

*Eurocentrism
and the
Communist
Movement*



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EUROCENTRISM

AND THE

COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Preface

"Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement" arose out of the work of a study group based in London and consisting of members of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain and other Marxist-Leninists, including several of Third World origin. The group was formed in 1985, and worked on studying the original draft of this pamphlet. This is therefore a second draft, the result of discussion and comment on the original.

The issues examined in "Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement" are still being considered by the RCLB. The publishers hope that the questions raised by this pamphlet will now be discussed more widely and that it might make some contribution to combatting ills which have been long entrenched in the theory and practice of the left in Britain.

July, 1986.

EUROCENTRISM AND THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Introduction

The Marxist-Leninist movement has always spoken a lot about giving attention to theory, but we have often not been able to recognise a theory when it stared us in the face. Of course we have to defend the essence of communist theory but this can only be done by continually breaking new ground in its application. Capitalism and imperialism are an actually Eurocentric system, in the sense that the rest of the world is super-exploited in the interests of the industrial heartland. If we pose the question in this way, it should be obvious that the main revolutionary creative forces will be found in the oppressed nations, because they are the ones on whom the system rests. But there is also a false Eurocentric ideology which presents this state of affairs as natural, which justifies European dominance and presents it as the mainstream of historical progress. This ideology is pernicious - it exists not just in society at large but within the 'left' movement as well. In order to contribute to destroying the Eurocentric world system we have to destroy the ideology in the process of formulating a correct revolutionary theory and politics appropriate to the situation facing us.

DEVELOPING THEORY - THE KEY LINK

We are putting forward the slogan of combating Eurocentrism not in order to replace other theoretical tasks, but as a key link which must be grasped in carrying out those tasks, in studying the class and national question, etc., if we are to make progress in these fields. Mao's slogan 'put destruction first and in the process you have construction' is still correct in the sense that practically all advances in Marxist theory have been polemics against something negative. Everything depends on correctly identifying the target. The concept of anti-revisionism is not wrong in itself, but it is certainly insufficient. Particularly in the imperialist countries,

much of what has passed for anti-revisionism has taken the form of what may be called a phoney two line struggle in which the deepest premises of revisionism have not been called into question (and are in fact reproduced). None of our theoretical work can get anywhere unless we have a unified view of the present era and its historical background based on a mode of production and relations of production which even in the colonial era had a world character, characterised by an international division of labour. Eurocentrism has been the main stumbling block preventing this being done. Unless we overcome it we will be stuck at the level of an economistic and mechanical materialist analysis failing to appreciate the real dynamics of history in which the world outside the major European powers has always played such a major role, and does so today in the form of the liberation movements.

A creative revolutionary development of theory does exist, with its centre in the oppressed nations. In this sense, it is quite wrong to speak of a crisis of Marxism. There is a crisis in the socialist movement in the industrialised countries. The revisionists there have abandoned communism, and even the M-L movement is seriously affected by liquidationism. But if we don't take a Eurocentric viewpoint we can get things in perspective. It is easy to be liquidationist if we still see Europe as the centre of the world, and are then baffled by the fact that the movement there isn't the most advanced. The apparent stability and prosperity of the industrial countries after World War II can be explained according to a genuine political economy, but the old Comintern theories about a general crisis - profoundly Eurocentric theories - couldn't explain this, which is a disorientating factor.

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The affirmation that Marxism is healthy requires a very open-minded reassessment of Marxism right back to the origins. We have to use dialectical and historical materialism to criticise the history of the movement and develop the theory in those places where it is not truly dialectical. Thus dialectical and historical materialism emerges doubly strengthened from the critique. This orientation distinguishes our approach from that of the reactionaries, who seek to negate the theory.

The communist movement by and large has failed to reflect adequately the most fundamental reality of the industrial system and its society, namely racist colonial exploitation. This failure is itself the result of an ideology which serves the colonial economic base, and permeates the whole of society, an ideology which influences even radical movements. Dialectical materialism has not been applied universally, but only selectively.

From this it also follows that the creative trend in revolutionary theory is at present somewhat scattered and not yet systematised because, although in some aspects it has developed through at least sections of the official communist movement, notably in China, in other cases this has happened in the margins of, or in opposition to the official movement. Thus what is needed is to understand both the reality of the system and the false ideology to which that reality gives rise.

"It is sad but salutary to realise how deeply ingrained ideas of 'race' are amongst us. In case it should be necessary, let me repeat one of my favourite paradoxes, viz. that though 'races' do not exist, racial prejudice, racialism and racism are as real as the food that you and I eat." (1)

Both the falseness of the ideology and the reality of the oppression have to be recognised. Any true analysis according to dialectical and historical materialism will reflect the totality of society, showing how ideology protects a particular base, and actively influences it. At the same time, insofar as Marxism is not universal, insofar as it leaves aside the historical processes in non-European areas and the dialectical relationship among such areas and between them and Europe, it is bound to introduce mechanical materialism and idealism. The departure from dialectics is thus essentially, and not just incidentally, linked with Eurocentrism, and conversely the struggle against Eurocentrism is necessarily one to develop and strengthen dialectical and historical materialism.

THE EUROCENTRIC WORLD SYSTEM

There is a certain imposed, exploitative Eurocentric reality in the world system, which was brought about through colonialism and the slave trade. This gave rise to a false Eurocentric ideology, of which racism is the most concentrated and acute expression, an ideology which in turn reacted upon the base giving rise to the reality of racist exploitation. This ideology protects the base in a number of ways, not least being the fact that it shields the reality of that base from effective analysis by the 'left'.

Europe used to be a fairly peripheral area in world history. European classical civilisation owed a lot to the black civilisation of ancient Egypt, as well as to India and other areas, and subsequent European progress, including the industrial revolution, drew heavily upon the achievements of other areas, for example the science of China and the Arab countries. Even the techniques which launched colonialism, like navigation and gunpowder, came from outside. Capitalism began with an act of robbery: colonialism and the slave trade. Bourgeois scholars, who deal in statistics just as dispassionately as their ancestors dealt in the slaves themselves, bend over backwards to dispute Eric Williams' thesis about the link between capitalism and the slave trade and pretend the latter wasn't profitable. But the indisputable fact they cover up is that the development of capitalism in Europe had as its corollary the forcing-backwards of conditions in what is today known as the third world. (2) Indigenous industries were killed off by exports of mass-produced goods. The functioning economic systems which fed the people were forcibly replaced by cash-crops to serve the needs of industry in the capitalist countries, thus creating the conditions of today's famines. The surplus value produced by the labouring population, which could have formed the basis for domestic development - albeit under a system of class exploitation - was creamed off for the benefit of further capital accumulation in the metropolitan countries. The latter maintained a tight control over the world market in order to foster a system of unequal exchange. When the exploitative international division of labour had been sufficiently consolidated the system promoted

in some areas a form of 'development' which is essentially subordinate and serves to accentuate factors like the dependence and dislocation of their economies, unemployment, the swelling of shanty-towns around the cities, and decadent neo-colonial culture. Such is the 'civilising' mission of capitalism.

Insofar as it is successful (and of course the liberation movements constitute a counter-trend which continually negates this tendency), capitalism peripheralises the exploited areas of the world, not in relation to world history as a whole - because the active factor now becomes the liberation movements - but with respect to the dominant structures which determine and benefit from the world economic system.

