



WORKERS' INSTITUTE OF MARXISM-LENINISM- MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT

'Practise Marxism, and not revisionism.'—Chairman Mao

WORKERS' STRUGGLES AND TRADE UNIONISM - Reference Material

We are living in excellent times. The world is in great disorder because the main contradiction in the world between the people of the world and the two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, is coming up for final resolution. The year 1975 will indeed see the total collapse of the old world and the birth of the new world. Communist revolutionaries while participating actively to bury the old world of imperialism, revisionism and all reaction and building the new world of socialism, are grasping ever more profoundly that without revolutionary theory revolutionary action loses its bearing. Serious study and application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is thus being undertaken in the course of actual struggles so as to arm the revolutionary masses with the invincible weapon to fight against the manifestations of revisionism.

The protracted revolutionary struggles of the working and oppressed people of the world, in particular those of the Third World, are pounding away ever more powerfully at the rotting foundations of the old international order. The situation in the imperialist heartlands can be characterised as "the wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountains". Wave after wave of spontaneous workers' struggles are reflecting this. Every attempt of the revisionists, neo-revisionists and other agents of the bourgeoisie to restrain the tempestuous workers' movement is coming to naught. In Britain, the miners' struggle from November 1973 to February 1974 showed in particularity the entirely new stage the workers' movement in the imperialist heartlands has reached. The miners were faced with five main obstacles: (a) a Tory government which declared "national emergency" four times - unprecedented in the history of Britain; (b) imposition of a 3-day working week; (c) a General Election; (d) a hostile mass media; and (e) revisionist mis-leadership. In spite of them the miners won their struggle. A crucial factor in this was without doubt the impact of the oil weapon launched by the Arab people following the October War in the Middle East. Starting as they both did, in November 1973, these two struggles objectively merged and showed the might of the united strength of the working and oppressed people of the world by rocking the old world to its foundations.

How many of the idealist metaphysicians who run "riot" in the "left" circles in Britain have grasped this? Yet, the most advanced revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, is scoffed at. The scientific analysis of the world situation and the situation in the imperialist heartlands by the great, glorious and correct Communist Party of China is often dismissed or lightly treated. The tendency to worship spontaneity is an old temptation in the imperialist heartlands and too many progressive people are caught in this whirlpool. They forget that poverty gives rise to a desire for change, a desire for action, a desire for revolution. They shun the difficult but necessary task of integrating the proletarian revolutionary line of Chairman Mao to the concrete conditions of Britain. Chairman Mao has pointed out that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything". He has also said that "once the correct ideas characteristic of the

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advanced class are grasped by the masses these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world." Theoretical workers armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and trained in struggle to uphold the historic mission of the proletariat are thus urgently needed in Britain, as in other imperialist countries. -- Excerpts from THE NEW WORLD, Vol. 1, No. 1, P.2-3

SOME RELEVANT EXCERPTS FROM MARX, ENGELS AND LENIN

1. Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system. -- Marx: Wages, Price and Profit, 1865.

2. Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898-1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least two major distinguishing features of imperialism: 1) vast colonies, and 2) monopoly profit (due to her monopolistic position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Marx and Engels, analyzing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its connection with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement.

In a letter to Marx dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote: "The English proletariat is becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable." In a letter to Sorge dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that "the English labour leaders had sold themselves." Marx wrote to Sorge on August 4, 1874: "As to the urban workers here (in England), it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot." In a letter to Marx dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks about "those very worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by the bourgeoisie." In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers' party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies."

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge: "The most repulsive thing here (in England) is the bourgeois 'respectability' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers. . . Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the finest of them, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one can see what a revolution is good for after all." In a letter dated April 19, 1890: "But under the surface the movement (of the working class in England) is going on, it is seizing ever wider sections of the workers and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant lowest (Engels' italics) masses, and the day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly find itself, when the fact that it is this colossal self-impelled mass will dawn upon it." On March 4, 1891: "The failure of the collapsed Dockers' Union; the old conservative trade unions, rich and therefore cowardly, remain alone on the field. . ." September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated and "the bourgeois papers recognize the defeat of the bourgeois labour party" (Engels' italics throughout) . . .

