of China and that of the overall revolutionary movement, Mao and the Communist Party of China led a thorough ideological and political struggle against modern revisionism endorsed by Khrushchev. By supporting the struggle for the triumph of socialism in China and unleashing the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Mao and the Chinese revolutionaries inspired and led millions of proletarians and oppressed people in the great battles that shook the world all through the Sixties. The new Marxist-Leninist movement then emerged and assured a continuity with the revolutionary communist movement of the past.

4. THIS NEW MOVEMENT, still young and lacking of experience, did not have the time or the capacity to develop sufficiently, whether it be on an ideological or organizational level, in order to face the new challenges that were going to arise. As Mao had anticipated, the overthrowing of the revolutionary line and the take over of state power by the new bourgeoisie represented by Deng Xiaoping in 1976 in China had a disastrous effect on the international communist movement. Along with the revolutionary coup in China, the attacks waged by the dogmatist revisionists united around the Labor Party of Albania that were sticking to some erroneous conceptions of the Third International and that refused to recognize the advancements made by Mao and the Chinese CP, led to the liquidation of most of the Marxist-Leninist organizations that had tried to follow the revolutionary path at the turn of the Eighties.

5. ONLY A HANDFUL OF ORGANIZATIONS, among them the RCP, USA, upheld Mao’s teachings—not in a dogmatic way but as a guide to advance on the revolutionary path. In 1984, about 15 of those parties and organizations adopted a common declaration and founded the **Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM)**, based on the defense of the heritage of the fight against modern revisionism and of the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, the Communist Party of Peru (CPP), reorganized under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo, spectacularly and courageously broke off from revisionism, legalism and bourgeois pacifism in which a majority of parties and organizations were bogged down. On May 17, 1980, they launched a protracted people’s war against the reactionary regime linked to US imperialism. During the last 20 years, the CPP played a central role in the reorganizing and development of the new international

communist movement. The CPP demonstrated the acuteness and the feasibility of the revolutionary course and took part in the line struggle within the RIM. It also systemized the revolutionary science of the proletariat—that is Maoism—on which the movement can now rely on.

6. ON THIS SOLID FOUNDATION, new communist organizations were born; others that were already existing and had accumulated a long experience in revolutionary combat, were able to reorganize and successfully undertake rectification campaigns. Currently, the most important revolutionary struggles, like the ones that are taking place in the Philippines, in Nepal, in Peru, in India and in Turkey are under the leadership of Maoist parties and organizations. They are the most advanced elements of the international communist movement. In the imperialist countries, it is also Maoist organizations, or ones inspired by Maoism, that are studying the experiences of the past and are organizing in order to develop the revolutionary struggle against the monopolist bourgeoisie that dominate the handful of rich countries, spreading terror, misery and devastation throughout the world. The RIM is already uniting several of those parties and vanguard organizations. As a group still in construction, it constitutes the embryonic centre of a new Communist International. The RIM recognizes Maoism as being the third stage of the revolutionary science of the proletariat and spreads it. It upholds and supports the establishment of Maoist parties and organizations. At the same time it helps develop a genuine solidarity work with the people's wars that are currently being fought. A growing number of organizations, like the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), now consider that the initiation and the further development of people's war is the main task of all communist parties, including in the imperialist countries. In the current situation where struggles against capitalism and imperialism are taking place on a growing scale, revolutionary struggles are developing again and fundamental contradictions that characterize imperialism are sharpening, the RIM can and must play a more prominent role to unite Maoists and the international communist movement.

7. THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE RCP(OC)'S FIRST CONGRESS pledge to build with firmness and determination a Revolutionary Communist Party in Canada as a conscious and organized detachment of the international communist movement.

- We enthusiastically salute our comrades from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) who are building a red fortress and serving the world revolution in South Asia: *Lal Salaam!*
- We warmly salute our comrades in the Philippines who are successfully pursuing a people's war that they have embarked upon more than 30 years ago already. The Filipino comrades are now engaged in a crucial battle against the imperialist counter-offensive that is being deployed at the very heart of their country. We also demand an immediate end to the harassment and attacks against Jose Maria Sison and the Filipino revolutionary refugees in Europe.

- We reaffirm once again our solidarity with our dear comrades from the Communist Party of Peru who are still advancing protracted people's war in very difficult circumstances and despite the severe setbacks they faced in the last ten years. Long live Chairman Gonzalo and the courageous revolutionary fighters in Peru!
- We salute the organizations and parties of countries dominated by imperialism who are leading protracted people's war or are preparing for it, namely in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan.
- We salute the Maoist parties and organizations that are leading the struggle within the imperialist countries, namely in Italy, Spain and the US, and assure them of our determination to wage a revolutionary war according to the concrete conditions in which we find ourselves. Also, as has begun the shameful trial being held by the French "justice" system with the objective to extradite the activists from the Communist Party of Spain (reconstituted) captured two years ago, we demand their immediate and unconditional liberation.
- We support the efforts of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement that aims at hoisting and defending the red flag of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as well as their help in building new Maoist parties and reinforcing the ones that already exists. We equally support their efforts to uphold and develop protracted people's war and world wide revolution, and to build a new Communist International that will lead the ultimate battle to overthrow capitalism and imperialism and assure the victory of communism world wide.
- We are engaging ourselves for the upcoming period in making progress and advancing on the path of the revolutionary people's war and by doing so in contributing to the development of the unity of the Maoist forces at the political and ideological level. Consequently, we are asking the Central Committee of the RCP(OC) to undertake what has to be done to eventually join the ranks of the RIM.

Long live proletarian internationalism!
Long live the unity of the International Communist Movement!



AGAINST BOURGEOIS DICTATORSHIP IN CANADA

Don't vote! Let's prepare for the revolution!

(First published in *Le Drapeau Rouge* newspaper, No. 48,
April/May 2004)

AT THE MOMENT THIS NEWSPAPER WAS PUBLISHED, uncertainty still ruled over the Liberal government on the best time to call for general elections. While a few months ago the road to victory was an evidence for the Liberals, now that the sponsorship scandal erupted in February their lead in the polls began disappearing.

If elections had been called six months ago, we would have had a ruling Liberal government. Now, we may end up with a minority Conservative government, with a majority of Bloc Québécois MP's in Québec. But the real politics—those who rule our lives and maintain the power of the rich—will they have really changed?

See how capitalist society is ill: the time of the election, which is the so-called most “democratic” exercise that can be, may be called at the will and along with the mood from the weather or opinion polls, which should make us wary from the start. But worse: it is a \$100-million scandal on sponsorships that will determine the political contents of the upcoming election campaign. A scandal that is a “symptom”, a cartoon of an arrogant power that doesn't even give a shape to its excesses and handouts to its friends. To say the truth, the sponsorship scandal arranges every political party running for office that will try by all means to hide the real illness: the capitalist and bourgeois class is decaying in every dominating imperialist State, where such scandals multiply and send in total discredit over the State power this class exerts.

The bourgeois class, whether in power as the federal Liberals or in the opposition like the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives and even the NDP, fundamentally has only one program to defend: maintaining the capitalists in power, the dictatorship of the rich over the poor. After over 150 years of bourgeois democracy in Canada, marked by elections opposing parties with interchangeable programs, what has really changed in State power? What fundamental transformation have we seen in the power of the capitalists to exploit most of the population to their profit or that of the banks? How many “sponsorships” were given to companies during these 150 years of bourgeois politics in Canada—without speaking of scandals?

In light of this totally justified decrease in confidence from a widening portion of the population, two reactions are proposed to us. That of the bourgeoisie and its power, trying by any possible tricks to hide its dictatorship by multiplying the number of political parties running in elections. But watch them all: those who count and have power, money and can use the bourgeois political process are part of one and only

class, they all **fundamentally** hold the project of holding on to the capitalist regime. With a little more or less humanity, with more money for the State, or then for businesses; but nothing that would come change the rules of exploitation and property that allow capitalists to rule the world.

Along with the dictatorship it exerts through its capitalist State and its more-of-the-same political parties, the Canadian bourgeoisie decides of our very own lives: as proletarians, we are constantly devoted to earning just enough money to survive until the next month, without possibility to acquire actual freedom.

The freedom we want is that of working, travelling, studying, eating, being housed without problem, and spend time to think, learn, know, create, help, love, have children or not, while transforming society towards more justice, towards the end of oppression and exploitation in our country. The only political transformation towards which we should devote all our forces is that one: to destroy the imperialist State that is totally annihilating the way of life of entire Native communities here in Canada or in oppressed countries as Alcan is doing in India and that crushes all opposition they call “rogue” as the USA are doing in the interests of their oil companies in Iraq; to destroy an system to whom war is essential” But in order to destroy all this we have to use all our forces to destroy the electoral lie which is keeping us under the illusion of a change that will never get to us.

The next federal elections in Canada give us absolutely no hope, nor any possibility to really transform Canadian society. Elections are an instrument of the bourgeoisie to accommodate and manage capitalist society. Proletarian revolution is the only instrument for workers, the unemployed, students, immigrants and all who are exploited, in alliance with First Nations, that will allow overwhelming social relations and finally do away with bourgeois dictatorship. Transforming society by the masses' revolutionary action also means the inevitable confrontation with the capitalists and the bourgeois State. Today, this State is managing repressive instruments that allow it to defend capitalist power: the army, the police and the justice system. We must prepare to defend against them when the time comes to attack their power!

No election in the framework of bourgeois democracy will transform the army, the police and justice to put them at the service of the exploited. We have to prepare for this confrontation, not with unarmed pro-bourgeois parties, which the State can easily ignore. We must prepare by finally building a revolutionary party serving the oppressed that will not be afraid to say: the bourgeoisie will never abandon its power by itself! The majority has to seize power by the force of its numbers and defend it by all means necessary!

**Against elections, let's prepare the revolution!
Let's build a genuine revolutionary party in Canada!**

Le Drapeau Rouge is a Maoist newspaper published in Montréal, Québec in solidarity with the revolutionary movement in Canada and with the people's war. Its editors can be reached by e-mail at ledrapeaurouge@yahoo.ca or by regular mail at C.P. 1004, Succ. C., Montréal (Québec) H2L 4V2. Some articles are also available in English on their Web site at <http://www.geocities.com/ledrapeaurouge>.

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE REVOLUTION IN IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Protracted people's war is the only way to make revolution

(First published in French in *Socialisme Maintenant!*, No. 8, Spring 2002. *Socialisme Maintenant!* was the then magazine of the RCP[OC].)

“Every just, revolutionary war is endowed with tremendous power and can transform many things or clear the way for their transformation.”

Mao Zedong, *On Protracted War* (1938)

IN IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES, several questions are raised inside the revolutionary movement. How will a revolutionary war be fought? How can the revolutionary politics of a Communist Party be carried out? What lessons can be learned from the International Communist Movement of the past? What can we learn from it to define our method of struggle? On what theoretical and practical foundations must we rest the revolutionary struggle of a party that is aiming for state power? The problem at hand is how to shape and organize a revolutionary force in a historical period that is objectively revolutionary.

Our organization—the RCP(OC)—is putting forward that the transformation of the rotting capitalist system is only possible through implacable revolutionary struggle. Our war is different than those led by the bourgeoisie. It takes root in the only truly revolutionary class, i.e. the proletariat, and sets its goal on the takeover of state power. The communist movement, which represents the most advanced political expression of the proletariat, has always asserted that the seizure of state power and the holding of it are essential conditions to society's transition towards communism. Surely enough, some will claim that we are a long shot from our goal. However we must recognize that the broad masses are starting to rise, though not always to the extent we would wish, and that more and more workers are rejecting the old political alternatives used to trick them and maintain them in their misery.

Who must take on the task of transforming the anger of the masses and turn it into a revolutionary force? With what program and what instruments shall this be accomplished? What strategy should be used? The masses are already experiencing in a direct, confused, and episodic way the contradictions of this mode of production and through their struggles, catch a glimpse of ways of overcoming them. The proletarian vanguard's most important task is to learn how to draw together, unite, and systemize these nascent mass

upsurges, and link them to a strategy that will allow the workers to make gains, to become stronger. Addressing the question of military leadership, Mao Zedong said that it comes from one simple principle: *“to preserve our forces and hit the enemy”* (*On Protracted War*). This principle can be applied to all revolutionary activity. The task of communists is not to maintain capitalism, but to demonstrate through the course of struggle, the superior character of the communist project in confronting the bourgeoisie in every way, this means by leading a war against capitalism, a revolutionary war.

Generally speaking, revolutionary wars share common basic characteristics: they are a people's war and revolutionary, their struggle is just and their political line is proletarian. But to hope leading a revolutionary war, one must, in Mao's word, *“put these conclusions to the test of our own experience, assimilating what is useful, rejecting what is useless, and adding what is specifically our own”* (*Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*).

In synthesizing revolutionary theory and practice and applying it to Canada's concrete conditions, and by affirming that Canada's path to revolution is *protracted people's war* (PPW), we are taking recourse in an adequate military strategy that at this time of imperialist development and with sufficient practical experience (among which the revolutionary war led by the Communist Party of China, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under the leadership of Mao, the protracted people's war led by the Communist Party of Peru, and fighting experiences in Europe) will enlighten us in regard to all our tasks and to the strategy that must direct the work of the Communist Party that will be taking on the bourgeoisie.

This conception of PPW (that cannot be reduced to its purely military aspect) allows the forces of revolution to reflect on, learn about, prepare and organize revolution; this is important, especially in a period where the revolutionary communist forces worldwide are reshaping. The rapid surge of the Marxist-Leninist movement in the 1970's and its spectacular collapse showed that many organizations that thought they had broken away from revisionism had in fact been only breaking away from its most obvious aspects (peaceful coexistence, parliamentarism...), but not from organizational practices and ideological conceptions that 150 years of communist experience have proven to be useless.

In deepening our understanding of revolution and its requirements, we are struggling against those who conjure up abstract ideas, empty from any meaning. We also vigorously oppose all those who wish to mechanically reproduce, without any changes, historical experiences from abroad and of the past, which they wish to apply as home made recipes. These people do not take into consideration the specific conditions of a given country; they limit themselves to one form of struggle, one way of fighting, without understanding that the workings of revolutionary struggle are extremely complex. To hope win, the great Marxist thinkers

always stressed the importance of taking into account all methods of struggle. Lenin sum this up by writing that *“in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master all forms or aspects of social activity without exception [and] be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another”* (Collected Works, Vol. 31). Mao said that the revolutionary initiative *“is not something imaginary but is concrete and material”* (Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War); this endeavor rests on the concrete analysis of a concrete situation.