EUROCENTRIC IDEOLOGY - "CIVILISATION" AND "BARBARISM"

Such is the reality of the Eurocentric world system. But on this basis there arises a false Eurocentric system of ideology which develops along with and protects the actual exploitative system of European domination, falsifies this reality and reverses it all along the line. This ideology becomes crystallised in the form of racism, and in the last analysis the two concepts are interchangeable. However, it is vital to grasp the underlying Eurocentric ideological system as a reflection (distorted) of the world economic base of capitalism; otherwise it is impossible to struggle against that aspect of the 'left', and even the 'anti-racist' movement, which has rejected some at least of the more obvious aspects of the race-doctrine, but which remains thoroughly imbued with a whole chauvinist world-outlook where the fundamental premises of racism remain intact.

In a nutshell, what this ideology does is to impose a false view of history which denatures that of all societies, including the West. It is false because it is unilinear and mechanical. The interdependence of cultures, their richness as a vocabulary of human responses to the environment is denied. Non-European peoples are made to languish in barbarism or savagery, only Europe is supposed to have the dynamism to attain civilisation (this is tautological since civilisation is defined in European terms!), other peoples either cannot attain this stage at all, or else (according to the assimilationist argument) only if they imitate and tail behind Europe, and thus accept its superiority. These peoples are stagnant, have no intrinsic dynamic for development or historical validity in their own right. Their cultures are at best only signboards along the road to what Europe has already achieved; the central processes of the world are today even more completely determined by what happens in the 'advanced' countries. Relations among the great powers are the reality of contemporary world politics.

Such is the Eurocentric myth. Of course, in the present period the two superpowers, America and Russia, have outstripped the European powers, but the ideology is still Eurocentric, they have simply taken it over from its original proprietors, and further developed it. The USA is founded upon the colonial oppression and genocide of native Americans and blacks, as well as other nationalities, and the imperialism of the USSR is essentially Great Russian. It is still white power. (3)

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THE NATURE OF 'LEFT' EUROCENTRISM

Because Eurocentrism is the predominant ideology of capitalist society it crops up also within the 'left' movement. It is not inevitable that the left will be sucked into this trap, but it will tend to be drawn into the dominant ideological system unless it consistently adopts historical materialism, adopts the stand-point of humanity as a whole and above all incorporates centrally into its ideology and politics not just the lessons of the practical revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations, but also their theoretical achievements. The 'left' variant of Eurocentrism is essentially the same as the openly bourgeois forms, but it has certain specific features in terms of form. It is the main purpose of this paper to investigate 'left' Eurocentrism, and it may be useful here to give a brief definition. It does the following things:

1. It builds upon the bourgeois unilinear theory of 'social progress' (with Europe as the highest point, leading factor and universal point of reference of world history), extending this beyond the point of capitalism (where the bourgeoisie stops short), so that Europe also becomes the factor leading the world forward to socialism.
2. It uses a semblance of historical materialism to invent a historically progressive role for capitalism world-wide, during a period when capitalism was in reality only progressive in relation to the feudal system within the major European states.
3. It underplays the history of colonialism, the slave trade, etc. as a basis for the capitalist mode of production.
4. It schematises world history on the basis of the European experience and forces everything into this mould, as for example the expectation that all societies must have a succession of the same modes of production (slave, feudal) as in Europe or are 'backward' if they haven't.
5. It holds that advanced productive forces necessarily produce advanced struggles, looks down on the peasantry, conceives of revolution primarily as a sharing-out of the national cake between proletariat and bourgeoisie of particular industrialised countries and subordinates everything to this.
6. It elevates inter-imperialist contradictions above the fundamental contradiction between oppressor and oppressed nations and considers relations among the great powers to be the main events in world politics.
7. It fails to see the continuing character of super-exploitation and the unequal international division of labour as the fundamental basis for imperialism and seeks to explain the dynamics of crisis and restructuring in the contemporary world economy without giving pride of place to relations between the imperialist countries and the third world.

8. It fails to see how the main contradictions of the capitalist mode of production have been embodied in contradictions between oppressor and oppressed nations, and regards nationalism in the colonial countries as a backward, tiresome, 'drag-inducing' factor; a prejudice to be treated at best with condescension.

9. It generally regards the national liberation movements as subordinate to the supposed interests of the proletarian movement in the industrialised countries, and tells them what to do.

Before going on to discuss the communist movement, we should say something about the general climate of ideas prevalent in society during the movement's formative period.

The Historical Background

Eurocentrism, with its racist character, is qualitatively different from whatever 'ethnocentrism' may have existed in earlier periods among other societies.

History is full of cases where one people conquered another, but what is unique about European dominance is that Europe systematically subordinated the whole socio-economic structure of most of the rest of the world, ultimately denying it development along its own lines or along European lines. What is special is thus the mode of production, which has world-wide ramifications.

The racist climate of ideas developed along with (in mutual interaction with) the actual Eurocentric exploitative system of colonialism. There was probably no racism as such within the ancient white world. There are differences of opinion about how far racism was ingrained in European society, or alternatively developed quite late as a reflection of an already quite developed colonial-slave system (4), but anyhow colonialism is certainly the key factor.

THEORIES OF RACISM

The analysis of racism within the Marxist tradition, for example in the Communist Parties before what is usually described as

their revisionist degeneration, is weak or non-existent. (Here we are talking about treating this as a central issue, not about token or marginal references.)

In the absence of a Marxist analysis we are thrown back on bourgeois writings. Even the small handful of really interesting and important works on racism, like those of R H Pearce, W D Jordan or P D Curtin (5) are not written from a dialectical materialist standpoint while on the whole bourgeois works befog the issue; an example being the tendency to equate contemporary racism practically with Hitlerite anti-semitism. (6) This is not to deny the importance of this subject, but to state that it can be understood only as part of a wider pattern of racism. (7) Hitler's ideas were practically all derived from earlier, anti-black racists, many of them English.

Thus it is not surprising that the anti-racist movement should be in a quagmire of seeing racist ideas as inexplicable, hay-wire "dreams that have had dreams for father". (8) Only dialectical materialism can provide an explanation. Our brief here is mainly to see why the communist movement has overall failed to do so hitherto, so that these weaknesses can begin to be cleared up, thus creating conditions for a thorough dialectical materialist analysis of racist and colonialist ideology. It was the presence of elements of this ideology within the movement which prevented it from appraising adequately the really-existing system of racial exploitation, and the ideology which arises on this base. The issue is central, not in the sense that racist oppression replaces class, but that unless the central importance of this factor is grasped, class questions cannot be understood either. Unless the communist movement grasps this nettle we would in fact have a phoney class analysis which reproduces the premises of racism.

Marxism lays an absolutely correct basis for this analysis. Feuerbach overturned Hegel's idealism and showed that ideologies are a reflection of the real world. He thought that once this fact was pointed out there would be no need for things like religions, or for divisions in humanity, and everything could be overcome through love. Marx on the other hand pointed out:

"His work consists in the dissolution of the religious world into its secular basis. He overlooks the fact that after completing this work, the chief thing still remains to be done. For the fact that the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is really only to be explained by the self-cleavage and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis. The latter must itself, therefore, first be understood in its contradiction and then, by the removal of that contradiction, revolutionised in practice." (9)

National oppression in a racist form is the most important form of alienation which occurs within the capitalist mode of production. The struggle against racism is inevitably part of the struggle to overthrow that mode of production, but not that mode of production conceived in a narrow, economic sense (which is itself racist), but rather in a sense which recognises the reality of racist oppression.

RACE AND CLASS

While not attempting a systematic study of Eurocentric ideology as it developed in capitalist society as a whole, we will mention a few aspects which seem important, particularly in explaining the ideology of the 'left' movement. To start with, there is the relationship between ideas of 'race' and class.