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were also expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proven by his preface to the second edition of The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1892. Here he speaks of an "aristocracy among the working class," of a "privileged minority of the workers," in contradistinction to the "great mass of working people." "A small, privileged, protected minority" of the working class alone was "permanently benefited" by the privileged position of England in 1848-68, whereas "the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement." "With the breakdown of that (England's industrial) monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position. . ." The members of the "New Unionism," the unions of the unskilled workers, "had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited 'respectable'"

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HAILS JUST STRUGGLE OF BRITISH COAL MINERS

Peking, February 15, 1974 (Hsinhua) -- The 'People's Daily' today carries a signed article entitled "The Just Struggle of the British Coal Miners."

The article points out that the nationwide strike staged by 270,000 British coal miners since February 10 in defiance of pressures exerted by the ruling class is an expression of the steadily deepening financial and economic difficulties and sharpening class contradictions in Britain, and it also indicates a new upsurge in the British workers' struggle.

The article says that the British government announced last year a three-stage programme for controlling inflation, which in effect is a programme restricting the reasonable demand of workers for higher wages while allowing the commodity prices to continue to rise. With their real income decreasing constantly, the British workers are getting more and more impoverished. Oppression by the monopoly capitalists in all its forms is bound to arouse strong resistance from the workers.

The article points out that the coal miners living at the bottom of British society are suffering from most relentless exploitation by monopoly capital. At a time when the British economy is sharply worsening, they often bear the brunt of the monopoly capitalists' intensified attack on the working class. These are the circumstances in which the coal miners have strengthened their staunch fighting spirit. It is by no means accidental that in recent years they have always been at the forefront of the surging strike struggle of the British working class. The miners' struggle against over-time work beginning last November fully demonstrates their might. By launching a nationwide strike, which marks a new height in their struggle, the coal miners will certainly deal a heavier blow at the British monopoly capitalists.

The article points out that the British authorities have, in the past few months, applied both hard and soft tactics in their attempt to halt the miners' just struggle. They have on the one hand tried their utmost to induce the miners to lower their demand for wage increases; on the other hand, they have declared a "state of emergency" on four occasions since November 13 last year and introduced a three-day work week beginning January 1 -- an attempt to lay the blame on the striking workers for Britain's economic difficulties and its energy crisis. As soon as the coal miners decided on a nationwide strike starting February 10, the Conservative government announced a general election to be held on February 28, sixteen months ahead of schedule, in an effort to compel the miners to cancel the strike. Some Labour Party leaders expressed the "hope" that the strike would be postponed. This clearly shows that the two British parties, under whatever label, speak only for the British monopoly capitalist class and can in no way represent the interests of the British working class.

The rapid deterioration of the British financial and economic situation is a reflection of the general crisis of the capitalist system in Britain and an evil result of the policies pursued by a succession of British governments in the interest of the monopoly capitalists. The coal miners' struggle is entirely just because it is a counter-attack on the monopoly capitalists who are trying to shift the burden of economic difficulties on to the workers, an action to safeguard the workers' right to live. It is obviously absurd to blame the coal miners for bringing about a difficult economic situation in Britain.

The article writes in conclusion that the British coal miners' strike fully demonstrates the soaring fighting spirit of the British working class. Their just struggle has won active support from the labouring masses in Britain. There may still be obstacles of various kinds or even twists and turns in the course of their struggle, but their stubborn fighting spirit in defence of the interests of the working class has been a tremendous encouragement to the labouring masses in Britain. With the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the sharpening of class contradictions in Britain, the British working class will experience a new awakening and the British Labour Movement will see a new upsurge.

HAIL MAY DAY - INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY!

Statement of the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought,
May 1st, 1975.

May Day is a day of unity and struggle of the working people throughout the world. It is a festival of the world proletariat. It is a day when working people express their profound solidarity with their class brothers all over the world in their common struggle against all forms of class and national oppression. It is a day when they dedicate themselves afresh to participate actively to smash the old world of capitalism and imperialism to smithereens and to usher in the bright new world of socialism and communism. On this festive occasion we in the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with profound revolutionary sentiments, salute the great and beloved leader of the international proletariat, Chairman Mao; the Chinese proletariat, the most advanced section of our class; and, all our fellow workers throughout the world who are standing in their place, struggling gloriously against the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to ensure that "the Internationale shall be the human race". In particular we salute the British working class - the oldest proletariat in the world, which is struggling in increasingly militant forms against a most weak and desperate but vicious and deceptive enemy - the British monopoly capitalist class.