We have already shown (in an article published in the Winter 2000 edition of our magazine *“Socialisme Maintenant!”* entitled *“Le parti communiste doit mener la guerre révolutionnaire dans les pays impérialistes!”*—namely *“Communist Parties must wage People’s War in imperialist countries”*) how bourgeois discipline (struggles within legal means, elections, parliamentarism and general liberties granted to the workers movement) have completely disarmed the proletariat and its organizations: *“The proletariat is paying a high political price for its obedience to the rules of bourgeois democracy. Its level of organization is weak. Its understanding of the methods and forms of struggle is largely deficient. Overall, it is not prepared—or ill prepared—to take on the great upcoming historical clashes with the bourgeoisie.”*

Scientific communism took hold in its struggle against the various tendencies that have crippled the workers’ movement. Social democracy and modern revisionism have kept the proletariat under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie, excluding from their analysis and actions the necessity of vying for state power. They have posed themselves as the theoreticians of future revolutions, otherwise remaining basically passive. They have put together paper “revolutionary parties”, refusing to actually make revolution. They are useless for the proletariat, and a deep chasm separates their theory from their practice. These parties had to go through many lengths to conciliate their reformist practice (parliamentarism, reformism) and their petitioning in principle for revolution.

Every time the working class played by the rules of bourgeois democracy, imperialism did not hesitate to resort to massacres and massive repression (Indonesia), coups (Chili) and in provoking and dividing worker movements in order to call them back to order. As the (nuovo)Partito comunista italiano (now in the making) wrote in its *Draft Programme*, *“historical experience has confirmed what Engels pointed out in 1895: the bourgeoisie, faced with the working class political seasoning, will be the first to violate its very own rules; consequently, accumulation of revolutionary forces cannot take place within the framework of written procedures and liberties.”* (Our translation)

In theory and in practice, after each victory and each defeat, “one becomes two”, which means part of the movement draws good from the acquired experience and moves on with the struggle; the other part holds on to its old beliefs.

On one part, new experiences are made good on, experiences that permit to translate defeats into victories; on the other part, the other organizations remain basically passive, let themselves become discouraged, or still worst, join enemy ranks. But revolution is not passive: it overcomes obstacles one by one and keeps moving forward *“by creating a counter-reaction that is paramount, that is the only thing that allows the whole of the workers’ movement to acquire more experience and leap forward, generalize its experience and verify it; [...] but so that the movement can advance, mature, verify its experience and generalize it, the vanguard must open the way and make efforts to draw proper conclusions.”* (*“La lutte révolutionnaire dans les métropoles impérialistes”*—namely *“The revolutionary struggle in the imperialist metropolises”*, *“Socialisme Maintenant!”* magazine, No. 7, Summer 2001) However one must know how to go about this task!

A century of insurrections

For the bourgeoisie, the 21st century will be a tumultuous century, let’s say a revolutionary one. As we have already mentioned in the Spring 1998 edition of our magazine, at the top leadership of NATO during a meeting on strategy, several conclusions were drawn at the dawn of the century. The XXIst century, according to them, will be *“a century of insurrections”*. *“So far events didn’t take place quite as we had expected, nonetheless a century of insurrections has begun. The first 30 years of XXIst century will be a period of revolutionary uprisings.”*

The period we are embarking in may be profitable for the revolutionary forces, as long as they develop strong ideology, politics and practice (developing the subjective forces of revolution) corresponding to the realities of the moment (objective laws) and give birth to an activity that allows gathering strength and shifting the balance of power in favor of the proletariat. We must however recognize that not all of those within the revolutionary movement are embarking in this period with a combative spirit and coming forth with constructive ideas that will allow to reorganize the proletarian struggle.

Some only construe from a historical experience specific to a given period; others are bent on interpreting from each and every new method of struggle only what can be reproduced in a particular circumstance. This way of conceiving things is sometimes expressed in the following words: *“Lenin said such and such a thing, but it was in a period of civil war”*, or *“Mao developed protracted people’s war, but China was an oppressed country”*. This type of reasoning completely strips Marxism of its living essence and prevents the masses from learning on the various experiences that would otherwise allow them to more fully embrace revolution, including situations that are more pointedly revolutionary. This false conception also entraps the vanguard’s activity within the sole limits of propaganda and agitation, alienating revolutionary practice from its proper function.

In imperialist countries, it is precisely against this conception that we must struggle to overcome the obstacles that block the development of a correct political line. We must struggle against the separation of theory and practice by forging *“the indispensable unity that must exist between revolutionary content and revolutionary activity—between statement and action/what we say and what we do—too often dissociated in proletarian practice”*. (*“Socialisme Maintenant!”*, No. 5)

Revolution cannot be correctly understood: 1) if we don't strive to link our work to surrounding phenomena; 2) if we only then move on to consider this linkage to broader phenomena and their overall dialectical nature, but overlook the specific nature and development of the process as a whole; 3) if we perceive this process as a series of small quantitative changes, that follow a progressive development (reformist thesis), instead of understanding them as a process that goes through leaps and bonds and brings about qualitative changes (revolutionary thesis)—this is why the development process of protracted people's war must be seen as a progressive movement, that encompasses things that are simple and others that are complex, things that belong to inferior stages of its development and things that belong to superior ones, and that this movement is not harmonious but takes place within the struggle between contraries (positive and negative, old and new, inferior and superior, etc); 4) if we do not take into account that this process depends on specific conditions, countries and historical settings.

A struggle led by vigorous social forces

Lenin wrote that to understand revolution in a truly Marxist way, one must see it *“like a fight carried out by lively social forces. When these forces are placed under given objective conditions, they act in a manner or another and apply with more or less success such or such forms of fights”*.

When writing about revolution, Lenin isn't describing abstract social forces but objective material conditions (military, economic, political). Even if the working class cannot hope for victory by extending its reach beyond material reality, it however strives for victory within these very same limits—small triumphs allowing the workers' movement to systemize its experience. Because in the end, the proletariat's victory depends on its subjective capability in determining the kind of struggle that is the most suitable to its reality.

The current period is characterized by: fiercer economic and military confrontation between imperialist countries and the people in oppressed countries; development of contradictions between imperialist countries; relations that are once again becoming antagonistic; fiercer exploitation and oppression, between the ruling classes of imperialist countries and their working classes in which the former is on the offensive and eliminating the conquests that the latter had achieved; the capital's destructive quest for surplus value, destroying all barriers that prevent its free circula-

tion (whether it be investments in the Health care system, education, labour legislation, work security, etc.) These attacks are proof that the bourgeoisie is experiencing problems and is unable to maintain its domination as in the past, by distributing crumbs from its superprofits to the working class as it then did.

All these contradictions weaken every imperialist country. From this ensues an uneven development of an overall revolutionary situation, comparable to the first revolutionary surges that took place after the First World War. It is a crucial period in which Communist parties contend with the bourgeoisie to win over to their side the masses. The masses are either organized by the vanguard and wage struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie for the conquest of state control, or else the bourgeoisie wins and enrolls the masses to take part in its wars of plunder abroad.

These general objective conditions lead us to postulate certain proposals to vanguard elements and the masses: 1) that we have entered a period of revolutionary upheavals; 2) that this period is taking place in the most advanced historical stage of imperialist development; 3) that the proletariat must devise a strategy to seize power in line with the specificity of this particular historical period; 4) that protracted people's war—a product of 150 years of struggle within the communist movement—is the only viable strategy in an imperialist country. Thanks to PPW the proletariat now has a revolutionary theory and a revolutionary strategy that enables it to defeat the bourgeoisie. In the imperialist metropolises, PPW takes on the following form: accumulation of forces – strategic defensive – strategic stalemate – strategic offensive, each of these steps introducing the next one. Armed propaganda is tied into this process.

1. A period of social upheavals

If the communist movement in imperialist countries wants to overthrow the bourgeoisie, along with the proletariat, it must develop a much more thorough analysis of the contradictions of imperialism in the current period. It must determine whether the objective conditions exist to make revolution—whether we are able or not to achieve this goal immediately; in the affirmative, it must determine what are our tasks. Lenin had assigned to the revolutionaries the *“indisputable and fundamental duty [...] of revealing to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, explaining its scope and depth, arousing the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary determination, helping it to go over to revolutionary action, and forming, for that purpose, organizations suited to the revolutionary situation”*.

The leader of the Russian revolution demonstrated that revolution is only possible if there is a revolutionary situation, which means a crisis involving all of society. He went on to explain that the vanguard must be able to grasp the development of this crisis. Consequently, seizure of power must be planned following careful consideration of the objective conditions of a revolutionary situation. Otherwise,

one's analysis stems from voluntarism and subjectivism, meaning a more or less conscious will to make revolution without the masses, outside of the true conditions of struggle, in an imaginary world... In fact, the revolutionary movement's greatest difficulty resides in defining and adopting a strategic orientation that will allow it to exploit to its fullest a revolutionary situation, one that will permit the broadest masses possible to achieve in the most favorable conditions the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin pointed out that a revolutionary situation is comprised of three things: *"1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; 2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; 3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action. Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible."*

Lenin also insisted on the fact that *"it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, 'falls', if it is not toppled over."*

How can we grasp Lenin's teachings, and mostly how do we apply them to today's conditions? Mao always stressed that to determine what is important and decisive, one should be determined *"not by general or abstract considerations, but according to the concrete circumstances"*. In the final analysis, the characteristics of each epoch, place and style of combat determine the nature of warfare.

It is normal that in imperialist countries, where communist parties and Marxist-Leninist organizations have gathered little experience on the subject of warfare and achieved little in the way of advancing the practice of revolutionary war, the revolutionary movements disagree on this subject. For the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP), only a revolutionary situation can afford the necessary impetus to kick start a revolutionary war: *"the launching of the revolutionary war depends on the eruption of a revolutionary crisis in society as a whole"*; without such a crisis, the

party must take root in the foundations of *"the political organizing and the struggle of the masses"*. For the RCP, the most important task in the current "peaceful" period is to *"Create Public Opinion, Seize Power—Prepare Minds and Organize Forces for Revolution"*. Behind this catchy phrase, the reality that underlies it is however a little less original: the "Seize Power" of the RCP rests more or less on the theory of insurrection, comprised of a long period of propaganda and agitation work and of legal struggle that leads, according to them, to insurrection and civil war.

Lenin's analysis of a revolutionary situation is quite to the point when applied to a concrete context. When Lenin talked about a revolutionary context he was talking about the period at hand, the one that comes just before the insurrection and the conquest of power, and not of the longer period of accumulation of forces. In this way, the RCP is right in saying that the conquest of power is only possible through particular objective conditions and accumulation of subjective forces—or as Lenin put it, *"without a shift in the opinion of the majority of the working class, the revolution would not be possible"*. On the other hand, it is wrong to assume that during the period that precedes this "shift in public opinion", the vanguard must strictly limit itself to propaganda and agitation work, disregarding all other means of struggle as the situation is developing into a revolutionary one (economic crisis, more and more poverty, contradictions within the upper class, etc.). Lenin has carefully pointed out that this change could not be the sole product of mere propaganda: *"Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people."*

When Mao stated, concerning the specific character of imperialist countries, that *"it is the task of the party of the proletariat [...] to educate the workers and build up strength through a long period of legal struggle, and thus prepare for the final overthrow of capitalism"*, he wasn't telling the communists of these countries not to engage in armed conflict; on the contrary, he pointed out, like Engels and Lenin had done before him, that to hope to overthrow the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must accumulate forces through a more or less lengthy period of "legal" activity, more important in scope than "illegal" activity. Mao, Lenin or Engels never claimed that the working class should prefer one method of struggle over the other: they postulated that both methods were narrowly linked to one another. Moreover, they claimed that legal activity depended on illegal activity, and that our capacity to take on rapid and vigorous action depended on our analysis of the universal traits (of all countries in all historical periods) and of the analysis of particular traits (a given country) of a concrete situation serving as guidelines to determine our course of action in developing the forces of revolution. To perceive the existence of a revolutionary situation once it is upon us and that revolution is already under way, strips of all meaning the usefulness of trying to grasp the movement under its concrete form and condemns the forces of revolution to tailism in regards to the unfolding events.

One of Mao's greatest contributions, which was very useful to the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), was to demonstrate that a revolutionary situation is a situation in continual development that stretches over a relatively long period of time in which the various imperialist bourgeoisies are unable to gain solid foothold because of their inherent contradictions. In this period, the revolution can only be successful if revolution's subjective forces are properly harnessed each step of the way to actions linked to its objective laws (and by the same token, its defeat comes from its estrangement from this principle). Instead of paving the way for the proletarians, of striving to derive proper examples, one would be in a position of "trail[ing] behind them, gesticulating and criticizing" (Mao).

2. *Imperialism in an advanced phase*

As it matured, imperialism brought upon modern capitalist states new structures and purpose, among which are: legal state authority (repressive laws); covert support and procedures free from any hindrances; state apparatuses used for various purposes (secret services); state apparatuses given discretionary powers and means of support written in different bourgeois constitutions (secret funds, foreign secret service agencies); and finally paramilitary and organized police (security agencies, specialized antiterrorist groups). We can also add to this the shift, in about every imperialist country, the use of regular armed forces instead of mandatory military service. These transformations can be witnessed in most imperialist states.

Sharpening class confrontation explains them. The counter-revolution forces naturally seek to prevent any offensive from the proletariat (reacting in some cases to prior attacks). To wage battle against the proletariat, the strategy of the bourgeoisie rests on two main axis: on the one hand, politics (laws, special rules, formation of specialized agencies); on the other, the courts and armed repression. The courts and armed repression axis consists of pre-emptive police and military work: infiltration, investigation, identification, securing of targets (buildings or certain people), pre-emptive arrests, etc. Frisking, searches, arrests, confrontation, selective elimination, etc. also serve to prevent political actions or come in their aftermath. These tactics can be somewhat likened to the "encircling campaigns" that were led by reactionaries against communist bases.

To counter attack, the proletariat must break this encircling and accumulate forces. Thus, the traditional political work of communist parties—gathering of strength through "peaceful" means—doesn't hold true under these circumstances. Communists must push harder to spark greater confrontation.

This evolution of modern bourgeois states in all advanced capitalist countries forces the revolutionary movement to adapt its conceptions, its political line, its functioning, its tactics. Any resistance to change, any refusal to adapt to new situations, among other things recourse to ancient forms of struggle elaborated and predominant in the pre-

imperialist phase, are at the root of the revolutionary movement's failure in its struggle for state power.