The ruling classes have traditionally had a spiteful hatred of the peasantry whom they regarded as naturally inferior. With the growth of the world system of capitalism, this attitude is carried forward into the view of the 'peasant nations' (or in its 'left' form the Trotskyite attitude to the peasantry). This transition from a domestic into an external, nationally and 'racially' determined peasantry needs to be analysed dialectically. Ruling classes naturally want to defuse class struggle against them, and this can lead in two different directions. On the one hand, there can be an attempt at rigid stratification, as happened in parts of Europe in the pre-capitalist period, so that the labouring class is considered as inferior by birth. Or, on the contrary, a myth can be created that there is a common (national) identity binding together rulers and ruled, faced with an external threat.

The former tendency is more characteristic of feudalism and the latter tendency has gradually become dominant under capitalism and imperialism. Capitalism is a 'step forward' only in the sense that it is a step towards a classless society because it pushes antagonisms to such a point, and also develops contradictions to such a point, and also develops contradictions on a world scale, so that a revolutionary solution becomes both possible and necessary. But it can't be called 'advanced' in the sense that its ideology is supposed to be more 'civilised' than what went before. On the contrary, we find that in some ways colonialist ideology seems to have taken over the most reactionary ideas which the feudal diehards used in connection with the domestic class system, and applied these instead, in the international arena, to the relations between so-called races.

The argument about skull shapes which played such a part in pseudo-scientific racism is also connected with arguments put forward in relation to the superiority of the aristocracy over the peasantry. (10) Reading the works of the influential nineteenth century racist Count Gobineau, one is above all struck by his hatred and fear of the French peasantry, which

"considers itself as a different species."

This antagonism will destroy European civilisation even more surely than the enemy from outside:

"Let us be clear about this, the base of the French population has few points in common with its surface: it is an abyss over which civilisation is suspended, and the profound, immobile waters slumbering in the depths of this chasm will one day reveal themselves an irresistible force of dissolution." (11)

Boer war
backlash

Yet the ideology of a more boisterous capitalism was able subsequently to incorporate within it quite happily the ideas about the stratification of 'races' which in the consciousness of a man like Gobineau had emerged as a projection of his nostalgia for the old stratified society, and disdain for the labouring classes.

Under capitalism and imperialism the ruling class's dream of a distinct labouring class condemned to permanent subordination because of their 'racial' origins has been actualised in the form of national oppression. At the same time, as part of the same process a myth of 'race' solidarity within the oppressor nation is created which helps to defuse class struggle there.

Thus the old attitude towards the peasantry resurfaces to some extent in the attitude to peasant nations. We find this among the nazis for example.

"In the nazi pyramid of values the peasant, excluded biologically from the elite, represents that world where intelligence and thought in general are not of essential importance to its good functioning, nor vital for its existence." (12)

The labour aristocracy in the metropolis was viewed as an embodiment of pure Aryanism because it had managed to constitute itself an aristocracy. (13)

These unrespectable nazi ideas have a very 'respectable' and 'civilised' pedigree, which will be mentioned later. The important thing is to grasp the interrelation between class, 'race' and the national question. These ideas are often depicted as a way of defusing class struggle, but this is inadequate. Racist oppression is real. It is not correct to present, as the revisionists do, a picture of a mythical racism being used to divert attention from a really-existing class struggle which is purely economic and has nothing to do with colour. Rather 'race' becomes a determinant of class.

"According to the twin factors of their oppression, black people have constituted a race and a class group at the same time. The black struggle against racism, therefore, simultaneously became a class struggle; the institutionalisation of inequality through legalised racism has remained a deadly class enemy of all blacks over the years." (14)

However, statements like the above are also insufficient if they do not highlight the national question:

THE KEY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Within the context of a world-scale mode of production, the oppressed peoples are robbed of control over their own land - and because it is their forced integration into a mode of production which robs them of their land, this situation can be maintained even under a neo-colonial structure. It is the position within a mode of production which determines class. At the same time the racist super-structure reacts upon and influences the relations of production.

The world-scale mode of production, which has its origins far back in the colonial era, and is not a new product of imperialism, in reality subordinated other nations to the dictates of European capitalism. Therefore, ideologically it robs them of their independence in terms of creativity, of history, of identity. It is not a question of a common pattern of development inspired by Europe, but of an articulated system of production which holds other societies in an organically subordinate position, in which they cannot develop either along their own traditional lines, or along European lines. The false Eurocentric ideology serves to protect a real Eurocentric system of domination.

Thus 'racial' stereotypes which, from a bourgeois point of view, seem to be inexplicable prejudices, actually serve a definite function: to justify other societies being kept in a state of dependent limbo, the ideology depicts them as naturally 'stagnant'. Colonialism imposed its own violence and stirred up divisions among the oppressed peoples - the ideology depicts the oppressed as people addicted to violence who will collapse into bloodbaths and massacres if colonialism withdraws. Colonialism is an act of despotism - the ideology depicts the state system of non-European societies as one characterised by a mindless, tyrannical despotism, from which European enlightenment rescues the people. To promote the colonial act of savagery, those who oppose it have to be branded 'savages' and enemies of civilisation. The whole political economy is one of robbery, and within its ideology it creates for black people the image of 'niggers' and scroungers. The stereotypes are negative not just in the sense of being 'bad', they are negative reflections of the reality of colonial oppression projected onto the oppressed people themselves so that the colonial and neo-colonial system appears as a just and necessary world order.

The Eurocentric reality is that the world was subordinated to European interests, as part of a system of production. The Eurocentric myth is the turning upside down of history in order to justify this dominance as 'natural'. Through losing control of her/his labour the labourer becomes alienated from her/his character as species being (the converse of this is that the socialist revolution is a movement for humanising society). This happens in the case of the proletariat in the industrial countries, as the Marxist analysis shows, but even more strikingly to the non-European peoples who are forcibly integrated into a world system where the product of their own labour, the vast productive forces of modern industry, stand as an alien force opposed to and exercising tyranny over them. But if in reality it is colonial oppression which attempts to dehumanise them (and conversely in the struggle to resolve this alienation they become the major force for rehumanising society), the myth presents them as not human, hence justifiably colonised. The alien, inhuman force of capitalism is depicted as a humanising influence:

"... the Negro is more humanised when in his natural subordination to the European than under any other circumstance."

Capitalist ideology fulfills the function of presenting the abnormal situation of European dominance as though it were natural and eternal. Hence the main question is not certain concepts of class dominance being presented in a 'racial' form; the central issue is the oppression of other nations and societies by Europe, and the relationship between class and 'race' can only be understood in this context.

THE RACE MYTH - PEOPLES WITH NO HISTORY

Thus Eurocentrism in ideological terms creates a false view of world history. This is the central element in racism. Non-European peoples were removed from history, regarded as history-less, with no past and no future. The point of reference in the past was European classical civilisation, though in a distorted form which purged it of the Asiatic and African influences which were important in reality, or else a 'teutonic' past in the case of some of the Angl-German forms of the myth. Where, in cases like China and India, some past history was grudgingly recognised in other societies, they had become stagnant and were devoid of dynamism for any future development. The only path to the future lay in, or through, the development of capitalism.

There are three interlocking aspects to the race-myth: the struggle to control nature, the dispossession of indigenes in areas possessing natural resources, and the struggle with rival colonial powers for the control of such areas. These concepts occurred quite early in the history of capitalism. As we can see from R H Pearce's work, the colonial experience was a potent source for the religious ideology of nascent capitalism. By developing the resources, the colonisers were, in accordance with God's purpose, bringing order out of the chaos of these lands. In the words of Samuel Purchas, writing in 1625:

"God in wisdom having enriched the Savage Countries, that those riches might be attractives for Christian suters, which there may sowe spirituals and reape temporals." (16)

This has been an abiding theme, right up to the contemporary imperialist period. What could be more characteristic of, say, the speeches of Eisenhower, than this theme of God, in his infinite wisdom, rewarding America with riches as it nobly shoulders the task of bringing order to the world?