May Day this year is being celebrated in an unprecedently excellent situation in the whole world. The principal contradiction in the world between the two superpowers and the people of the whole world is coming up for final resolution. No act of desperation by the two superpowers can save them. In the past two weeks, in quick succession, the people of the world joyously received the inspiring news of the historic and decisive victories scored by the heroic Cambodian and Vietnamese peoples against the two superpowers - U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. U.S. imperialism has thus been thoroughly defeated two times in two weeks by a small nation and has been shown up as a colossus with feet of clay. Soviet social-imperialism, on the other hand, has been thoroughly exposed as a false friend whose "socialist" proclamations are fig leaves to cover its betrayal of the banner of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the historic mission of the proletariat to liberate the whole of mankind and realize the grand ideal of communism. As the great victories of the heroic Indochinese people show, it is the people of the world, in particular the people of the Third World, who are really powerful and are the motive force in the making of world history, not one or two superpowers, however much the latter rant and rave in their contention for world hegemony. The incessant and manifold struggles of the Third World are in fact daily contributing to the rapid decline and collapse of the old international order based on colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism. In the imperialist heartlands, the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie in their efforts to shift the burden on to the people in these countries, such as Britain, are in effect adding fuel to fire the indomitable fighting spirit of the working class who are today rising up in rebellion in various forms. As the Chinese proverb says: "The wind sweeping through the tower heralds a rising storm in the mountains". The magnificent victories of people's war won by the Cambodian and Vietnamese peoples are in fact part of a chain of many more great victories to come this year. Indeed, it can be said with certainty that this year, 1975, will see the long-awaited event - the victory of world revolution!

In this final conflict, mankind's standard-bearer is Socialist China led by the great, glorious and correct Communist Party of China and Chairman Mao, who are carrying forward the banner of the Great October Socialist Revolution in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The people of the world, in particular the people of the Third World, led by Socialist China, while fighting rigorously for a new international economic order against the two superpowers and their hangers on know only too well that only with the establishment of a new international political order, that is, by the establishment of the international dictatorship of the proletariat, can the old world of colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism

be crushed and the new world of socialism be built so that mankind can march forward creatively to the classless world of communism. As long ago as March 1919 when Comrade Lenin founded the Communist International he pointed out that the establishment of the international dictatorship of the proletariat is impending. Today, with historic victories being scored in rapid succession by the people of the world, the urgent task facing Marxist-Leninists, particularly in the imperialist heartlands, is to boldly disseminate and ideologically arm the working people with the historic mission of the proletariat and the need for the establishment of the international dictatorship of the proletariat. We in the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought take this as our principal task at this stage as part of our contribution to the victory of proletarian world revolution.

BY A BRITISH WORKER COMRADE

Superpower Influence in the Labour Movement in Britain - Many people are puzzled at what is going on in the organized labour movement today. It seems to most people not to make sense at all. On the one hand Trade Union leaders, who are paid by workers' subscriptions, have a fairly good salary, if you take into account their tax-free expenses such as cars, travelling allowances and sometimes houses and meals. Most people would say a very good salary. However, they seem to be telling the workers that we must accept a lower standard of living and also that a vast amount of unemployment can be tolerated.

What seems to be the case of this Trade Union power bloc is that capitalism is in a crisis and the working class must shoulder the burden of this crisis. So we, the working class, must help our deadly enemy, the capitalist class, to climb off its death-bed, help it to get better, so that this "Monster" can carry on oppressing us! This is objectively, what the Social-Democratic (i.e. Labour Party) power bloc in the Trade Union movement is trying to accomplish.