3. *The proletariat must conceive a strategy for the conquest of state power*

At the beginning of capitalism, the proletariat, in terms of political knowledge, was at the stage of first hand perception. The destruction of productive machinery as one of its forms of struggle against capitalism shows its inexperience. Spontaneous actions took precedence over conscious actions. It was a period where emerging forms of struggle where coexisting with previous forms of struggle that had taken place during the bourgeois revolution (struggle against the aristocracy, emergence of the bourgeoisie)—a period that Engels characterized as one of revolutions serving a minority: "*All revolutions up to the present day have resulted in the displacement of one definite class rule by another; all ruling classes up till now have been only minorities as against the ruled mass of the people. [...] All revolutions of modern times, beginning with the great English revolution of the seventeenth century, showed these features, which appeared inseparable from every revolutionary struggle.*" (Introduction to "The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850")

Marxism renders the proletariat with a theory that allows it to go from spontaneous forms of struggle to conscious and organized ones. Marx and Engels were the first to recognize the proletariat as a key historical actor. Their work linked the theory and the practice of class struggle in one cohesive, inseparable whole. "*In the two revolutionary years of 1848-49 the [Communist] League proved itself in two ways. First, its members everywhere involved themselves energetically in the movement and stood in the front ranks of the only decisively revolutionary class, the proletariat, in the press, on the barricades and on the battlefields. The League further proved itself in that its understanding of the movement, as expressed in the circulars issued by the Congresses and the Central Committee of 1847 and in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, has been shown to be the only correct one, and the expectations expressed in these documents have been completely fulfilled. This previously only propagated by the League in secret, is now on everyone's lips and is preached openly in the market place.*" (Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League)

The 1848 revolution, which Marx qualified as "*the first great battle [...] fought between the two classes that split modern society*" (*The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850*), revealed to the working class, despite the failure of the insurgency, that abolishing the exploitation that took place in a bourgeois republic was possible. In a certain way, the proletariat had itself been caught up in the illusions of bourgeois society, thinking that a bourgeois republic was somehow a social republic, one that supported bourgeois interests but also proletarian ones. It is Marx who showed that it is only in a life and death struggle against the bourgeoisie that the proletariat was able to gain consciousness

of its own class interests. It was only after the defeat in June, noted Marx, that was proclaimed *"the bold slogan of revolutionary struggle: Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the Working class!"*.

Following the June defeat of 1848, the First International allowed the triumph of Marxism-Leninism over anarchists and petty bourgeois conceptions of socialism. This gave Marxism world wide credence among workers. Waging struggle for the emergence of a revolutionary theory and for the formation of a revolutionary movement, Marx and Engels fought tirelessly against proponents of Proudhon and Bakunin's theory allowing scientific communism to permeate all fundamental decisions of the proletarian movement.

In March 1871, working districts broke out into insurrections, and as the government fled to Versailles, Parisians voted in the Commune: a government that proclaimed itself revolutionary, patriotic and for the workers. From the 21st to the 28th of May, 1871, in what was named the "bloody week of Paris", the last great revolt of the 19th century was squashed. The Paris Commune, while defeated by the bourgeoisie, gave the working class an example of how it could exercise state power. It also provided revolutionaries with priceless examples of the necessity to bolster actions with correct theory. This is why *"the Commune was also the grave of the Proudhon school of socialism"* (Engels, *Introduction to "The Civil War in France" from Karl Marx*); this experience demonstrated the need for a Communist Party and proved that the task of the proletariat was not to *"transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to smash it, and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent."* (Marx)

Let's see how Lenin summed up the basic mistakes made by the Commune and what he considered its greatest merit: *"The two errors consist in the lack of offensive, conscience and resolution to break the bureaucratic and military machine of the state and the power of the bourgeoisie. And for what reason Marx admired the Paris Commune? Precisely because of the flexibility, the historical initiative and the spirit of sacrifice these Parisian demonstrated when they tries to 'conquer the sky'."*

In Russia, the emergence of organs of power created by the proletariat and serving to counter state power allowed communists to make revolution. Soviets made their appearance in 1905. They served to undermine the monopoly of bourgeois power. Speaking of the Soviets, Lenin said they heralded the end of bourgeois parliamentarism and inaugurated the beginning of a new historical era: the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the First Congress of the Communist International, he carefully pointed out: *"It would be sheer nonsense to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody*

the new conditions for applying democracy." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28)

The defeat of the Commune also marked the disappearance of forms of struggle that were no longer useful. We are primarily referring here to conspiracy, the plotting of a coup to be executed by small groups. Marx and Engels brought to light the nature of these conceptions inherited from bourgeois revolutions, that didn't fit the conditions in which the proletariat had to struggle within the newly created bourgeois society. The teachings of Marx and Engels add great credibility to the thesis of Lenin that demonstrated that the success of insurrection couldn't take root in a conspiracy or rely only on a Party, *"but upon the advanced class"*. That insurrection had to come from a revolutionary upsurge of the people: *"Insurrection must rely upon that turning-point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism."* (*Selected Works*, Vol. 2)

The experience of the Commune also marked the end of a strategy that put to use barricades; not that barricades from that point on had become useless, but that they weren't central anymore to insurrection theory because of the passive nature of their use. Perfected equipment, reliance on instructions, unique leadership of the army's chain of command and its overall discipline, as well as the use of railroads in swiftly displacing troops, gave the reactionaries a cutting edge that forced the insurgents to modify their strategy, opting for open attack rather than the use of barricades.

Lenin, who was the leader of the first socialist revolution, didn't have to profoundly reflect on the issues of war and military strategy. When the Russian revolution was unfolding, the political struggle of the masses overshadowed the question of warfare, because tactics weren't centered on armed struggle and armed revolution, save in brief periods.

This period that kicked off at the turn of the century and came to an end with the October Revolution was marked by quick spurts of legal and illegal forms of struggle that moulded very specific political and organizational developments. These developments were to be found in great concentration in the Bolshevik Party. Among them, the struggle to develop a centralized semi-clandestine organization that served to carry out all types of struggles is noteworthy. In *"Left-Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin wrote that to defeat the bourgeoisie, one of the essential conditions for the victory of the Russian revolution was *"absolute centralization and the strictest discipline of the proletariat"*. Such discipline was reinforced: *"First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-*

sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletarian, but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and of its political strategy and tactics provided that the broadest masses have been convinced by their own experiences that they are correct.”

Even if Lenin’s analysis of revolutionary struggle (and the forms of struggle that proceed from it) purports mainly to an insurrection strategy bearing the immediate and practical aim of destroying the enemy rather than the politico-ideological aspects of revolutionary struggle—hence depicting a situation that is quite different from ours (partisan actions of a PPW serving to gather strength)—it gives us however some indications as to the importance of armed actions serving to support propaganda. Lenin speaking out on the 1905 upsurge gives us a good idea of how the work of the Party should be linked to armed struggle. He then proposed at the R.S.D.L.P. congress in 1906: 1) that the Party recognized the armed actions of combat units belonging to the Party or struggling at its side were in principle, “*permissible and advisable in the present period*”; 2) that the character of these actions “*must be adjusted to the task of training leaders of the masses of workers at a time of insurrection, and of acquiring experience in conducting offensive and surprise military operations*”; 3) that the most important immediate goal must be the destruction of government, police and military machinery; 4) that it was also important to seize the enemies financial belongings; and finally, 5) that armed actions had to be conducted “*under the control of the Party and, furthermore, in such a way as to prevent the forces of the proletariat from being frittered away*”.

Lenin wrote in an assessment of the Moscow insurrection and the revolutionary struggles of 1905 that the forms of struggle used by the proletariat have been transformed: “*From a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades. From isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organizations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising This is the greatest historic gain the Russian revolution achieved in December 1905; and like all preceding gains it was purchased at the price of enormous sacrifices. The movement was raised from a general political strike to a higher stage. It compelled the reaction to go **to the limit** in its resistance, and so brought vastly nearer the moment when the revolution will also go to the limit in applying the means of attack.*” “*Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. It will be an armed uprising. It must, as far as possible, be simultaneous. The masses must know that they are entering upon an armed, bloody and desperate struggle. Contempt for death must become widespread among them and will ensure victory. The onslaught on the enemy must be pressed with the greatest vigour; attack,*

not defence, must be the slogan of the masses; the ruthless extermination of the enemy will be their task; the organization of the struggle will become mobile and flexible; the wavering elements among the troops will be drawn into active participation. And in this momentous struggle, the party of the class-conscious proletariat must discharge its duty to the full.” (Selected Works, Vol. 1)

Contrary to what one may think, the October Revolution is not only the product of the insurrection of the masses and the takeover of the Winter Palace: it is the end product of a process of gathering of forces made possible by the incremental role of the Bolshevik Party, with Lenin at its head, that started to gain in momentum as soon as 1903 and culminated in the October 1917 Revolution.

The efforts of Lenin and the Russian communists will allow to shepherd the masses thanks to: the fashioning of a revolutionary strategy (partisan war, insurrection and dictatorship of the proletariat); struggle against deviations from revolutionary Marxism, at the state level among other things (instrument for exploitation of the oppressed classes); analysis of imperialism as the supreme phase of capitalism. “*On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. On the other hand, having arisen on this granite theoretical basis, Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has had no equal anywhere else in the world. For no other country during these fifteen years had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist.*” (Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” Communism, An Infantile Disorder)

Lenin, in his well known text on *Guerrilla Warfare* pointed out how the Russian communists—and this still holds true nowadays—faced with a rapid unfolding of events and struggles grasped new forms: “*In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not ‘concoct’ them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. [...] In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. [...] To attempt to answer yes or*

no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position. These are the two principal theoretical propositions by which we must be guided."

It is however obvious that all forms of struggle are not revolutionary forms of violence. Only revolutionary actions from the masses and the vanguard are considered true revolutionary actions. These actions reject institutionalized bourgeois legality. They go beyond the framework of domestication thrust upon the working class by the bourgeoisie. Once the contention for power becomes clearly at issue, the goal is of course to overthrow the control exerted over the state by the upper class and replace it with that of the people. These are the kind of revolutionary actions we must systemize and apply, because *"as long as proletarian struggles, here and abroad, are not part of a comprehensive plan aimed at doing away with capitalism and geared at building socialism through application of Maoism to the concrete conditions of class struggle, and that the reign of the bourgeoisie goes unchallenged, the latter will continue to exert its domination over the proletariat and will prevent it from doing revolution."* (*"Socialisme Maintenant!"* magazine, No. 7)

Lenin clearly proved that revolution isn't possible without a revolutionary context, and that the Communist Party must assume leadership, enlightened by a thorough understanding of the developments that take place in such a context through ideological work and multiple struggles. This also includes partisan actions, armed struggle, riots, parliamentary struggle. This is how the Bolshevik Party was able to allow the revolution to triumph.

4. *Protracted People's War in imperialist countries*

It is Mao Zedong who gave the proletariat with a military doctrine suited to its needs. Through transformation of guerrilla war, he devised a strategy that allowed the proletariat (the leading force of the revolution) and peasantry (the main force) to carry through socialist revolution in China. From a Marxist-Leninist standpoint and an analysis of concrete conditions in China, guerrilla strategies and those of people's war were transformed into a full scale military strategy—protracted people's war—applicable everywhere and of universal value. Contrary to the Russian revolution, all other revolutionary wars waged through conventional warfare led to the demise of the revolutionary army, as was the case in Spain between 1936-39 where the Republican side tried to take arms on an equal footing with its adversary, tried to fight the same war. This gave the fascist an unspeakable advantage. The revolutionary forces were soon overpowered. In his struggle against mechanical application of bourgeois military principles and blind application of the insurrection theory advocated by the Third International, which led to the crushing of the revolutionary movement in Shanghai in 1927, Mao developed the PPW strategy.

Among the principles that he elaborated, let's mention:

- the role and the necessity of revolutionary violence to transform society and profoundly transform social relations;
- participation of the masses as a decisive factor in war;
- the building of base areas and the beginning of social transformations even before the complete conquest of state power;
- the building of a Red Army and the Party's leadership over the army;
- the Communist Party as a leading force;
- the necessity to gain insight from revolutionary theory.

In China, the victory of the revolution proved that Mao Zedong was right in applying Marxism-Leninism to the objective conditions of China, and in this way *"to march at [peasants'] head and lead them"* through revolution. We are the ones who must organize the people, we must fight tenaciously against all those who think that problems will be solved only through political lobbying. As Mao said, that that is reactionary is similar: *"As long as it is not struck, it is impossible to make it fall."*

In December 1998, 22 Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations got together at Mao's 105th birthday and adopted different resolutions, namely a *General Declaration* that distinguished between *"the general theory of the people's war"* (applicable everywhere), and *"the strategic line of protracted people's war"* [only applicable in countries] *where the peasant masses are in the majority among the basic producers and fight for agrarian revolution is the main component of the democratic revolution".* By introducing this distinction, the signatories were able to claim that *"the strategic line of protracted people's war is not applicable in industrial capitalist countries. But the general theory of people's war is undeniably of universal significance. It is likewise of universal significance that the class struggle in the imperialist countries and the protracted people's war in semicolonial and semifeudal countries are dialectically interconnected."*

This way of construing protracted people's war leads to incorporating tactical elements into strategic theory, to derive from what is specific that which is universal, and conversely. For example, encircling of cities by the countryside is only thinkable where the peasantry is the main force; but the fact that this does not apply in an imperialist country where the proletariat constitutes the main revolutionary force as well as the leading one doesn't change an iota to the universality of protracted people's war.

Under the terms of the above statement, the fight against right wing opportunism and revisionism—the main threats in imperialist countries—are greatly hindered because of the dissociation between armed revolution and the "protracted legal struggle" that precedes it. The revolutionary experience of the 1970's and 80's in major imperialist cities clearly

indicated that the combination of armed struggle with the mass struggle and the agitation and propaganda work of the Communist Party allowed to break with electoralism, parliamentarism and revisionism, when guided by correct theory.

In imperialist countries, the vast majority of the Marxist-Leninist organizations didn't go beyond the limits prescribed by bourgeois legality and stuck to the role of being a leftist opposition, zealously engaging in the protracted political activity of agitation and propaganda which, whether one likes it or not, only goes beyond the permissible limits of capitalist society on very rare occasions. This leftist opposition unwillingly showed its opportunistic character because in truth of fact the tenants of the "October Road", while promoting the insurrectionist theory, handed the initiative of revolutionary movement over to the bourgeoisie and gave it all the leeway it needed to prevent this very insurrection.