But there have been changes in the ideology, as well as continuity. When the religious form of the myth was becoming threadbare, it took on a pseudo-scientific garb in the form of social Darwinism. The persistent idea, though, is that it is legitimate to use the rest of the world in a profitable way. From the eighteenth century this already provided the basis for international law:

"... when the Nations of Europe, which are too confined at home, come upon lands which the savages have no special need of and are making no present and continuous use of, they may lawfully take possession of them and establish colonies in them ...

"... if each Nation had desired to appropriate to itself an extent of territory great enough for it to live merely by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild fruits, the earth would not suffice for a tenth part of the people who now inhabit it." (17)

In the period of nascent British imperialism in the nineteenth century, Austen Chamberlain used to refer to the colonies as "underdeveloped estates". (18) It should be noted that the very concept of "underdevelopment" which is central to the establishment picture of the third world springs out of the capitalist-imperialist system of ideas, meaning areas which the indigenous population is not fit to develop, and which has to be developed by someone else instead. One finds this same order of ideas in the writings of the influential turn-of-the century American geopolitical analyst Alfred T Mahan:

"The claim of an indigenous population to retain indefinitely control of territory depends not upon a natural right, but upon political fitness... shown in the political work of governing, administering and developing, in such manner as to insure the natural right of the world at large that resources shall not be left idle, but be utilized for the general good. Failure to do this justifies in principle, compulsion from outside..." (19)

In the interests of being even more progressive than the bourgeoisie, certain sections of the 'left' were eager to take up these ideas. Thus the leading revisionist, Eduard Bernstein:

"The recognition of the power which savages have over the lands they occupy cannot but be circumstantial. Basically, there too comparatively advanced civilisations enjoy great power. What determines the historic right to use lands is not their conquest but their exploitation." (20)

THE EUROPEAN MASTER RACE

These ideas provide the framework for the fully-developed race doctrine. The stereotype of black people as scroungers not only serves to cover up colonialist scrounging, but has an even more precise ideological purpose. The stereotype of blacks "Sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices..." - to quote from the highly respectable establishment literary figure, Thomas Carlyle (21) - is an integral part of the ideology arising on the basis of capitalist world economy. If non-Europeans enjoy the fruits of nature without having to graft for a living, they will never exploit the natural resources of their countries to the full - hence Europeans must do this for them. Moreover, the race-myth argues that Europeans have actually evolved differently: their environment has made them hardy and resourceful, inventive and creative, natural leaders. Hence they have the qualities to run not just their own countries, but the rest of the world as well. The Europeans had thus risen to a position of mastery over nature, which implied also mastery over other peoples. In the words of Eugen Dühring, a leading German racist and precursor of many of Hitler's ideas:

"Now within the compass of Asiatic and especially tropical civilisations, the human being has become far more a nurseling of nature than its master, and only the Nordic scene of his activity has matured him from economic childhood into a man." (22)

This interlocking of the struggle-against-nature theme with the theme of mastery over foreign lands and their people is central to the novel Robinson Crusoe, which enjoyed phenomenal popularity. Although O Mannoni used his analysis of this book to develop a very reactionary colonialist argument, (23) it is basically true that Crusoe is an articulation of partly unconscious assumptions which permeate ideology in an oppressor nation quite strongly. A whole range of European popular fiction elaborated the themes of Robinson Crusoe and wove them into a myth. (24)

"SCIENTIFIC" RACISM

The 'scientific' element introduced into racism during the nineteenth century was really only a rationalisation of previously held Eurocentric prejudices. Conversely, the non-scientific form of earlier ideas does not detract from the fact that they reflect the material interests of colonialism. Hegel's theories are presented in an idealist way, but are still very practical; the general prejudices which reinforce colonialism are always linked to the concrete concerns of colonial policy. Thus, speaking of north Africa,

"It is a land which does nothing but follow the fate of all which arrives from the great beyond, lacking a definite face of its own. Turned, like Asia Minor, towards Europe, this part of Africa could and should be attached to Europe, as, incidentally, the French have recently successfully attempted to do." (25)

Hegel regarded the African as representing the childhood of mankind, but at the same time as being incapable of development, lacking the important characteristics of Mind. This Eurocentric and racist view of Africa plays quite a central role in Hegel's idealist philosophy, and any truly dialectical-materialist critique of Hegel would need to take this into account.

Pseudo-scientific racism came along to dress these ideas up in a new garb. For example, the mid-nineteenth century writer, G Combe in his System of Phrenology (New York 1845) claimed to show objectively that the study of negro skulls revealed that "The greatest deficiencies lie in Conscientiousness, Cautiousness, Ideality and Reflection." (26) This is basically just a rehash of the prejudices to which Hegel gave a particularly complete expression, as where he described the African peoples as "tranquil over a long period, but they enter into ferment from one moment to another, and then become completely beside themselves" with consequences so violent because it is not an idea which has taken hold of them, but rather "a fanaticism more physical than spiritual". (27) It should be noted that these ideas reflect, among other things, the horror of the coloniser at the threat of retribution.

ASSIMILATION AND DARWINISM - LIBERAL FACES OF RACISM

Within the Eurocentric frame of reference the non-European peoples are faced with an impossible choice. They are not really allowed equality on Europe's own terms. If they reject European orientations they are regarded as uncivilisable, and in spite of all the obstacles they 'attain' according to European norms, this fact is used in evidence against them to prove that they can only get somewhere with stimulus from outside.

The assimilationist argument is thus inherently Eurocentric and essentially implies the inferiority of non-European peoples. Nineteenth century abolitionist literature relied heavily on biographies of blacks who had 'made good', and this only became ammunition for the racists to argue that these people could at best only be imitative. Thus, in Curtin's phrase, "the cultural chauvinism of the pro-Negro group rebounded to the air of racism". (28) This remark would apply to a lot of 'anti-racist' forces on the left which have not rid themselves of a Eurocentric world-view. It is still a question of genocide of other peoples' culture, of their real identity.

The Eurocentric economic base needed to destroy the independent socio-economic viability of other peoples. Hence, they are considered historically obsolete as peoples, destined to be swept out of the way in the course of historical progress. Whether this meant that they should be physically exterminated in the interests of settler colonialism, as in parts of the Americas or Australia, for example, or else maintained in a kind of existence so that the colonists could be "themselves enriched by the trafficke and commerce which may be had with them" (29) (shades of Brandt Commission!), the argument is essentially the same. There is no meaningful line of demarcation between those who argued for physical extermination and those who advocated destroying peoples' identity and enslaving them.

In the early nineteenth century discussions precipitated by the slave trade there was a dispute about whether the world's peoples came from a single stock or from different stocks. The former argument, which was presented in a biblical form, also happens to be scientifically correct, because humanity comes from a single source in Africa. Darwinism destroyed the biblical argument and left the way open to a pseudo-scientific assumption that the so-called 'races' were something like different species. This line of argument can be found, for example, already in the writings of the Englishman, Robert Knox, whose ideas anticipate Hitlerite racism.