A substantial amount of our country's economic resources have long ago been sold out to the U.S. trans-national companies (e.g. car plants, chemicals, etc.). Everyone knows that the U.S. superpower has been knocked "punch-drunk" under the blows of the Indo-Chinese people's war of liberation, that the Pound sterling Empire collapsed long ago and that the Dollar Empire too is all but finished. Trying hard to hang on, like "grim death", the U.S. imperialists try to patch up this crumbling Dollar-empire with the help of their lackeys in the proletariat, the Social-Democratic politicians and some Trade Union leaders, in the Western capitalist countries.

The other superpower in the Trade Union movement is even more poisonous, this superpower has wild dreams of taking the whole "workers' organization" over. These representatives of Soviet social imperialism are given to throwing out their chests and putting on airs of the "old timer". They mention socialism every second sentence and never stop waving the "Red Flag". If the going rate for a certain job is say £50 per week, they will demand £100, if a £100, they shout £200. This is like the market-trader, who always shouts the loudest, about himself being honest, but very often turns out to be the biggest twister of all! These social fascist labour-leaders are nothing but political opportunists, representatives of the other superpower, Soviet social imperialism. The Soviet Union has long ago ceased to be a socialist country. Since the death of "Joe Stalin" it has been turned into a capitalist state, more, it has turned into a fascist state, where the vast majority of the people are very badly exploited and oppressed. It has constantly expanded its influence on a world-scale. Always looking for opportunities for a "take over", it likes to "fish in troubled waters", it contends for power everywhere. Where is there trouble, war and bloodshed in the world that can't be put on the two superpowers' account? The Middle East, Cyprus, Portugal. Always looking for ways and means to breach the front of the U.S. in Europe, it hopes to "take the fortress from inside", for, of all the pieces of real estate, make no mistake, Europe is the apple of the Soviet social imperialists' eye. The so-called militant Trade Union leaders are nothing but phoney Marxists, trying their hardest to put the British people under the domination of Soviet social-imperialism.

But the British Trade Union movement belongs to the British working class. It is an elementary movement of the workers, built to defend the vast majority of our people against the capitalists, who would like to bleed us dry. Temporarily it has been turned into an organisation defending the bourgeoisie.

We should not get down-hearted, because the vast majority of Trade Unionists are good fighters for progress and surely will not allow either of these two trends in the Trade Union movement to remain in control.

Source: Roehampton News Bulletin, No. 4, July 23, 1975.

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bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated Unionists. The so-called "workers' representatives" in England are people "who are forgiven their being members of the working class because they themselves would like to crown their quality of being workers in the ocean of their liberalism."

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them as a whole. And they should be studied, they are worth carefully pondering over. For they are the pivot of the tactics in the labour movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist epoch.

3. We have said that there could not yet be Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc....

.. All worship of the spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element," of the role of Social-Democracy, means, quite irrespective of whether the belittler wants to or not, strengthening the influence of the bourgeois ideology over the workers.

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology being developed by the masses of the workers themselves in the process of their movement the only choice is: either the bourgeois or the socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn away from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is a lot of talk about spontaneity, but the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its becoming subordinated to the bourgeois ideology,... for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade unionism, .. and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to combat spontaneity, to divert the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy.... Lenin: What Is To Be Done? (1902)

QUOTATIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MAO

THE PROLETARIAT IS THE GREATEST CLASS IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. IT IS THE MOST POWERFUL REVOLUTIONARY CLASS IDEOLOGICALLY, POLITICALLY AND IN STRENGTH. IT CAN AND MUST UNITE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE AROUND ITSELF SO AS TO ISOLATE THE HANDFUL OF ENEMIES TO THE MAXIMUM AND ATTACK THEM.

THE PROLETARIAT CAN ONLY EMANCIPATE ITSELF BY EMANCIPATING THE WHOLE OF MANKIND.

WHY DID LENIN SPEAK OF EXERCISING DICTATORSHIP OVER THE BOURGEOISIE? IT IS ESSENTIAL TO GET THIS QUESTION CLEAR. LACK OF CLARITY ON THIS QUESTION WILL LEAD TO REVISIONISM. THIS SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO THE WHOLE NATION.

Reading List: a) Marx: Wages, Price and Profit. b) Lenin: What Is To Be Done? c) Lenin: Imperialism and the Split in Socialism, d) Marx, Engels, Lenin: On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, e) THE NEW WORLD.