Alongside this movement and in opposition to it, proletarians and young revolutionaries born out of mass movements from which the demands raised the question of state power attempted to creatively, sometimes instinctively put into practice, within big imperialist countries Mao's conceptions regarding revolutionary war. As in 1905 when the workers overstepped the social democratic movement, moving beyond economic strikes that had then become useless and embarked in the preparation of armed insurrection, these proletarians and young revolutionaries demonstrated that *"armed struggle is a form of proletarian struggle under imperialism. Its size and its role will increase or diminish according to the material conditions in which it takes place. It follows the ebb and flow of mass movement. Armed struggle doesn't suddenly appear at the precise moment of the decisive clash, it is part and parcel of the period of gathering of forces that prepare and favorably condition the success of the revolution."* (*"Socialisme Maintenant!"* magazine, No. 7)

Fighting communist organizations have demonstrated time and time again that armed struggle heightens class consciousness; whether it's used as a propaganda tool to show the existence of a revolutionary initiative or whether it is used to wage combat and win victories (even partial ones); or that it serves to anticipate and prepare future phases of the revolutionary movement (strategic defensive, insurrection).

The practice of armed propaganda at the stage of gathering of strength, at least in regards to the experience of the Red Brigades in their ascending period (1970-1976), demonstrated that armed actions are at first mostly ideological and political tools (less importantly of a military character). Furthermore, if they are guided by correct theory, they allow to reinforce and accelerate the formation of the main nub for the power grab: the Communist Party. Armed propaganda has proven to be incremental for political revolutionary struggle and political propaganda. It is a means to permeate the proletariat with the commu-

nist project through an active struggle to defeat revisionism. Armed struggle also introduces revolutionary optimism by putting an end to the demoralization of the masses; by the same token, it is a strong educational tool to educate new generations of young proletarians to revolutionary struggle.

Far from being a mechanistic reproduction of Mao's strategy thrust upon imperialist countries, armed struggles that were waged in Europe have proven to be an original development of the proletariat in imperialist countries. In this regard, P. Becker, who wrote in the name of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) in a brochure titled *The False Path of the West European "Armed Guerrillas"* estranged himself from Communism and made himself guilty of partaking in the domestication of the proletariat by asserting this point of view: *"Guerrilla warfare in 'normal' non-revolutionary times, in the imperialist countries can do none of the principal things it does in oppressed countries, and attempts to launch it there in such times are generally doomed to remain isolated military attacks by relative handfuls. [...] Protracted people's war [is] a generally applicable path in the oppressed countries, whilst efforts to transplant it to the imperialist countries distort it into a static an useless, even harmful, 'model'."*

On the opposite, the following statement, quoted from the famous interview given by Chairman Gonzalo of the Communist Party of Peru and printed in the paper *El Diario* in 1988 presents another viewpoint about that:

"As for the armed actions in Europe, we've seen protracted armed struggles. They are an expression of objective reality. Therefore, the task is not to condemn them, but to understand, study, and analyze them to see how they are an expression of the fact that there is also a revolutionary situation in old Europe. And beyond that, that there are those who have taken up arms, understanding that that is the only way to seize power. This is a powerful blow to revisionism, because in Europe itself, considered to be one of their bastions, revisionism is beginning to be abandoned. Regardless of the level reached, and the problems that remain to be solved, this is undeniably an important advance." (Our emphasis.)

"In some cases, the national question is involved, as in Ireland. In other cases, the issue of how to make their revolution is raised. We believe that these struggles must be studied seriously. The problem is in understanding what their ideology is, what politics guides them, what class they serve, and how they approach the question of the superpowers. We believe that they deserve a lot of attention, especially when there are organizations that propose taking up Mao Zedong again, or that are starting to raise the need for a Party, or that the armed struggle alone is not enough. We must look at this as a new awakening and understand that they might make a lot of mistakes when you get right down to it, who doesn't? But they themselves will sum up lessons from their errors, as they are

doing, they'll advance, grasp Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and form Parties and wage people's war in accordance with the socialist character of their revolution and in accordance with their specific conditions."

In sum, to repeat, it is proof that in Europe, too, there is a revolutionary situation developing unevenly (Our emphasis). There are people who are sick and tired of rotten revisionism who, in such difficult conditions, within the belly of imperialism where the struggle is complex and difficult, are taking up arms to change the world, which is the only way it can be done. This provides more hope, and helps us see that the main trend is revolution, and to see how Europe is also turning toward revolution. Let's also recognize that, after having been pioneers in the past, they are opening up a path and, in the end, providing more hope. And they deserve greater understanding from us since there are already those who are concerned about the Party and are taking up Mao Zedong again. That is, they want to return to Marxism and to grasp it completely as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. These struggles being waged in Europe also have their limitations and errors, as all struggles do, but we should see them as an expression of the irrepressible advance of revolution and how more and more countries and peoples are coming forward to take up arms to overthrow the existing order. They are summing up experience, and setting their course toward the Party and the ideology of the proletariat, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism."

*"For me, seeing revolution begin to open a path in Europe is reason to rejoice. And regardless of possibly stumbling and falling along the way, we must have confidence in the masses and in the peoples—confidence that, as in other places, they will make revolution with arms in hand, following Marxism. They will do it there as well, that is how we must think. I emphasize that we must see this in historical perspective, take a long-term view, study these movements seriously, and encourage everything that tends towards Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, forging a Party and developing people's war." ("Interview with Chairman Gonzalo", *El Diario*, 1988)*

Chairman Gonzalo is a great Marxist. He clearly understood that even though armed struggles from different groups bore their share of contradictions and shortfalls, they had however objectively allowed to highlight the fact that the struggle of the masses and armed struggle went hand in hand and bolstered one another and that, at a certain point of development, the struggle of the masses generated new forms of struggle. These struggles, those of armed combat organizations for example, chart the course of revolution. They clearly indicate the necessity of grasping Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and leading protracted people's war.

P. Becker's pamphlet is proof that *"being incapable of understanding what historical conditions give rise to this struggle, we are incapable of neutralizing its deleterious aspects. Yet the struggle is going on. It is engendered by*

powerful economic and political causes. It is not in our power to eliminate these causes or to eliminate this struggle. Our complaints against guerrilla warfare are complaints against our party weakness in the matter of an uprising." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11)

It is the material conditions which we live in, among other things the intensification of the proletariat's exploitation and the opposition to this exploitation, that create and generate new forms of struggle that, at any given time, will take on a different nature and become the main source of struggle; all other forms of struggle must then conform to it. Mao and Lenin clearly established that the role of the vanguard is in fact to generalize, organize and give a conscious character to these new forms of struggles. Lenin's summation of the new methods of struggle that arose during the aborted 1905 revolution is of special importance: *"The guerrilla warfare and mass terror that have been taking place throughout Russia practically without a break since December, will undoubtedly help the masses to learn the correct tactics of an uprising. Social-Democracy must recognize this mass terror and incorporate it into its tactics, organizing and controlling it of course, subordinating it to the interests and conditions of the working-class movement and the general revolutionary struggle."* (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11)

Marxism teaches us that all revolutions are centered around the struggle for power. Billions of people throughout the world struggle, directly and indirectly, to free themselves from imperialism. In this regard, communists don't invent forms of struggle, they only structure already existing forms. Communists don't command the masses, they study their prevailing forms of struggle. The role of communists is to produce a twofold analysis. As the political process seasons and gains in scope, the goal of seizing power and destroying the bourgeoisie becomes more imminent.

In imperialist countries, armed struggle has also proven to be the main and leading force of revolution. The Communist Party must assume leadership of this armed struggle in order to stimulate and organize a revolutionary struggle that isn't exclusively peaceful and legal, or military and illegal, but a dynamic combination of all existing forms. This armed struggle is conditioned by circumstances, countries, epochs.

Save for the Russian revolution, the principles of protracted people's war have championed each and every revolutionary victory and advancement. Revolutionaries from imperialist countries are urged to carefully study protracted people's war. Brilliant examples of it are offered to us by Mao in China, the PCP in Peru, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the Communist Party of the Philippines, among others. These revolutionary examples clearly illustrate the importance of simultaneously building a Communist Party, a Red Army and a counter-opposition by transforming the fury of the masses in a mighty revolutionary force. In an imperialist country, this task however requires what we call *Maoist urban bases*.

In general, to make revolution in an imperialist country, today's communists must, in addition to spreading as widely as possible Marxist-Leninist-Maoist teachings within the proletariat, aim at: 1) forming a Revolutionary Communist Party; 2) put together the nucleus of a Red Army; 3) gather strength, form leaders, strengthen fighting structures (learn through fighting) and transform the fury of the masses as a mighty force for the revolution; and through integration of all these tasks 4) fighting for the conquest of power. Only the struggle for power confers a necessary continuity to the expansion and the degree of success of the revolutionary process. As is written in our *Draft Programme*: "*The socialist revolution can not be restricted to the moment of the seizure of power by the proletariat. It is at first a struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie, followed by the actual overthrow of its power, then the work to build a new society; each of those steps prepares the one to come. It is a 'protracted and painstaking' historical process, for which violence not only plays a key role at a given time, but is also part of it as a fundamental and permanent subject.*"

Protracted people's war in an imperialist country must be planned in accordance to a proper analysis of the existing and prevailing material conditions at the disposal of the ruling class (sophisticated technologies, a modern state apparatus). This struggle will engage us in a long and protracted process. Armed propaganda must be thought out from this perspective, and from this very same and broadened perspective, guerrilla activity. Today, it is hard to imagine how we could simply reproduce the October 1917 pattern and "take by surprise" the bourgeoisie with an insurrectionist movement that would suddenly explode and rapidly expand throughout the country.

What path must we follow to make revolution? A discussion with the RCP, USA

In its new *Draft Programme*, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA argues that "*the conditions in the imperialist states are generally ones where the grip of the ruling class on society is centralized in a strong national government and at the same time is powerfully and fairly uniformly extended throughout the country. The level of technology, including means of transportation and communication, is highly developed. Except in situations of serious crisis, the ruling class can concentrate massive armed force in any particular place—or even in a number of places—within a short period of time.*" (*Draft Programme*, Appendix, p. 41)

Hence, the proletariat would have to wait till the bourgeoisie is at its weakest before launching an armed insurrection. At that moment in time, according to the RCP, the revolution in the United States "*would begin with mass insurrections centered in the urban areas*". "*This would lead to the establishment of a revolutionary regime in as much of the territory as possible, and then the waging of a civil war to finally and completely defeat the old ruling class and its counter-revolutionary armed forces and to*

consolidate the rule of the proletariat in as great territory as possible. Such a war should only be launched when the proletariat has a real chance of winning. This requires three basic factors: first, a serious crisis in society and in government; second, mass upheaval and rebellion among the proletariat and other sections of the people; and third, a vanguard party capable of turning the mass upheaval and rebellion into an organized insurrection and giving it overall leadership and direction." (*Draft Programme*, Part 1, p. 27)

This is more or less the same stance adopted by the RIM (of which the RCP is part of) in regards to strategy in imperialist countries: "*The strategy of the party [...] must be based on seizing hold of such upsurges, launching the insurrection and immediately taking the offensive, bringing significant forces rapidly to bear on the enemy so as to prevent it from gathering its initially far superior military strength, to win victories day by day, retaining the offensive long enough to prepare conditions for then pushing through with civil war. Through this insurrectionary process a revolutionary regime can be established and thus serve as a genuine red base area for the civil war, however, unlike in the oppressed countries, the establishment of such a regime cannot be done bit by bit, but is concentrated into a relatively short period, which then is followed by all-out civil war, a contest of strength between the new-born revolutionary regime and the remaining areas of bourgeois control.*" (P. Becker, *The False Path of the West European "Armed Guerrillas"*)

In his book entitled *A Horrible End, Or, an End to the Horror* (1984), Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP exiled in France, stressed that in the United States, revolution will have to wait for the moment until "*there is a decent chance of coordinating uprisings of the basic masses concentrated in the urban areas into a general armed insurrection which can seize power at least in a number of the major cities and quickly advance from that initial breakthrough*".

"*Now, having said that, it is also very important to emphasize that things you've done leading up to the launching of the armed struggle would count for something. In the case on countries like the US this means a period of political work and political battles and preparing public opinion, preparing minds and organizing forces for revolution, building the party and building broad organized ties with the masses—all these things count for something. They count for a great deal in fact. So you wouldn't be literally starting with nothing. But in terms of actually having an army in the strict sense you'd be starting basically nothing. So two things: first, you wouldn't want to go up against the full power of the imperialist armed forces right away; and two, you wouldn't want to go up against an imperialist regime when it has the most favourable situation and there is no serious economic or political crisis.*" (Bob Avakian, *Could We Really Win?*)

The RCP and RIM place emphasis only on the military aspect of armed action. This is the main weakness of their stance. No mention is made as to its role or potential as a tool for political propaganda to gather forces. It limits in advance other forms of struggle (that is no armed struggle before insurrection) by making to sharp a discrepancy between the current level of consciousness of the masses from their actual struggles in any given situation. During this time, the bourgeois state is preparing itself for a stand off. What the RCP is saying to the masses in actual fact is *"Don't take up arms!"*. They seem to believe that once a revolutionary situation breaks out, the proletariat will be able to launch an armed offensive against the imperialist state and its army without any prior military preparation.

Fearing direct confrontation with the imperialist bourgeoisie, the RCP refuses to engage in the development of any kind of revolutionary initiative, whether it be of an offensive or defensive character. In the current historical phase, bourgeois authority must be challenged through armed propaganda. By the same token, the RCP contributes in safeguarding bourgeois rule and its monopoly over the use of weapons and violence. In our opinion, their understanding of revolutionary violence and use of weapons is erroneous. We will not be able to properly educate the most advanced elements of the proletariat in the use of revolutionary violence without any practical experience within the context of tactical and organizational conditions—even though limited—that could pave the way for a final victory. We cannot let the masses solely advance their struggle by means of spontaneous fighting.

The main difference between our stance and that of the RCP is that for the latter, guerrilla and armed struggle in general are components of civil war that arises at the time of insurrection; as for us, we believe that armed struggle is part of the work that communists must develop in the period of accumulation of forces. In this regard, it is necessary to understand armed struggle as something that must flow from the entirety of historical development and the objective material conditions in which class struggle is today taking place within capitalist countries and thus incorporate it in a revolutionary strategy. Strikingly enough, it is ironic that the objective conditions the RCP refers to, which force the Communist Party into a long legal battle to prepare insurrection, are likened to the conditions that generate armed struggle.

What do 150 years of communist struggle tell us? It tells us that there is no possible discrepancy to be made between the goal (revolution) and the way struggle must be waged. For a Communist Party genuinely wishing to be revolutionary, speedy preparation of the overall conditions of revolutionary mass struggle in every way and in every realm (including armed struggle) is of the utmost importance. Does this conception of the activity of the vanguard exclude the work of a party, ideological and political struggle, organizational tasks? No, of course not. On the contrary, it presupposes and reinforces it; it makes it necessary while imparting to the vanguard's activity a much more conscious character.