But it is important to understand that those who professed to believe in the unity of mankind could be every bit as racist as the others, if the point of reference for human unity was conceived in a Eurocentric way. An article in October quotes a passage from Darwin's Descent of Man which includes the statement that "... there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his (man's) sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races," and argues on this basis that the race doctrine was needed to combat Darwin's "heretical" views. (30) But this is an error. Darwin's conception of the unity of mankind is fully compatible with a cool, 'scientific' recognition of the inevitability of the extermination of some parts of mankind by others in the interests of the survival of the fittest.

As he bluntly remarks elsewhere in the same work, "where civilised nations come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short..." (31) The data upon which this conclusion is based came from his actual observations of genocide. He visited Tasmania some time after the entire native population had been deported to a barren island where they were eventually completely exterminated. In his journal he cheerfully remarks that

"... Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population. This most cruel step seems to have been quite unavoidable, as the only means of stopping a fearful succession of robberies, burnings, and murders, committed by the blacks..." (32)

True, he also condemns "the infamous conduct of some of our countrymen", but the really important point is that he regards the extinction of the weaker as an inevitable result of the clash of two social groups. By an obscene logic, the atrocities of colonialism are themselves used as their own justification: the fact that some peoples were exterminated proves their inferiority, hence colonialism is justified.

THE "PROGRESSIVE" MISSION OF COLONIALISM - CIVILISING THE BARBARIANS

In the passage quoted above, Darwin referred to civilised nations and barbarians. The concept of introducing civilisation to lands peopled by savages and barbarians has been used throughout the history of colonialism to justify it. The royal letters patent of 1606 for colonising Virginia state the aim, among other things, as being to "bring the Infidels and Savages living in those parts to human civility and to a settled and quiet Government". (33) (To "bring to civility" here means the same as "civilise".) Three centuries later Cecil Rhodes described the Ndebele group of people (who were then offering strong military resistance) as "the last ruthless power of barbarism that existed in South Africa" which he knew "must pass away", and to state that "... you cannot stop civilisation going into the interior". (34) As late as the 1950s ethnologists were waging a bitter rearguard action against writers like Levi-Strauss and Michel Leiris who were accused of undermining the distinction between the civilised man and the savage. (35) In reality, the boot is on the other foot. Insofar as barbarism and savagery have any meaning, these terms would apply to the crimes committed by colonialism in the name of civilisation. As Aime Cesaire had pointed out, every time a head is cut off in Vietnam or a Madagascan tortured,

"civilisation acquires another dead weight, a universal regression takes place, a gangrene sets in ... a poison has been distilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward savagery." (36)

Thus it was very important for colonialism to characterise other peoples as savages or barbarians, precisely so that its own crime might be covered up. In the same way as phrenology was used to give a pseudo-scientific appearance to prejudices about black peoples' thought-processes, so it was important in the evolution of racism in the nineteenth century for the terms barbarism and savagery to be given a supposedly scientific content.

This task fell particularly to another apologist of genocide, the American Lewis H Morgan, who worked out a whole scheme of world history taking as its point of reference the development through Graeco-Roman society to contemporary capitalism, the whole inter-laced with the Aryan race-myth.

Morgan was a believer in the essential unity of humanity. Indeed, the last section of his book Ancient Society, where he draws his ideas together, is subtitled "Unity of Origin of Mankind". But in it, building on ideas already developed earlier in the book, (37) he states

"In strictness but two families, the Semitic and the Aryan, accomplished the work (i.e. the attainment of civilisation) through unassisted self-development. The Aryan family represents the central stream of human progress, because it produced the highest type of mankind, and because it has proved its intrinsic superiority by gradually assuming the control of the earth." (38)

Morgan is thus giving expression to the colonialist ideology which makes it necessary "to believe that in the savage and his destiny there was manifest all that they had long grown away from and still had to overcome." (39) The unity of mankind is expressed in a historic continuum, of which the point of reference and the culmination is the European achievement. The colonialist "assuming control of the earth" by the 'Aryan family' is the highest achievement of human existence and all 'savages' and 'barbarians' should be proud to contribute to this. Now that mankind has reached this lofty historical pinnacle, those peoples who 'got stuck' at earlier stages are very strictly nothing but historical relics, living fossils to be studied by the anthropologists of the master race. They are not really people, (40) and because they do not have their own historic logic, their future exists elsewhere, it has overtaken them. Not that the savages are useless as objects of study. On the contrary. Referring to the native Americans as having been "discovered" and to their culture as "fossil remains buried in the earth", Morgan argues with some urgency that the "ethnic life of the Indian tribes is declining under the influence of American civilisation". Morgan does not think it is a bad thing for these peoples or their cultures to be exterminated - indeed, this is historically necessary and laudable. But before this happens,

"These circumstances appeal strongly to Americans to enter this rich field and gather its abundant harvest." (41)

In other words, by one of the many obscene ironies of colonialism, the oppressed peoples, before lying down to die, are expected to submit to having their cultures dissected from an external, Eurocentric viewpoint, so as to provide evidence, to provide building materials for a unilinear, mechanical historical schema which confirms the master-race's sense of their mission as part of an ideological superstructure which crucially protects the colonialist economic base.

This unilinear, mechanical concept of 'social progress' is the essential thing which turns the 'unity of mankind' argument into its opposite, into something reactionary. It is not difficult to see how this ethnocentric, mechanistic concept of 'social progress' can crop up in a 'left' guise. Having led the progress through barbarism to civilisation and on to capitalism, the Aryans can now bring the world to a yet more progressive social system, using the resources they have plundered to create an era of equality and plenty. Morgan expresses this kind of reasoning quite explicitly, but it is at least implicitly present in very wide areas of the 'left' movement.

COLONIALISM'S FEAR OF THE OPPRESSED - DEATH'S HEAD AND NO SURRENDER

The development of colonialist ideology has to be seen against a background of a changing and developing world system. The contradiction between the colonial powers and the oppressed peoples was a constant, as was the resistance of the latter. Colonial ideology always had to find ways of minimising this resistance, presenting it as hopeless, or using it as an argument to prove that 'natives' were essentially unruly and therefore needed to be colonised. This fear of the oppressed was an ever-present reality for the colonisers, but it gave rise to different strategies at different times. At the same time, the structural demands of the Europe-dominated world economic system were not always the same, so the pattern of domination altered.

To present the history of the evolution of imperialism as a unilinear development in the direction of acquiring formal spheres of influence would obviously be simplistic. If we survey the whole history of the Eurocentric world system, informal domination rather than the possession of formal colonies appears to be a more important feature. In many countries formal colonisation was only a fairly brief, though important, episode in a long history of exploitation, reaching up to the present day. There was a kind of solidarity among the Europeans which overrode their differences, at least a common assumption of a right to rule and exploit the rest of the world. Racism is the most important aspect of chauvinism to oppose. Chauvinism arising out of the competition between the great powers should also be opposed, but it is secondary.

If it is true that socialists tended to neglect the significance of independence struggles by the slaves and other exploited peoples, the same criticism cannot be levelled at the bourgeoisie. An event like the struggle leading to the independence of San Domingo (Haiti) was an absolute obsession with many bourgeois. As we have already noted with Hegel, the race doctrine is in many ways a product of fear, fear of the retribution in store. After the revolution in Haiti broke out, "a wave of horror and fear" engulfed the American slave-owners. (41a) If the result was a last-ditch defence of slavery, it also led in some quarters to pressure for abolition combined with a sharpening of the race doctrine. In fact, racism was all the more necessary once the abolition of formal slavery was contemplated. Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence and lived by managing a slave-estate, was a leading ideologist of black inferiority. He also opposed slavery - out of fear. St Domingo he described as "the first chapter", and wrote:

"it is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (south of the Potomac) have to wade through." (42)

The leading racist, Robert Knox, who was a contemporary of Marx allows his chilling fear of the Caribbean slave revolts to pierce through - he wants to deprive non-white 'races' of their history, precisely in order to avoid a precedent:

"The past history of the Negro, of the Caffre, of the Hottentot, and of the Bosjeman, is simply a blank - St Domingo forming but an episode. Can the black races become civilised? I should say not: their future history, then, must resemble the past. The Saxon race will never tolerate them - never amalgamate - never be at peace. The hottest actual war ever carried on - the bloodiest of Napoleon's campaigns - is not equal to that now waging between our descendants in America and the dark races; it is a war of extermination - inscribed on each banner is a death's head and no surrender; one or the other must fall." (44)

Time and again Knox returns to the example of San Domingo and tries to conjure it away. The colonialist attempt to construct a Eurocentric ideology depriving the colonial peoples of their history is thus highly functional.

Knox was only one in a line of English racists. 'Civilised' England was the source of many of the ideas which later found their 'unacceptable face' in Nazi Germany. Figures from around the turn of the century who directly inspired German fascism include English people as diverse as the grand historical theorist H S Chamberlain, Karl Pearson (Professor of 'Eugenics' at University College London), Cecil Rhodes whom Spengler described as "the first man of a new age", (45) Sir Halford Mackinder who produced the Eurocentric theory of 'geopolitics'. (46) The Nazis saw dynamic Germany taking over the cause of the white races which England had served well in its time. (47)

This shows on the one hand that there is no meaningful line of demarcation between the more genteel manifestations of Eurocentrism and out-and-out racism; and on the other hand that there was cross-fertilisation among the European powers in terms of the evolution of racist ideas and practices. Hitler was unacceptable because he did inside Europe what the other powers had long been doing outside.

COLONIAL RIVALRY - COMPETING TO EAT THE BREAD OF THE POOR

This is not to deny the importance of contradictions between the colonial powers, but these arose against a background where the right to rule the rest of the world is assumed. There was a transition from mercantile capital to industrial capital, from smash-and-grab robbery to the contemporary situation of systematic dependence (or in some cases dependent development) of the third world, within the neo-colonial world order. As part of this process a transitional phase occurred in the nineteenth century during which capitalism 'needed' an intense period of the expansion of formal colonialism in order to break down the traditional structures in some areas, notably Africa, and thus

prepare for the period of neo-colonial dependence. This is the objective historical logic, and was not a conscious plan. Nevertheless, there was in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century a big struggle over whether it was progressive to expand the area directly ruled by Britain. Both sides in the argument accepted the orientation of Britain exploiting the non-European world; the difference of opinion was over whether this could more efficiently be done by direct rule or trade. In these circumstances, there was a change and development in the growing imperial ideology. There was increased emphasis on the competition between the great powers. But again this comes against the background of the acceptance of European rule. The greatness of the most successful colonial power was to be demonstrated precisely in its ability to conquer the 'inferior races' more efficiently than its rivals. As early as 1869 the leading Liberal politician, Sir Charles Dilke, wrote in his book Greater Britain,

"China, Japan, Africa and South America must soon fall to the all-conquering Angl-Saxon... Italy, Spain, France, Russia become pygmies by the side of such a people." (48)

The race doctrine was adapted to these new needs, and soon Karl Pearson was to formulate these concepts 'scientifically' in his book National Life from the Standpoint of Science:

"A nation ... is an organised whole ... kept up to a high pitch of external efficiency by contest, chiefly by way of war with inferior races, and with equal races by the struggle for trade-routes and for the sources of raw materials and of food supply." (49)

This trend of chauvinism between the great powers was a newly developing factor in the period leading up to the thirty years of acute crisis and war facing the imperialist system in the period 1914-45. As we know, the workers' movement found this difficult to handle. But the more basic question of the racist chauvinism underlying the Eurocentric system remained in the background throughout. This was something the powers held in common. "But now, united round the table, they are eating the bread of the poor." (50)

FURTHER STUDY

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Eurocentrism and the works of Marx and Engels

Marxism is a revolutionary ideology which explains for the first time the basis of exploitation and profit and points the way forward to a new society. It has proved itself the only consistently revolutionary theory, the masses cling to it and the reactionaries attack it. Marxism centres around a scientific critique of the capitalist system, pointing out that the only way forward lies in the destruction of capitalism and the founding of a new mode of production. Marx consistently opposed reformism and demonstrated, through a rigorous analysis of the contradictions of capitalism, the need for a revolutionary solution. The system is still capitalist and the analysis still applies.

THE UNIVERSAL RELEVANCE OF MARXISM

But to read Marx creatively we have to see capitalism as a world system. In the Communist Manifesto it is pointed out:

"The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air."

Today, the lowest stratum is unquestionably the labouring masses of the oppressed nations. If we read the passage in this light, it is as true today as when it was written.

"What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers." (51)

Of course there are specific differences when we come to speak of capitalism as a world-system, including the primordial importance of unequal exchange. But here too communists like Samir Amin have been able to develop Marx's general insights into the workings of the capitalist system, in order to solve new problems creatively.

But Marxism is more than just a study of the workings of capitalism; it also puts forward the principles of dialectical and historical materialism which explain some general principles of humanity's relations with the natural world, and the development of society. Experience has also proved that these principles are correct. Now, how does it happen that a theory of potentially universal applicability was developed first in Europe? The answer probably is that a systematic study of capitalism, which could at that time most easily be conducted in Europe, helps to reveal certain facts about human society in general because it strips aside the ideological veils which cover up relations of exploitation in other societies.

THE LIMITATIONS OF MARXIST THEORY

This, then, is why Marxism arose in Europe, and not because European thought in itself was 'more advanced' than in other parts of the world. Marx obviously drew upon his own immediate intellectual background, and Lenin is quite right in identifying the three sources of Marxism as German philosophy, English political economy, and French socialism. But this European intellectual heritage should not be equated, as Lenin implicitly does, with "the highroad of development of world civilisation". (52) It should also be viewed as a limitation on Marx's thought, on his ability to develop consistently all the potentialities of the theory of dialectical and historical materialism.

If the development of capitalism stripped away some ideological veils, it also introduced some new ones, of which the most central is racism. The system of thought in the European enlightenment was deeply imbued with mechanical materialism. Marxism itself shows that ideologies are strongly conditioned, at bottom, by social and economic realities, and it is our view that mechanical materialism, closely related to its opposite, idealism, is conditioned in an important way by the needs of justifying colonialism through the invention of a unilinear scheme of human progress. Hegelian dialectics negated mechanical materialism, but only very imperfectly. There are severe limitations in Hegel's dialectics, as we have already shown on the question of Africa. Dialectical materialism is a correct theory, but its potential can only be realised if we draw together the contributions of the systems of thought of different human societies in order to overcome the limitations of the European system. The theory which Marx and Engels first systematised is correct, but in practice the thought of these two individuals was limited in its ability to follow up the theory's potentialities in certain directions, and in some cases actually contradicted the theory.

It is quite a normal expression of the historical dialectic that the basic revolutionary forces of the world oppressed by capitalism should themselves take hold of Marxism, explicitly or implicitly criticise its shortcomings, and universalise it, make it something for the whole of humanity. This is exactly what has happened with the mass movement, and the many great thinkers and leaders who have emerged from the oppressed nations.