To claim that a swift series of insurrections in imperialist countries will enable the creation of red bases is an ideological construction of reality that estranges itself from Mao's teachings. It is also a wrong summation of the first wave of Russian and Chinese revolutionary experiences.

If we take the period that extends from October 1917 to the Second World War, the attempts to imitate the Russian revolution through insurrection, prevalent in the conceptions of the Third International, availed themselves to no good, rightly enough: they were based on a misconception of the historical reality of the time. *"In fact, one can say that an insurrectionist strategy presupposes exceptional conditions, as was the case with the Russian revolution which triumphed over a divided enemy (between feudal and bourgeois, absolutists and parliamentarists, etc.) weakened by the crisis and a war which turned to the rout, etc. And when the International Communist Movement believed to have found in the Bolshevik insurrectionist tactics a strategic model applicable to all the revolutionary fights over the world (from Berlin in 1919 to Canton in 1927), it underwent defeat over defeat..."* (Fighting Communist Cells, *La Flèche et la Cible*, Our translation)

Insurrection as a building block (with ensuing civil war) turned out to be a strategic option that didn't permit to grasp the nature of capitalism's crisis between the First and Second World War. It also prevented, among other things, to grasp the changes that had taken place within the modernized state, the nature of imperialism at that point of its development, the treason of social-democracy, which should have forced the revolutionary movement to adopt long term strategy. This stopped the Komintern from developing a correct line, neglecting the task of accumulation of force and the perspective of overthrowing the bourgeoisie.

By separating the revolution in two distinct phases (legal work followed by insurrection), the movement as a whole, without barely any exception, abandoned in practice the preparation of the insurrection. As legal work became more distinct from preparation for insurrection, the revolutionary program soured into an opportunistic, pacifist and legalist program. The wide credence that this opportunistic line had gained pushed back all the more the moment of insurrection instead of making it more imminent. For example, in Germany the Red Army had not been organized for a correct strategy of seizure of power, and the Communist Party was unable to lead one single army detachment to defend itself. It witnessed the destruction of huge structures of people's organizations it had painstakingly built and that regrouped 5 million voters and a Red Front of 100,000 men when the fascists came into power.

The complete collapse of the parties of the Second International is costly proof of the falsity of the insurrectionist theory. Everywhere, the bourgeoisie regained the initiative from the proletarian masses: in Italy in 1922 (march on Rome by the fascists), in Bulgaria (military coup), in Spain in 1923 (dictatorship of the Voldemaras), in Portugal in 1932

(Salazar), in Germany (seizure of power by the Nazis and destruction of the Party), and in Austria in 1933 (civil war that ended in the defeat of the Republic in 1939).

“Successive experiences have demonstrated that the insurrectionist theory is far from being conclusive for communist parties in imperialist countries; quite the contrary, while failures were accumulating and as no imperialist wars were looming, capitalism conceded a few goodies to the workers. Opportunists made good on this by introducing reformism, economism and revisionism within workers’ organizations. By neglecting to accumulate revolutionary forces, by skirting the vanguard’s task of developing through a long drawn process the conscious practice of partially staking with the masses the future instruments and conditions of state control within the very heart of bourgeois society—process which is called protracted people’s war—the revolution’s defeat is inevitable, wherever it takes on the form of insurrection.” (*“Socialisme Maintenant!”* magazine, No. 7)

The summation we must come to is that despite important breakthroughs, the communist movement in imperialist countries that was born out of the Third International was unable to ascertain the new conditions in which the revolution was going to take place (or if they were understood, it was unable to translate them into appropriate political action). As Mao pointed out: *“The legal existence of the Communist Party is tolerated in some capitalist countries, but only to the extent that it does not endanger the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie; it is not tolerated beyond that.”* (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*). The brunt of the communist movement in imperialist countries was unable to grasp the fact that the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat under imperialism was in great part taking place as an undeclared and permanent civil war.

Concretely, the Third International, at a certain point, splitted into two currents. One was backing a screwed up version of Lenin’s insurrectionist theory, partly put into theory by Neuberg (pseudonym of a group related to IC); the other, protracted people’s war. On one side, Thorez and Togliatti; on the other, Mao Zedong. Through mechanical application of the insurrection theory, communist parties were led into repeating the errors of the parties and organizations of the Second International, which consisted in separating legal from illegal work. They were led into making armed struggle and illegal actions in general subservient to legal activities. For the most part, the first phase (the long work involved in agitation and propaganda) ceased in practice to be considered as a preparatory step for the second phase.

Protracted people’s war in Canada

Now that we have taken a look at the overall evolution of revolutionary strategy, that we have considered its insufficiencies, boldness, strong and weak points, we must strive to overcome its fallbacks by incorporating improvements

in our revolutionary practice, here in Canadian society. We would be very bad communists if *“we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice.”* (Mao, *On Practice*)

We still don’t have a clear idea of how protracted people’s war is going to unravel in Canada; we need to study, among other things, the role of First Nations in the revolution. But we are able to grasp the ideological and material bases for its application. As Mao said, *“Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that. Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare.”* (*Problems of Strategy in China’s Revolutionary War*). Our strategy is devised for seizure of state power, dictatorship of the proletariat and the development of socialist society towards communism. This process takes place step by step in an uninterrupted revolutionary process.

The transformation of the imperialist state, the revolutionary situation that is in the making and the weakness of the revolutionary forces impose upon us the protracted people’s war strategy. Our enemy is quite superior to us. This inequality forces us to gain in strength in order to overcome this political imbalance.

In his famous text *On Protracted War*, Mao studied different elements that define and characterize a situation where revolutionary forces are weaker than reactionary forces. Far from limiting himself to a mechanical assessment of the forces in presence that could have been summed up like this: our enemy is much stronger than us so it is impossible to wage war against him—Mao analyzed all the contradictions that opposed the two sides (revolution-reaction) and highlighted the aspects that divided them and those that linked them. *“Why a protracted war? Only by referring to all the contradictions in between us and our enemy can we come to a just conclusion.”* Our conclusion must rest on *“the appreciation, in their reciprocal action, of all the particularities that characterize the enemy as well those of our country”*.

What are Canada’s characteristics?

Canada is an industrially developed imperialist country, dominated by a monopolist bourgeoisie that possesses a centralized state and a powerful police force and army. The Canadian bourgeoisie, though made up of different regional fractions, wages war against oppressed people abroad to safeguard its interests. It also wages war against its own proletariat, the popular masses and the First Nations. The bourgeoisie represents about 5% of the population. It is contending with other bourgeoisies of imperialist countries through economic competition. This competition tends to become more and more antagonistic.

The proletariat is far superior in number but is poorly organized, not very politicized and divided by bourgeois

agents who work essentially within the domesticated pressure movements. In the proletariat, the hard nucleus of potential revolutionary forces is to be found among the most exploited workers that come from immigration, youth, Native proletarians and doubly-oppressed women. They are the ones who weather the brunt of the attacks from the bourgeoisie.

According to a report on poverty produced in 2000 by Statistics Canada, poverty has been on the rise for 25 years. The poverty rate among households, according to this government agency, was higher in 1997 (22.4%) than in 1989, 1981 and 1973. This means 1.3 million households that have become poorer since 1973.

Poverty has greatly increased among young households. In 1981, a young family (that is the oldest adult being under 25) risked being poor on a 21.7% average; since 1997, this risk doubled, climbing to 46.1%. Poverty among the next age group is also higher: among the 25 to 34 year old group, the poverty rate went from 12% in 1981 to 18.9% in 1997. As for single headed families headed by women, the poverty rate that was at 53.3% in 1981, oscillated between 55% and 60% during the last decade.

The highest rate of poverty is to be found among First Nations, “visible minorities” and disabled people. According to a census done in 1996, 43.4% of Natives, 35.9% of visible minorities and 30.8% of disabled people were poor in 1995. These rates are a lot higher than the national average (about 22%).

The increasing rates of poverty in the active population reflect the insufficiency of earnings derived from the work market. The number of working poor, that is those who have been employed for at least 49 weeks a year, has markedly increased from 1981 to 1987 going from 14.7% to 21.9%. Taking solely into account earnings, close to 1.6 million families in the active Canadian population were living under the poverty threshold in 1997, compared to 1.1 million not taking into account government transfers.

The reach of poverty—estimated at how much lower than the poverty line a given person’s income has fallen—has also greatly been on the increase. From 1981 to 1997, the poverty gap for all poor households has almost doubled (86.4%). Taking into account solely earnings from the work market, the poverty gap has increased 96% in this same period.

For about 40% of Canadians, poverty is a persisting problem. Some groups are more vulnerable to long periods of poverty: single-headed families, people belonging to a visible minority, newly arrived immigrants, people with little education and those who live by themselves. The longer one has lived in poverty, the harder it is to get out of it.

The main contradiction in Canada lies between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: revolution will have a socialist character. Canada’s concrete conditions determine its political orientation, the military strategy and tactics on each side, the protracted character of the war and also heralds the final victory of the revolution. For the time being, with-

out getting into details concerning different stages of revolutionary warfare (strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and strategic offensive), we can, following concepts elaborated by Mao, highlight certain aspects that can be applied to war in imperialist countries.

Of the three instruments the proletariat needs for revolutionary struggle, the Party is the most important one. Without a leadership based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, a revolutionary army will inevitably succumb to adventurism and armed revisionism.

The second instrument the proletariat needs for warfare is a revolutionary army. We are not talking here of adventurists looking for kicks, or a group that is in a rush to settle accounts with the bourgeoisie: we are referring to an active organ, distinct from the Party, that follows the latter’s political leadership and fully assumes the military objectives that the Party sets for it.

In semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries, armed struggle is the main activity of the revolutionary armed forces. Without armed struggle, there would be no place for the proletariat, or the people, or the Communist Party or for the victory of the revolution.

In an imperialist country, the armed struggle of the Red Army takes on a different form. At first, armed propaganda actions serve to thoroughly introduce the principles of the Communist program to the working class; this form of activity consists of small scale operations executed by small groups that aim at political objectives (sometimes military ones). In this phase, we are not occupying areas, but waging surprise attacks, consisting of concentration of forces for short periods of time, meaning the time to accomplish any one of these given tasks. Protracted people’s war will hence go through a preparatory stage consisting of the construction of a Revolutionary Communist Party, the development of an embryo of the Red Army and mass struggle. This step (the military tactic relies on the level of military technique: it is Engels that pointed out this truth) goes through a transition leading to the next step—strategic defensive—in which the demands and political nature of mass movement will transform themselves, as well as their revolutionary political and combative activity. To sum up, this period is strategically defensive, but tactically offensive.

At another phase of development, the Red Army will fight to annihilate the enemy forces, while assuming propaganda tasks aimed at the masses and fostering their organization in order to create a counter-power. Because the Red Army is a people’s army, organizing the masses in war is also an aim, members of the Party can fight from within this army, according to Party needs. However all Army fighters are not Party members.

The third “magic sword” that the proletariat needs is a united front in the masses. The experience derived from the first wave of proletarian revolutions showed the need to create organs of counter-power at the very heart of imperialism; the experience of armed struggle in Western

countries during the 1970's and the resistance waged by communist partisans during the Second World War showed that it was possible to develop a counter-power within imperialist countries.

Systematically, the Party will encourage the masses to set up truly authentic proletarian organizations, entirely independent from the State, and establish multiple networks controlled and organized in an autonomous fashion. These organizations, which they will generate themselves at need, will be from the very start at the heart of the struggle for the proletarian revolution. The Party will call for the formation of Soviets, worker committees where the masses will be able to organize and express themselves on a strict class based viewpoint. These organizations will work together in building and developing a whole network around the Party and the revolutionary army: the embryo of a new power will be hence in the making. *"It is in the name of these new organizations, authentically proletarian, in which they will have learned to defend themselves, to engage in battle against the enemy but mostly—and with help from the party—to assume leadership of society, that the masses will then rise. They will be ready for any sacrifice to defend their organizations, as well as the vast network built around the party. They will do this bearing arms, as soon as they understand that the bourgeoisie will be endeavouring to destroy them."* (From RCP[OC]'s *Draft Programme*)

What must we do? Declare war on imperialism? This may sound funny, but we are rightly dealing here with a war, and even though it is not declared, objectively the bourgeoisie is leading a generalized offensive to prevent the proletariat from regrouping its forces. The bourgeoisie is leading its struggle its own way, the proletariat must also fight its own way by developing protracted people's war.

In imperialist countries, the bourgeoisie is well in command of the situation: it is from this position of weakness that the proletariat begins its struggle. Reactionaries, although smaller in number, have at their disposal a powerful military force, a strong economy and a strong state apparatus; in counterpart, the system they defend spreads war, misery and is backward in character. This system is bogged down in insurmountable contradictions. These are the characteristics of the enemy. As for the revolutionary camp, it is the contrary; even though it is much more numerous, its military strength is relatively weak, it has no state apparatus, but its struggle is a just and progressive one. It also has at its helm a Communist Party that is guided by correct theory, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and is bolstered by the most revolutionary and numerous class—the proletariat.

Canada is strongly urbanized and the majority of its cities occupy small portions of its surface. The protracted people's war will take place mostly in the big cities and urban areas. *"It is there that the nascent proletarian power will appear. The support and the participation of the masses, once again, are of the utmost importance in this process. The*

revolution will be built around a vast and underground network led by the party." (RCP[OC]'s *Draft Programme*)

At the stage of strategic defensive, *"the fact is that the disparity between the enemy's strength and our own is now so great that the enemy's shortcomings have not developed, and for the time being cannot develop, to a degree sufficient to offset his strength, while our advantages have not developed, and for the time being cannot develop, to a degree sufficient to compensate for our weakness. Therefore there can as yet be no balance, only imbalance. [...] Hence during a certain stage of the war, to a certain degree the enemy will be victorious and we shall suffer defeat. [...] But circumstances are continually changing. In the course of the war, provided we employ correct military and political tactics, make no mistakes of principle and exert our best efforts, the enemy's disadvantages and China's advantages will both grow as the war is drawn out, with the inevitable result that there will be a continual change in the difference in comparative strength and hence in the relative position of the two sides. When a new stage is reached, a great change will take place in the balance of forces, resulting in the enemies defeat and our victory."* (Mao, *On Protracted War*)

The major difference in the application of protracted people's war in imperialist countries is the duration of each of its transitory steps and their content. In an oppressed country, guerrilla warfare can remain for a long time at the stage of strategic stalemate because it can rest on stable base areas. In an imperialist country, this phase consists of the moment when guerrillas and the revolutionary masses concentrate their forces in order to launch an insurrection to take possession of a major city that will allow the mass-generated organizations to take solidly and permanently root (on an open basis). This period marks the transition between strategic defensive and strategic offensive.