But the problem is that, as we have said, this development has taken place to a large extent, particularly after Lenin's death, inspite of the official communist movement. Hence, we are not just dealing with a healthy development, but at the same time with a degeneration of the official movement which, in a country like England, has caused enormous damage. From an ideological point of view the degeneration happened through a process of magnifying the initial weaknesses which existed within the principles of communism as formulated by Marx and Engels, weaknesses which arose where the Eurocentric limitations of these leaders caused them to depart from a consistent dialectical and historical materialist standpoint.

FACTS AND THE RE-EXAMINATION OF HISTORY

The fact that Communists are in a position to highlight the real historical processes involving humanity as a whole is because the oppressed nations have pushed themselves onto the stage of history. The creativity of the national liberation movements has created conditions for exposing the Eurocentric myth in the present and has forged the link with the past historical creativity of non-European peoples. The actual struggle poses the necessity of probing, through revolutionary theory, the contradictions which lie at the basis of that struggle.

As Engels pointed out, the working class risings in Lyon in 1831 gave the lie to the theories of the identity of interest between capital and labour; and at the same time gave the impetus to the movement in the field of the science of political economy. As he put it:

"The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history." (53)

On a much larger scale, the national liberation movements have made necessary a re-examination of the whole history before and since the origins of capitalism. The two essential ideas which are thus highlighted are, firstly, a systematic conception of colonialism and slavery as the essential elements in the growth of capitalism and, secondly, the historicity of non-European societies, which is interrupted through colonialism but which reasserts itself through the anti-colonial movement. These ideas are not just a development of communist theory but also a subversion of ruling class ideology, i.e. Eurocentrism, which supports the colonial system. In general, any development of revolutionary theory also attacks the ideological supports of the established order. But this process of the expansion of revolutionary ideology to encompass the whole of humanity certainly does not proceed smoothly. It meets bourgeois ideology not only externally, but internally. The liberation movements may have attained a qualitative point where they could push themselves through against all obstacles to their recognition, but they are not new to the era of imperialism, (as is sometimes assumed or implied) they always existed as the complementary opposite of colonialism itself. They existed and were ignored in European socialist thought.

During the nineteenth century, the formative period of socialist thought, there was also a period of expansion and consolidation of the colonial system, and a systematisation of its ideology,

particularly in the pseudo-scientific race doctrine. There was a real struggle between European and non-European societies, which the racists theorised into a false doctrine (survival of the fittest, etc.). Serious bourgeois writers on political economy in Marx's day seem not to have had much to say about colonialism. To repress the theme rather than discuss it openly is not a virtue. Thus the field was left clear to the racists to draw their conclusions from the real conflict between nations. The function of socialist thought was to drag into the open the themes which the bourgeoisie suppressed, ask the embarrassing questions which were asked in the domestic sphere (who produces the wealth?), and thus challenge the racist monopoly in dealing with the really-existing black-white conflicts, to show that these were a product not of race but of capitalism. This task was both political, because it meant entering into a necessary arena of struggle, and at the same time theoretical because a truly world-encompassing view of capitalism could thus be created, not the inevitably truncated view which would result in concentrating on the analysis of processes within the metropolitan country.

MARX AND MALTHUS

On the whole Marx failed to do these things. Among the figures whose ideas were subsequently incorporated into the race-doctrine, the only one whom Marx devoted considerable attention to criticising was Malthus. Malthus' ideas about the competitive pressure of population upon scarce food resources was incorporated into the survival of the fittest idea. Marx criticised Malthus on the grounds that his view was ahistorical:

"Malthusian man, abstractly deduced from historically determinate man, exists only in Malthus' head." (54)

But this criticism in itself is not a step forward. In fact Malthus is an example of the extreme reactionary whose views can be incorporated into capitalist-imperialist ideology only through the negation of those aspects of his thought which look back to the pre-capitalist period. His world-view is essentially static and pessimistic; he does not believe in a bright new future under capitalism. Since for him all societies are static, there are no reasons for regarding non-European ones as worse.

From this standpoint Malthus has no particular interest in arguing for a civilising or progressive mission for Europe. Thus he opposes colonisation; despite the stupidity of his writing on Africa he recognises the existence of 'negro nations' (55) and in connection with Mexico and Peru he even writes:

"We cannot read the accounts of these countries without feeling strongly that the race destroyed was, in moral worth as well as in numbers, superior to the race of their destroyers." (56)

Malthus opposed the ideas of progress put forward in the eighteenth century enlightenment. However, the latter, insofar as its conception of progress was mechanical rather than dialectical, actually held within it the seeds of vulgar evolutionism and pseudo-scientific racism. Simply to introduce historically determinate man in place of Malthusian man could open the way to the 'historical determination' of other societies as 'primitive'

in contrast to progressive Europe. One cannot say that Marx's lines of demarcation with Malthus were correctly drawn.

ALIENATION - THE REALITY OF NATIONAL OPPRESSION

The insistence on historical materialism is correct, but if a Eurocentric perspective prevails the whole historical process cannot be grasped, and what one will have instead is mechanical evolutionism. Marx also criticises Feuerbach for talking about an abstract individual, and not about an active, practical, social being. This is correct, and the passage we have quoted from Marx's Theses on Feuerbach provides a correct basis. Ideologies and religions reflect the alienation of the human from her/his essence as species-being. Feuerbach thought that this alienation could be overcome at the level of consciousness, (57) but Marx refuted this: alienation in the realm of consciousness is only a reflection of self-contradiction in the secular basis, and this must be resolved through revolutionary practice.

Feuerbach's abstraction and lack of historical specificity, however, leads him to relate to the whole of humanity as a species, and to reject divisions. Thus he affirms:

"It is only since the power of faith has been supplanted by the power of the natural unity of mankind, the power of reason, of humanity, that truth has been seen even in polytheism, in idolatry generally ..." (58)

This point of view is progressive, and yet at the same time insufficient. In the spirit of Marx's critique we can say that it is pointless merely affirming the unity of the human race unless we also recognise the reality of national oppression and the whole global exploitative system which underlies the ideology of racism and the divisions it produces; and, having recognised this, takes steps to resolve the contradiction in practice.

This position, which follows logically from Marx's premises, reaches its highest point so far in the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania. But Eurocentrism prevented Marx himself from following his thought to its conclusions. If one tries to negate Feuerbach's limitations by bringing into play a conception of the secular basis (i.e. the historical development of human social and productive life) which is narrowly Eurocentric, it is possible to arrive at conclusions which are worse than Feuerbach. Thus Marx could describe the Hindu religion as

"a brutalising worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of Hanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow." (59)

The highest form of alienation of mankind from its basic humanity is that created by colonialism and the slave trade, and the racist-Eurocentric ideology with which this interacts. This is the main problem in the capitalist era rather than religious (this situation also creates its opposite, the necessity of a liberatory movement which is at such a high

level that it can transcend the limitations of religions, functional though these are in relation to the societies which gave rise to them). Academic Marxologists have put forward umpteen theories about the concept of alienation, but the fact surely is that Marx was correct at the outset in highlighting the question but his subsequent failure in developing it is explained by his inability deeply to grasp the principal material basis for alienation in the present era. If the actual existence of racist oppression is taken seriously then it is possible to relate to the whole of humanity as an entity. But Engels' Ludwig Feuerbach simply attempts to negate Feuerbach's sentimental love for humanity by saying that people think differently according to class, (60) which is very insufficient. The concept of people thinking differently according to which mode of production they are in is correct, but it is necessary to recognise a human essence linking together at least the labouring people over and above these differences. Otherwise racism will creep in.

MARX ON COLONISATION

If we regard all the peoples of the world as having their own historical validity, as different expressions of a common human striving to come to terms with the natural world in the course of production and life in general, as facets of a mutually enriching human endeavour, then the history of capitalism appears in a different light.