The period that will follow insurrection and the seizure of a major city will represent a new phase in the civil war with the bourgeoisie. We could have tried to speculate on the way the civil war will be carried out from this point on, but this would be of no help to the revolutionary movement. Our position as communists in an imperialist country forces us to endeavor in trying to understand and assimilate as best as possible the most advanced teachings of the communist movement, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and apply them in practice in our struggle for revolution.

C. Jacobson



Communist organization in street demos

(Translated from the Summer 2001 edition of *Socialisme Maintenant! magazine*.)

1. STREET DEMOS ARE UNDER THE CONTROL of reformists of all kinds for much too long. Under their leadership, demos have degenerated into useless activities in regard to class struggle. But unlike the most reactionary bourgeois politicians, these reformists (so-called “left-wing” politicians, trade-unionists, members of the NGOs, non-violent pacifists, etc.) do not wish to do away with demos, but to transform their very nature in order to use them as means to control or lead ideologically and politically in the class struggle.

2. INSTEAD OF CALLING UPON THE WORKING CLASS and the masses to take action—in street demos, for example, as part and parcel of the proletariat’s traditional means of class struggle—reformists will entertain a tendency of inertia, and this, by the very use of demonstrations. This may seem contradictory, but it is not in fact. Demos allow reformists to show their bourgeois partners that they have assumed perfect control and leadership over the working masses. They will exert tight control over the content (claims and political meaning) as well as the shape and form of the demo. The theme used in these circumstances (bland or terribly vague), the claims, the slogans, the chants, the course, the placards, the speeches, the means of transportation, serve in preventing the demonstrators from acting on their own initiative. This tendency of inertia is a bit thwarted by the need to stage a demo; a demonstrator must make his or her way to a given gathering point, provide for free time within her or his regular activities, etc. But once the demonstrators have gone through the necessary steps to partake in such an event, reformists will relish secretly the thought (...although this is less and less a secret), that these participants will be in fact reduced to mere passive instruments. This passivity will be wrongly construed as a political adherence, as a support to the ideological mechanism—put together by the bureaucratic organizers of the demos.

3. PASSIVE AND TOTALLY PREDICTABLE DEMOS are consequently perfectly in line with policing strategies and the State. These forces wish to assume control and leadership over the population. This will to control, whatever one may think, is not in contradiction with these types of demonstration as long as the organizers are able to evaluate the crowd that will show up, the nature of its different components, their command over the continuum time-space (initial gathering—course—eventual break-up) and finally an overall well sought out planning of the political event.

In the following words, this was expressed in a document of the “Institut de Perfectionnement des Cadres de la Police” (Institute for Improved Training of Superior Officers) of the Canadian Police College: *“Crowd control is important, for once a crowd is out of control, it is too late to plan an intervention.”*

It is most important to carefully understand that police lose 50% to 60% of their efficiency (we are not talking here about its striking scene) when it must improvise an intervention that doesn’t fit in with its prior planning. There is an objective link between the ideology of control of the reformist-bureaucrats and that of the police and the State. This is detrimental of course to the struggle of the proletariat.

Olivier Fillieule (a French author) illustrates in pointed fashion this point of view. The following excerpts, in his work on policing in France, are particularly interesting to any activists who has felt trapped in between the police and the reformist organizers during a demonstration. What holds true for France, holds true for Québec and Canada.

“According to most French policemen who have been interviewed, a police intervention fails when security forces have been taken by surprise. The worst thing that can happen for them is to be taken by surprise. Planning is central to their actions.”

“The intelligence gathered from the organizers comes partly from knowledge of the groups going to take part in the demonstration. Unlike what is commonly held true, the police are not suddenly made aware of a demo. On the contrary, there is connivance, if not mutual recognition between both parties. In order for a demo to run smoothly, there are talks that take place between the organizers and the police beforehand or while the event is taking place. This is the most commonly used tactic. These negotiations are done on an informal basis rather than in a legal framework.”

“The effort made to reach a compromise can be made before the event, but during the event negotiations are equally important. This is why at every event there is a liaison agent. This agent must stay at the head of the demo and maintain communication with the organizers of the demo. [...] Negotiations, on the spur of the moment, with the demonstrators are made a lot easier this way. These ongoing negotiations lead to close collaboration between police forces and the stewards if they share common goals.”

Fillieule gives an example of this, quoting a top police officer that partook in this kind of experience:

“If the procession is 800 meters long, the trouble makers must be isolated and the rest of the demonstrators—the group that detains a legal permit to demonstrate—must be able to reach their destination. It is quite easy to do this with the CGT and other professional organizations. They have disciplined stewards that can isolate outsiders. They create blockades, either they stop the demo, or hurry its pace, or cut it off. Sometimes they inform us of

their intention of pushing the rioters into a given street. However no student organizers will do this [this is to be proven!]. They do not want to be seen as collaborating with the police.”

4. BIG ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS TRADE-UNIONS pretend that their strength resides in the impeccable organization of their *passive and predictable demos*. They say: “*Look how well we can organize: there is nothing to worry about, our sound system is in perfect condition, we can be heard for miles [yeah, sure but a message of no importance!], our people are in a festive mood while remaining respectable, this goes to show their level of social consciousness*”; etc. This is a lot of bull shit. These *passive demos* are not a show of force, but evince on the contrary weakness. The working class is prevented from waging true struggle by *politically attacking the enemy*. **If a worker is to demonstrate, he or she must attack the enemy, the bourgeoisie!**

5. TO THESE WELL KNOWN *passive and predictable demos* can be added a new variety of non-violent civil disobedience actions. One aspect of this new variety is that it allows for a *more vigorous way of struggling*, appealing to young workers and students. However, its second aspect curtails the struggle to that of reformism. Trotskyism served the same purpose in the 60s and 70s by seducing scores of young protesters and young activists with a form of radical and critical speech. But after a lengthy detour of five, eight, ten years they led people back to classical reformism: socialist parties, State apparatuses, trade-unions, etc.

Civil disobedience has achieved the same thing, but in a lot less time. Many protesters have already in fact likened civil disobedience to **civil obedience**. This perception is quite truthful. By popularizing like a piece of merchandise the gesture of being voluntarily arrested, and in turning it in mere spectacle of symbolic value for the media, the most resolute supporters of this type of political action have simply converted once again struggle in regards to its fundamental content, even though different in form, into a link between reformist and police control.

A demo organized by Opération SalAMI in Montréal revealed this quite pointedly. We are referring to one of its most famous actions, the one that took place in front of the Sheraton Centre, the sit-in to protest against the OECD vying to reach a multilateral agreement on investments. During this action about a hundred people were arrested in 1998.

This is how things went on at that occasion: While the demonstrators were spontaneously gathering at their meeting place as do all demonstrators, the police force did not hesitate in clearing René-Lévesque Street. With sporadic nubs of their bludgeons and occasional spurts of pepper spray they kept the demonstrators at bay on the sidewalk. However as soon as the ones leading the demo (leaders in the broadest sense, including animators, sound technicians, media groups, organizers) moved forth to begin the demonstration (it is safe to assume that the police was aware of the time of this manoeuvre), police withdrew in order to

let SalAMI start a slow walk down René-Lévesque, as planned. This led the marchers away from the Conference Centre. Thereof, at each street corner they came across, they covered the street sign bearing the name of that very street with a piece of cardboard on which was written another name.

SalAMI had organized a non-violent disobedience protest, but one that had strong approval by the police. This is of course perfectly contradictory. In fact civil disobedience is everything but what was settled on between SalAMI and the police. A spontaneous and untimely taking to the streets in order to disrupt the protest timetable, is an example. But the way SalAMI acted, there is no question they didn't stage a civil disobedience protest. It was nothing more than a symbolic action approved by the police force and staged for the media. It was a **civil obedience protest**.

The same things goes for planned “sit-ins” or “teach-ins” that take place in areas or in streets where it was agreed upon with police so that circulation can be re-routed. These political actions are empty in content. It is a trickery that is meant to fool the demonstrators. Once again **it is a mechanism that serves to link the political control of reformists to that of the State and the police**.

6. THE GREATEST DANGER THAT STEMS from these *passive and predictable demos* is that revolutionaries become complacent and reproduce within their own organizational structures those of these types of protests. Instead of putting to use the knowledge already gained by the revolutionary movement, they give into the disorganization proposed by the reformists. This will have as a result that any denunciation will become senseless, because the form of protest will be unworthy of properly conveying the message.

7. MORE AND MORE THIS DANGER IS PERCEIVED by revolutionaries who are striving, in truth of fact, through trial and error, but mainly in a manner that is unfortunately not unified, to make protests significant. This is one of the brightest aspects of class struggle since the last decade.

It must be said that faked-communists (revisionists) have completely estranged themselves from these firm and solid advancements. They have adopted in fact the discipline and the legal practices imposed by the bourgeoisie. This results in demos where the demonstrators are passively kept in toe with the reformist leaders.

Once the dangers of this dominant current are well understood, the dangers being of ending up caught disorganized within the frameworks of these sham protests, then we can work towards countering of these methods in order to give to proletarian protest the tactical nature they are suppose to have. To do this we must fully understand revolutionary methods in street demo organization. These ways of organizing will offer us an ironclad stronghold to lead struggles and the numerous upcoming protests.

What are Red Fists?

8. IN DEMOS, OUR MOST BASIC FORM OF ORGANIZATION, are the *Red Fists*. Red Fists are, above all, based on a method of communist organization. A way of putting to full use our strength and of assigning roles for a street demo. Secondly, Red Fists are an active and lively form of solidarity shared by the vanguard where revolutionary activists pull together and partake in a concrete communist action.

Why do we use the expression “Red Fists”?

Firstly, the red color serves to express the communist and revolutionary content of the activity, considered as a whole, and not in its parts. This content is one of propaganda. It is this revolutionary and communist content which is determinant and decisive. It is not empty of meaning, a thing with a propagandist character that is undetermined, or void.

The fist is to underline a parenthood with one of the most practical, versatile, powerful and flexible tools known to humankind, something that comes from our very existence and our development on earth: the hand. A hand can be held opened, or it can be clenched in the form of a fist. In the shape of a fist it has the following characteristics:

a) **It is united, inseparable and its members stick up for one another.** A Red Fist is made up of five comrades who are in definition welded to one another. Ultimately they are called upon to stay united and stick up for each other for the duration of the demo, and in each different phase of the demo. Acting within a Red Fist is to act in order to preserve and safeguard this unity.

b) **A Red Fist is also a tiny work association.** The five members of the Red Fist work together as a team, mutually assisting each other and strengthening themselves reciprocally. Imagine for a minute your very own hand at work. Most of the time your five fingers work in unison. Once in awhile, to allow the index and the thumb to act, the other fingers are going to exert pressure on a given point; or they might circumvent an area, free it of some obstacle to foster eventual action. In other circumstances, all five fingers will act together, in oneness, to grasp an object. In truth of fact, we are faced with a very broad array of subtle combinations in which an action, even a very modest one, is done with the indispensable support of each and every finger.

c) **Only one thing is performed at a time.** A Red Fist cannot, as a hand cannot, efficiently perform more than one task at the time. Could you, for example, knock at a door, count your money and open peanut shells all at once? It would be quite difficult, wouldn't it? One must choose. Only one thing can be efficiently done at any given time. It could however be possible to perform a planned series of actions. But one must determine if such a course of action would be useful and must seriously consider if each individual action will be well accomplished.

d) **A Red Fist does not decide on its own what task it is going to perform.** Does your hand decide on its own if it will crack peanut shells? Of course not. It doesn't decide on its own either if it is going to count money or knock on a door. Your hand responds to a will. Even if this will is transient, and swift, as sudden as a bolt out of the blue, it proceeds nevertheless from a spontaneous and immediate plan conjured up by the brain. The Red Fist is strong and its action is warranted insofar as it is responding to a will. It knows that it is part and parcel of a broader scheme, the scheme that must take place in a demonstration. Each Red Fist understands that it has a role to assume, one that has been rationally assigned to it. The scheme is to fulfill certain propaganda aims during the course of a demo. This is why all Red Fists are fully and rigorously united in solidarity with one another. This solidarity is perfectly expressed when any given Red Fist fulfills what it has been assigned to do.

This is why if a Red Fist is assigned to look after a banner, there is nothing more important politically during the time of that assignment than to look after that very banner. The Red Fist must protect this banner, it must bring it to where it must be brought so that it can be seen by whom it must be seen.

In this same sprint, a Red Fist that must hurl projectiles on a line of police officers must aim as well as they can to hit as precisely as possible their target. Nothing is more important politically for them than that task.

e) **A Red Fist is flexible, swift and assumes responsibility for itself.** A Red Fist is part and parcel of a broader scheme, but this does not make it a dead weight to be looked after by other Red Fists. Quite the opposite. It is not either a small appendage that is inseparable from the crowd, an appendage that acts in perfect unison with the crowd wherever the crowd goes or whatever the crowd does. It is sufficiently coached to know how it must move and where it must go, how it must defend itself and through what means, how it must retreat.

9. THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE TINY GROUPS give them great practical value—for action and for propaganda in street demos. More specifically, they foster communist organization and the fulfillment of objectives related to the demo in the following manner:

a) **They foster the participation of communist demonstrators.** No form of participation is useless. Likewise no task is unimportant. Someone may feel ill-prepared or unfit to fulfill a task, however he or she may support the overall scheme and may be willing to play his or her part in the demo by participating in a Red Fist in a way that suits this person better. The overall scheme must provide for everyone participation. At the same time, the role of each Red Fist must be well planned in order to fit in with the overall scheme.

b) **Preparation must be fostered over improvisation.**

A Red Fist must be well prepared when it comes into a demo. This holds true for each and every demo. Members of a Red Fist must have met with each other at least once or twice beforehand. In truth of fact, they should meet as many times as needed in order to properly carry out their mandate.

For example, members meet over a coffee or lunch. On this occasion the group goes over every detail in a careful manner so that everyone clearly understands his role and is able to perform it well. In this way each member of that given Red Fist can rely on each other. The means of transportation must be taken into consideration. Whose car will be used? Will it be a car borrowed from a friend, or your own or a rental? Is the given vehicle in good working condition? Does the owner have any traffic fines to pay? How much money does the Red Fist need? At the place of destination, where is it safe to park the car? Is the group knowledgeable about the area in question? Hour by hour knowledge of the days schedule: time of arrival, of departure, when the protest is going to start, how long will it last, the trip back home. The roles assigned within a Red Fist. What will be needed? Who will put the needed stuff together? When will it be done? So on and so forth. For every question that comes to mind, there must be a simple and practical answer. One must have foresight.

c) **Autonomy** is fostered. A Red Fist is by and large autonomous in regards to its organization. It provides for its own transportation to and from the event. It is responsible of its own gear. Either they carry it with them, or they know where and how to get it. It is also responsible in carrying out its task in the demo. It is not continually reliant upon orders, or counter-orders, or signals or directives.

d) It fosters **self-defense**. It is unthinkable to be staging a protest that is important for the proletariat in which the demonstrators, in a spirit of capitulation, would surrender to arrests, or still worst, would let themselves be voluntarily arrested. Such a way of acting is a terrible waste. Red fists call for resisting arrests.

It is known that the police will arrest people while being in numeric inferiority, **because they assume** (on account of their experience or their training) **that the demonstrators won't resist**. However police are taken aback by man to man resistance when an arrest is in process and they are unable to proceed in their usual fashion. Because they are in inferior numbers, they have to re-deploy their forces. Precious time is gained in this way by the revolutionaries.

Members of a Red Fist must stay together and act in solidarity. Behavior such as walking up front as a lone-ranger bearing a flower, or pissing in front of the police is to be proscribed. This type of behavior is merely suitable for the TV cameras. A Red Fist must stay grouped together and unless this unit has any other mandate, it must stay close to the masses.

Members of a Red Fist must intervene if one of them is hassled by a policeman. The surrounding masses must be alerted by a few words or something to that effect. But one must not wait for their reaction. One must take the initiative and hope that the surrounding people will follow suit. The goal is to free the comrade from the grasp of the policeman or the policemen—one must remember that they are acting in inferior numbers. One's fists, boots, sticks or anything that will make the officer(s) release their hold. The Red Fist can also intervene for another demonstrator. The Red Fist must again act in the same fashion, this is to say act in group formation.

Different types of Red Fists

10. THE EXISTENCE OF MANY DIFFERENT TYPES of Red Fists in a demo is possible. In fact there is no set limit. All depends on the complexity and the importance of the demo. The main types of Red Fists are the following:

a) **Sales and distribution.** This type of Red Fist takes part in a relatively simple form of agitation: distribution of leaflets, of newspapers, sales of brochures and magazines, etc. A single Red Fist or several can be used for a demo. It must be assured that it brings the right number of published material and it must provide for a way to get more if needed. Members of a Red Fist must decide upon who will hand out the propaganda (2 or 3 people) and who will assist and protect them.

b) **Political identification.** This Red Fist carries with it a banner or any other manner of political identification. When it is carrying a regular type of banner, two of its members must carry the banner and the rest of the team must assist them and protect them. These latter comrades can possibly bear red flags.

c) **Communist agitation.** According to a pre-established plan, this type of Red Fist sees to the delivery of a particular message among the demonstrators. This message may be a particular slogan, or specific watchword (advance in such or such a direction or proceed to such and such a place). The Red Fist bears red flags. It hands some out to the demonstrators around it. It strives to rally around it all who bear a red flag through its determination, enthusiasm, and tactical efficiency.

The Red Fist must be fully devoted to the masses, be strongly united with the people that surround it, offer advice, set an example by way of its actions, be communicative with the surrounding crowd, etc. It must be also very exuberant, evince a great deal of combativeness and of determination among the ranks of the demo.

d) **Action.** The task of this Red Fist is to attain a target. The target in question could be a billboard conveying a message of a particularly despicable nature. Other examples are the shut gate of a factory that just has been closed down, a police car, the entry to a given building, a policing device, a meeting centre, etc. This Red Fist must dispose of all the necessary material to enable it to accomplish its task.

The aim of its action, at the moment it is accomplished, is to endow the demo with some sort of political direction, firstly intended to be coordinated with the task of a Red Fist that is overseeing communist agitation. Once the target hit, agitational tasks must be spread throughout the demo.

If the attack has been very well carried out the demo will have been all the more successful in terms of efficiency in *striking at the class enemy!*

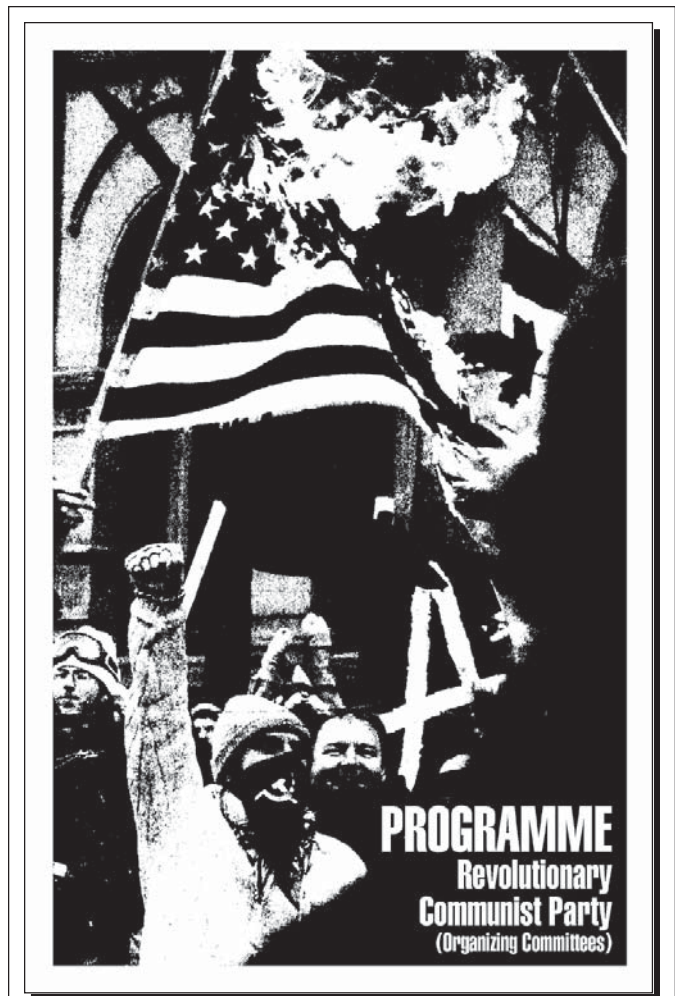
Depending on the circumstances, other Red Fist may be useful such as ones that stays on the look out or one that provides **information**, or one that serves as a **communication link**, etc.

11. EACH RED FIST MUST SEE TO ITS OWN PREPARATION. Of course, during prior meetings this aspect must be dealt with. But if any comrades fail in this task, this could badly damage the outcome of the demo.

This preparation must take into consideration certain difficulties that may be encountered in demos that will be tough to carry out. It is this level of difficulty that will determine how much preparation is needed, and this even though the difficulties don't show up as planned.

- a) No drugs, alcohol, agendas, notes, documents or bags.
- b) Loose seasonal clothing, preferably too warm then not warm enough, equipped with big pockets to replace an encumbering bag.
- c) Dispose of a change of clothes, worn preferably underneath, allowing one to swiftly shed the clothes he or she wore during the demo, clothes that could help the police identify the demonstrator.
- d) No contact lenses; eye glasses must be secured by something in order not to be lost.
- e) Eyewear protection, such as swimming goggles, a mask, a scarf or a piece of cotton. The scarf serves to make the demonstrator unrecognizable. It also protects partly against tear gas.
- f) At least one bottle of plastic (such as a soft drink bottle), filled with vinegar. One for every Red Fist.
- g) Any protective equipment: gloves, pads, or something similar fastened with tape, etc., that will make one reassured if there is any body to body contact with the police.

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Strategy and tactics in the struggle against the US global imperialist war

Paper presented by the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Forum, Nepal at the “International Communist Seminar” organized by the Workers Party of Belgium (WPB) on 2-4 May 2004 in Brussels. The Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Forum is a mass organization which supports the People’s War currently led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

Dear comrades,

We would like to extend our heartfelt greetings on behalf of the revolutionary masses of Nepal while we are gathering here in a seminar on a very important, very timely and very burning issue of the present day.

The Nepalese revolutionary masses have been confronting US imperialism since the very initiation of the People’s War. In the present days, while the US occupation and people’s resistance have been going on in Iraq and Afghanistan, and while its aggression has been going on against the people of the Philippines, Peru, Haiti, the Korean Peninsula and other parts of the world, its political intervention and military concentration over Nepal have been intensified. Despite the US has been waging a political offensive against the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)—the vanguard of the proletariat—and military offensive by its lackey (the feudal Gyanendra Shah), the US has been preparing to increase its military offensive against People’s War, aiming at establishing strategic military bases, encircling China and watching over India.

While dozens of the best sons and daughters fighting for destruction of feudalism and imperialism have been killed and dozens of Maoist leaders and cadres including Comrade Kiran, Comrade Gaurav, Comrade Matrika and Comrade Suresh (Standing Committee and Central Committee members) have been arrested by India—some of them still being in prison and many others having been extradited to Nepal—this International Communist Seminar has been organised here to discuss very burning issue on the topics of Strategy and tactics against the US Global War. We would like to extend our heartfelt greeting to the organiser, the WPB, and a lot thanking for giving us the opportunity to express our views on this issue. We will concentrate our views on this very subject.

* * *

“There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one’s own country, and supporting

(by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception.” (Lenin)

In the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, basing on the analysis of the economic, political and military strategy of the imperialism, Maoist revolutionaries have characterised four basic contradictions in the present world. Contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat as a contradiction between labour and capital; inter-imperialist contradiction; contradiction between imperialism and oppressed classes, nations and people; and the contradiction between capitalist and socialist system are the basic or the fundamental contradictions in the present world. Among these four basic contradictions, contradiction between capitalist and socialist system does not exist now, but it is important to keep in mind that such contradiction existed before and will exist tomorrow with the birth of socialist states in the future. And, out of these four basic contradictions, at the international level, imperialism versus oppressed classes, nations and people is the main contradiction.

The imperialist system has developed to a more monopolistic, more parasitic and more decadent one than a century ago, when great philosopher Lenin defined and exposed imperialism, developed strategy and tactics of the Great October Revolution and guided the world proletariat for world revolution. In China, in the course of fighting feudalism and imperialism and coming through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) having liberated the Chinese people from feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, Chairman Mao Zedong developed Marxism-Leninism to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. After the fall of Soviet social-imperialism, the US imperialism today has developed as the single superpower of the world. Controlling over science and technology by handful fanatic elements of the monopoly capitalists of the imperialist countries, specially the United States of America, it has unleashed a war juggernaut, unjust, parasitic predatory in character, in the name of “human rights” “democracy” and “liberation” of the poor countries.

The US imperialism has been using strategy and tactics of so-called democracy and human rights as a political offensive, economic blockade and control through International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and through military actions against the oppressed masses of the world. This process has created a huge gap between production and distribution on the world scale. Even imperialist’s data say that rich countries that have 15% of the world population own 80% of the world’s resources, whereas 85% of the population own only 20% of them. Consequently, two and a half a billion people have been victims of abject poverty. One billion people are under absolute poverty line. It has given rise to unemployment, poverty, anger and anarchy and rebellion simultaneously. The imperialist war on Yugoslavia, on Afghanistan and on Iraq is for the further expansion of the imperialist predatory, parasitic and plundering mission in the Central and South Asia, aiming at to engulf rich natural resources, huge number of cheap labour of China, as well as perspective rival force

in the future, after tightening control over African and Latin American countries. Furthermore, the American policy of “pre-emptive action”, the theory of “Project for New American Century”, concept of “Global Leadership” and Bush and Co.’s theory of “either you’re with us or with the enemy”, makes the US monopoly capitalists and imperialists more fascistic than ever before. These objective realities of the present world provide great objective conditions for the world revolution.

Lenin’s explanations on the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution and Chairman Mao’s proposition that revolution is the main trend in the world, which he concluded from the correct identification of contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations, is also equally scientific and valid in today’s world. Imperialism that has developed to a global system through economic, political and military hegemony and domination at the global level as well as through ties with the brutal and fascist regimes in Third World countries, has been imposing war juggernaut against the oppressed people in the whole world. Despite the fact that the superpower has been imposing war in order to maintain its imperialist system and economy, the US has been forced more and more to adhere to imperialist terrorism by developing newer and newer generation of weapons. This situation of the imperialism makes it looking stronger but in essence, it is frustrated, feared and terrified by the political consciousness of the masses of the 21st century. Because of this objective reality of the present world, despite their “military supremacy”, the demise of the imperialist lackeys and fascistic regime of the Third World as well as of the US imperialism itself has come under the ring of fire.

For instance, the Maoist revolutionaries can see and analyse objective conditions developed along with the US aggression on Iraq that along with the sharp confrontation and forceful resistance of the Iraqi people, the US imperialism in Iraq is surrounded by millions of oppressed Iranian, Jordanian, Turkish, and Arabian proletarians. The Communists in those countries must be able to hoist the red flag of the People’s War and mobilise the revolutionary people against the regimes of their countries as well as against imperialism. Mao Zedong’s scientific synthesis that either Maoist revolutionaries have to make revolution and the war will be prevented or war will lead to break out revolution will come true if the Maoist revolutionaries consciously uphold, defend and apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and that means beginning People’s War.

The imperialist monopoly on markets, material resources and military firepower have also intensified inter-imperialist contradictions. French and German opposition against Iraq war, however, marks nothing benevolence for the Iraqi people and make no respect to the millions of people who opposed war, but maintains contradiction against American hegemony and domination in the oppressed Eastern European countries, as well as in the Middle East. Any confusion that French, German, Russian imperialists opposed war and Spain’s preparation to “withdraw” its troops from

Iraq make something positive in fighting against US imperialism will be suicidal for the oppressed people in the world. Furthermore, the quest of favourable UN resolution either to prevent war or to handover Iraqi sovereignty to the Iraqi people are simply a bargaining cheeps of the European imperialists. The US monopoly in military power, economic domination and hegemony over European imperialist bourgeoisies and their market has further intensified the contradictions among themselves. These contradictions will not be solved unless the Maoist revolutionaries make socialist revolution in these countries. Again, inter-imperialist contradiction and contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has been forcefully leading imperialist and capitalist countries to socialist revolution. In a nutshell, the expansion of the European Union to the Eastern Europe is the outcome of inter-imperialist rivalry, the competition between the US and the EU to dominate over cheap labour, rich resources and market for their stockpile products. But contrary to their wishes of exploiting cheap labour and natural resources of this region, the expansion of the European Union to the Eastern European countries has simply invited more and more gravediggers of the European imperialists bourgeoisies.

Despite a powerful expression of public opposition against the imperialist war, it is time and again proved that imperialism do not stop war unless it is overthrown from power. The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles have further proved Lenin’s scientific synthesis that imperialism means war, because as long as there is imperialism there will be war(s). Hence, imperialism cannot be overthrown without a violent overthrow by using revolutionary power, and after revolution, such revolutionary power cannot be maintained without challenging imperialist internationally by proletarian internationalism.

A revolutionary crisis has been seen in the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Iran during the US war against Iraq. It is a law of dialectics that a big action generates a big counteraction and such counter actions are clearer and palpable at weak links. Along with the US aggression against Iraq such weak links were interlinked with war and still persisting to be weak link in the region as well as in the United States of America. All revolutionary crises do not necessary lead to immediate victory, but every revolutionary crisis could and should be turn to bring greater and more decisive revolutionary crisis. Furthermore, any revolutionary crisis automatically cannot lead to revolution unless there is conscious vanguard Party of the proletariat to lead these crises to revolution. Contrary to the imperialist assertion that imposing unjust war against oppressed countries brings a “new world order”, such wars always drag them to a spiral mode of crisis, more fragile, uncertainty and more complexities. Here just as Mao has said, *“the proletariat should attempt to prevent the world war as far as possible, but if unsuccessful, they should work out the policy to turn the world war into world revolution”*, the Maoist revolutionaries should make all out efforts in making revolution.

But in the absence of a Maoist vanguard Party guided by a revolutionary line, having a People’s Liberation Army

under the leadership of such Party and exercising a revolutionary United Front to lead revolution or advanced revolutionary subjective conditions, revolution in any country is not possible. Here, it is very important to keep in mind that, just as having drawn lessons of the historical experiences of the fall of the Paris Commune, Marx had pointed out that the old state machinery cannot help for the new and revolutionary state machinery; in the same way there is no possibility of revolution without concentrating on these three strategic instruments of revolution.

In the context of Nepal, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has scientifically upheld, defended and applied Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the concrete objective reality of the Nepalese society. In the course of the People's War, the Party has synthesised its experiences as Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda Path. Prachanda Path is a set of ideas developed in the course of Nepalese revolution on which, as in every revolution, the basic theory becomes yet developed ideology and guiding principle becomes the developing ideology: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the basic theory and Prachanda Path is the guiding ideas. In the Nepalese context, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism becomes basic principle, theory and philosophy for the revolution and Prachanda Path serves as guiding ideas. It is similar to what happened in the Russian Revolution, that Marxism was the basic theory and Lenin's ideas were guiding principles; and Marxism-Leninism was the basic theory and ideas of Mao Tsetung were the guiding principles in the context of the Chinese Revolution. As per dialectical relation between general and particular, the ideas developed in the particularity of the Chinese Revolution serve as general ideas in the context of the People's War in Nepal and Peru. Similarly, the ideas developed in the particularities of the Nepalese revolution may certainly serve as general ideas in the course of making world proletarian revolution. Here, it would be important to note that the particularity of the ideas of Chairman Prachanda deserves generality in the context of world revolution. Chairman Prachanda has laid a general foundation to pave the way for the New Democratic and Socialist Revolution in the 21st century and thus to advance to Communism synthesising the first five years of practice of the People's War. In the Second historic Conference of the Party held on 2001, he documented: *"21st century shall be the century of people's wars, and the triumph of the world socialist system"*. Apart from this, it also shows that there has been a significant change in the prevailing concept of model of revolution after 1980. Today the fusion of the strategies of armed insurrection and protracted people's war into one another has been essential. Without doing so, a genuine revolution seems almost impossible in any country. In the particularity of Nepalese revolution, Prachanda Path has developed the principle of fusion of two military strategies—the strategy of insurrection and the strategy of protracted people's war. This principle could be applied as a general principle in the particularities of other countries and even in the imperialist countries. The understanding of the comrades of the Maoist Parties of Italy and Canada also indicates that without leading Peo-

ple's War in the imperialist countries by making fusion of the two military strategies, revolution will not be possible.

While we are discussing about mapping out the strategy and tactics in the struggle against global US imperialist war, no real strategy and tactics could be forged divorced from the revolutionary war within the imperialist citadels. And whether revolution is possible or not depends on zeal and enthusiasm of the revolutionaries in fighting on all fronts against revisionism and opportunism, eclecticism and reformism as well as the war front of the enemy. In the context of Europe, Maoist revolutionaries must investigate revolutionary potentialities and navigate revolutionary activities in the concrete realities of the present conditions of Europe, and not on the conditions that existed before the 1950s. The present conditions are the fact that the Western Europe has developed as one country—like without border, that it has been using single currency, that it has integrated economy and culture, that the people of every country have been suffering American military presence since World War II, that the European Union has been marching towards developing single European Parliament and its single Army of the Union, that the European bourgeoisie have let loose European nationals to earn, marriage and settle any of the European countries have brought a new reality in Europe and such conditions demand a new kind of organisational set-up of the Communist Revolutionaries to meet the needs of the European revolution. Furthermore, the need of market for the European bourgeoisie and a quest for way out against US imperialist domination however, brought a unity of the European states to a step progressive, yet because of their imperialist economic military and political nature, predatory mission and repressive character they have tightened military domination in many of the African countries, promoted a national chauvinism in Europe and maintained imperialist alliances with the US imperialism. Hence, under the given situation, unless the revolutionaries of Europe get unified under a single policy programme and plans and fight against both European and American imperialist bourgeoisies, making revolution over one country or its expansion will be very difficult. Furthermore, in order to meet the challenges posed by revisionism, reformism and liquidationism before the Maoist revolutionaries, the world revolution demands a New Type of Communist International. The Maoist Communist Parties and Organisations in the world over by now has the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) which has been developing as an embryonic centre of such a new Communist International.

Hence, by this, and only by this process, as Lenin said *"working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception"* will the Communist Revolutionaries be able to map out real strategy and tactics in the struggle against global US imperialist war.

Thank you,
Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Forum, Nepal

Celebrate RIM's 20th Anniversary!

By the Committee of the
Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

Twenty years ago, in March 1984, the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) was announced to the world during a historic London press conference that boldly declared the formation of “an embryonic centre of the world’s Maoists” and the goal of forming a communist international of a new type. A short time later, on 1 May of the same year, the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* was published and distributed in many languages. Although the world situation has undergone dramatic changes since then and RIM’s own understanding of its revolutionary ideology has advanced, especially with the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as its guiding ideology in 1993, the *Declaration* remains a precious achievement and a solid foundation for further advance.

The formation of RIM was, above all, a response to the capture of revolutionary China by the new bourgeoisie led by Hua Kuo-feng and Deng Xiaoping shortly after the death of Mao Tsetung in 1976. The closest followers of Mao, including his widow, Chiang Ching, were arrested, and a wave of terror spread across the country. Thousands were killed or imprisoned. The China that had been living proof of the possibility of building a new society free of exploitation was rapidly transformed into a hellhole of capitalist exploitation. The China that under Mao had been a bulwark of resistance to the world imperialist system became another link in the world-wide chain of oppression.

The international communist movement was severely harmed by the loss in China. Many forces followed the Chinese party into the revisionist swamp. Others echoed Enver Hoxha’s vicious attack on Mao Tsetung Thought (which today we call Maoism). Some tried to “rediscover” socialism in the Soviet Union, which Mao had so forcefully and convincingly exposed as social-imperialist. Even more former communists lost their hope in the possibility of proletarian revolution and drifted away from political activity altogether.

The formation of RIM was a declaration of refusal to abandon revolution. It was a daring act to hold high the red flag when it was being trampled in China, Albania and elsewhere. As the *Declaration* put it, “Today...the forces fighting for a revolutionary line are a small minority encircled and attacked by revisionists and bourgeois apologists of all stripes. Nevertheless, these forces represent the future”. With the hindsight of twenty years we can see how prophetic these words were.

Only a few years after the formation of RIM the whole East bloc, including the USSR itself, came crashing down to

the applause and laughter of the Western imperialists, who tried to use the collapse of this revisionist monstrosity to proclaim the final victory of Western “democracy” over “communist totalitarianism”. Even today the tidal wave of the bourgeois ideological onslaught against the theory and experience of proletarian revolution does its damage.

Despite these difficult moments, RIM and the parties and organisations making it up were not only able to maintain their bearings but to make some dramatic breakthroughs. The People’s War under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru advanced steadily throughout the 1980s and early 1990s before facing a “bend in the road” following the capture of its leader, Chairman Gonzalo, and the subsequent emergence of a right opportunist line that called for abandoning the war. Despite the hardships and difficulties, the communist revolutionaries in Peru have persisted and struggled to keep the red flag flying.

South Asia, home to hundreds of millions of the world’s exploited and oppressed, is crucial in the process of world proletarian revolution. Maoist forces from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been a pillar of RIM since its formation. A new chapter in this history began in Nepal in 1996 with the initiation of the People’s War. Now, after only eight years, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has liberated the bulk of the country and is knocking at the door of nation-wide political power, which is sending shock waves throughout the region.

In India, RIM’s connection to the advancing revolutionary struggle has been strengthened with the participation of the Maoist Communist Centre of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari).

In Turkey, the Maoist current is emerging stronger after a series of line struggles against the pernicious influence of a semi-Hoxhaite trend in the communist movement of that country. As a result, the subjective conditions are improving for a powerful new wave of people’s war.

In Iran, a generation of revolutionaries had faced arrest, execution or exile, but amidst the defeat and demoralisation the red flag was kept afloat by the forces of RIM who went on to form the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist). Today, as the reactionary regime of the mullahs is agonising on its deathbed and the imperialists and reactionaries seek to control the inevitable “regime change”, the importance of RIM and the existence of its contingent in Iran stands out more clearly than ever.

In Afghanistan, where the communist forces had been smashed and/or disoriented by the Soviet Union’s invasion and the subsequent leadership of the anti-Soviet war by CIA- (and China-) backed reactionaries, a new communist party emerged.

Thus, we can see that in the Middle East-Central Asia region, the only choice for the masses is not the false conflict between imperialist “modernisers” and Islamic “anti-Western” obscurantism. The path of new-democratic revolution, socialism and communism is no doubt a difficult

road, but it is the *only* road to genuine liberation. Suffering at the hands of domestic and foreign exploiters, tired of seeing national sovereignty and democratic rights trampled by these same enemies and fed up with the dead-end “solutions” of the misleaders, whether bearded or clean shaven, men or women, the revolutionary elements in these countries need the liberating ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and it is the forces of RIM, in particular, who are struggling to bring it to them.

The countries of Latin America have long been considered their “backyard” by the US imperialists, who believe they have an unrestricted right to exploit the masses of these countries and control their destiny. Although the People’s War in Peru has faced difficulties in recent years, it has been a shining example for revolutionaries throughout the region, and comrades in Colombia, Mexico and other countries of Latin America have struggled to popularise its lessons. In Latin America, as well as elsewhere, efforts by the US imperialists to impose an even tighter control are intensifying the already strong hatred for Yankee imperialism. Here, too, the possibilities of new revolutionary breakthroughs exist.

From the beginning, RIM has reflected the reality that the world proletarian revolution consists of two basic streams—the proletarian socialist revolution in the imperialist countries and the new-democratic revolution in the oppressed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. RIM’s vision of the final goal of a world without classes and its internationalist orientation is strengthened by its presence in both kinds of countries. In the imperialist citadel of the United States, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA has been able to sink roots among the masses and advance preparations for the future battle to rid the world of its greatest oppressors. In Italy and Germany, parties and organisations are developing as part of RIM, and elsewhere in the imperialist countries comrades are increasingly recognising the role of RIM in uniting the genuine Maoist forces.

In short, the world is ripe for revolution, and the situation is ripening still further. But in order for the dreams of the oppressed to become a reality, proletarian ideology must come to the fore and a solid communist organisation must be built. There are still too many parts of the world where Maoist forces are extremely weak or non-existent, such as in Africa where the need for revolutionary transformation is so evident. Even where genuine Maoist forces do exist, their capacity is generally dwarfed by the magnitude of the tasks to accomplish and the possibilities to fulfil.

Further, we must consider the whole of the international communist movement and its future, not just the specific parts that make it up. RIM was formed not only to help the existing parties and organisations learn from each other and advance but to develop as a centre, to strengthen the proletarian ideological and political pole in the world as a whole and to lay the basis for further advance, both ideologically and practically, towards a communist international of a new type. The need for ideological and political clarity, for a

stronger unity of the communists at the international level, and for further breakthroughs in leading the revolutionary struggle of the masses forward, all this cries out to be done. All Maoist revolutionaries must understand the importance of RIM to the world proletarian revolution and do their utmost to help it advance.

The world today is a fiery cauldron of conflict. The imperialist enemy is on the rampage and the people are driven to resist in a thousand ways. Imperialist order and stability is giving way to more intense turmoil in which the difficulties, hardships and sacrifices facing the communist forces and the masses of people are intensifying. Yet these very same conditions are favouring the emerging new wave of world proletarian revolution. Thus, we see once again that danger can be transformed into opportunities, the necessity to resist transformed into the freedom to take great strides ahead. In this light we can see that RIM’s important achievements over two decades are but a prelude to the even greater challenges on the horizon facing the proletariat.

May 1st, 2004

Participating Organizations in RIM are:

- Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)
- Communist Party (Maoist) of Afghanistan
- Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD(ML)]
- Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Naxalbari)
- Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist)
- Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
- Communist Party of Peru
- Maoist Communist Centre of India
- Maoist Communist Party [Italy]
- Maoist Communist Party (Turkey/North Kurdistan)
- Marxist-Leninist Communist Organization of Tunisia
- Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) [Bangladesh]
- Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia
- Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

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On the Struggle to Unite the Genuine Communists

Despite the obvious need for unity against the powerful, well-armed enemies of revolution, it has often proven difficult to unite the communist forces into a single vanguard party. The solution is not, however, programmes that gloss over differences in the search for some arithmetic unity around "common points", but a dialectical process of struggling to resolve the key issues facing the revolution in a spirit of unity-struggle-unity. This article reviews the rich but tortuous experience of the international communist movement to draw vital lessons for the struggle today.

Building Red Power in Nepal

As it struggles to advance the eight-year-old People's War towards the seizure of nation-wide power, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is confronting complex and perilous challenges. An interlude of cease-fire in 2003 gave way to a new round of even more intense warfare. Today the People's War is reaching new heights.

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Celebrate RIM's Twentieth Anniversary
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