Rosa Luxemburg had a very profound insight when she worked out that the ultimate key to capital accumulation was that capital was

"not the sole and completely dominant form of production"

and that

"Overseas, it (capital) begins with the subjugation and destruction of traditional communities, the world historical act of the birth of capital, since then the constant epiphenomenon of accumulation." (61)

This required a development in comparison with Marx's perspective. True, in Capital he described capital as coming on the stage dripping with blood from the slave trade, the colonisation of India, etc., but to express (occasionally) sorrow at the sufferings of people is not the same as recognising that their cultures had a historic logic which was interrupted. In fact, in the case of settler colonies where the colonialists wanted to wipe the indigenous people off the map and replace them, Marx was prepared to write them out of history at the stroke of a pen. In the address to Abraham Lincoln which he wrote on behalf of the International Working Men's Association during the American Civil War, Marx in no way questions the right of white settler colonists to exploit the "virgin soil" of America, he simply objects to the use of slave labour in so doing. (62) Capital Volume I concludes with a discussion of colonisation, but this is conducted entirely at a level of contradictions between the metropolitan bourgeoisie and European settlers. Marx explains that

"It is a question of true colonies, of a virgin soil colonised by free emigrants." (63)

But in fact there were practically no instances of colonisation which did not involve the dispossession of a people who had made the land their own, through a society and culture closely linked with their land. This shows that Marx had unconsciously absorbed the perspective of his time which had led Darwin to say it was a great advantage for Tasmania to be free of people, or indeed which produced the background to the Afrikaner myth that there were no people of any significance in southern Africa. Yet, the significance of colonisation is not settlers moving into virgin territory, having cleared out a few inconvenient natives, but rather a process of usurping the fruits of functioning societies, breaking up their whole mechanisms - because, for example, production of a particular foodstuff is linked to the whole culture of a people and is not 'merely' an economic question - and truncating their development.

Because Luxemburg's view was in some ways so new and involved such a radical breach with established patterns of thought, it is perhaps understandable that she arrived at absurdly simplistic conclusions. National struggles were not encouraged because the point where "humanity only consists of capitalists and proletarians" would be one where further capital accumulation was impossible. But the reality is different. Capitalism not only initially encounters other peoples in the colonial adventure, but it also continues to maintain them in a super-exploited limbo, so that if the colonial peoples become proletarians, this is as proletarian nations, or groups subject to racist oppression.

Colonialism regarded some areas as 'virgin territory' because the population was sparse. But in fact the populations of such areas, by their very existence in harsh conditions, had provided valuable experience for humanity as a whole. In the post-capitalist era the world's people will need to be conscious of the environment and draw on all the possible vocabulary of responses which have been evolved hitherto.

In the anti-imperialist movement there is a collective movement by the whole of the progressive forces of humanity for the first time; of course, the individual popular cultures had always interacted in the past but this is the first time they can interact at a global level, thus developing their particular characteristics while at the same time universalising the whole range of human responses to the environment. This movement brings about a revolutionary universalisation of culture in opposition to the homogenising threat of capitalism and imperialism.

In contrast to this view, the bourgeois mechanical view of 'progress' praises the idea of homogenisation: it is considered progressive if 'stagnant' and 'isolated' communities are broken up to be incorporated into the world market.

In the case of Ireland, Marx and Engels were able to make an astonishingly dialectical analysis and point out, for example, that

"Ireland has been stunted in her development by the English invasion and thrown centuries back." (64)

But they did not generalise this to colonies outside Europe. If, on the one hand, Marx was prepared to regard sparsely-populated settler colonies as 'virgin territory', and thus write their peoples out of history at a stroke, on the other hand, with populous countries like India he never broke with the viewpoint of seeing the destruction of their indigenous economy as something progressive. This view comes across clearly in Marx's article The British Rule in India. Marx and Engels condemned the atrocities of colonialism, but demarcated themselves from the sappy liberals by being hard-headed in praising the centralisation of the market which was objectively brought about by these regrettable means. Thus Marx:

"I have continued this hidden warfare in a first article on India (i.e. "The British Rule in India"), in which the destruction of the native industry by England is described as revolutionary. This will be very shocking to them. As for the rest, the whole rule of Britain in India was swinish, and is to this day." (65)

Now, in fact this notion of the backwardness, isolation and stagnancy of Indian traditional production is nothing more nor less than an aspect of the ideology which reflects the needs of European industry. Thus a bourgeois economist, Henry Fawcett, who was known as a friend of the Indians, condemns atrocities but argued that the breakup of communities was indispensable for the development of cash-crop production - which is of course in India's best interest!

"A village community virtually isolated from the rest of India cannot now raise that produce for which their land is best adapted, but must cultivate it with a view of supplying themselves with the first necessities of life. Manchester would, no doubt, annually purchase off India many million pounds' worth of cotton..." (66)

Here the link with the economic base is fairly transparent, but this ideological position gave rise to a whole way of seeing the Indian situation. Marx largely remained a prisoner of this, the dominant ideology of his time, and this fact stood in contradiction to the logical development of historical materialism.

"STAGES" THEORY OF HISTORY

There is an undialectical theory of social development which holds that everything leads up to contemporary capitalist society, which includes all that is interesting in earlier societies, and thus also constitutes a vantage point from which they can be judged. This is the assumption of bourgeois theories all the way through to the stages theory of the avowed apologist for US imperialism, W W Rostow. (67) One east European writer gives an excellent critique of Rostow, which in fact has a much wider applicability:

"If a society classified among the highest group has certain characteristic features, then every society that reaches this stage owing to the development of its productive forces, will assume the same features. Moreover, in order to reach this stage, on the strength of its productive forces, it must develop these very characteristics." (68)

The joke is that this critique would apply just as much to the contemporary Soviet view as it would to the American. They also regard their so-called socialist society as the point of reference for everything else. Now, how did it come about that the Soviet Union developed a view so close to that of capitalism? In our view the concept of a mode of production, and of a transition from one mode of production to another, is correct and in conformity with historical materialism. In the 1920s and '30s the Soviet Union imposed a view of the succession of modes of production (primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism) which is very dogmatic in comparison to Marx's own view and which notably imposes a Eurocentric straight-jacket on other societies (for example, the concept of feudalism). But this criticism is not sufficient. There is a deeper error which assumes that European capitalism, just because it is a further step in the succession of modes of production, subsumes within it everything which is worthwhile in more 'primitive' forms of society. Thus, from the Soviet viewpoint, once Russian 'socialism' is superimposed on the pyramid, this becomes the from which all other social formations can be assessed, condescendingly, as if from a superior height. This deeper error can be traced back to Marx, as when he wrote:

"The categories which express the relations of this (bourgeois, i.e. European) society and make possible the understanding of its structures, permit us at the same time to grasp the structure and production relations of all past societies, on the ruins and with the elements of which it built itself up..." (69)

But if capitalism is viewed in a fully dialectical way, we have to recognise that while, on the one hand, it creates a massive potential for production, which can be turned to good use under socialism, on the other hand, it tends to negate (and not to subsume) the essential strivings of humanity for self-realisation as expressed in the functioning social organisms which it tried to demolish all over the world.... These positive tendencies must now reassert themselves in a new way in the anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist struggle.

MORGAN AND THE 'ORIGINS OF THE FAMILY'

Although Marx tended to take this dialectical view when looking at capitalism within a particular country, he never fully extended it to relations between societies. Thus, the bourgeois world-view was never completely broken with, and part of it remained unchallenged within the socialist movement. This helps to explain why Lewis Morgan's ideas could have been swallowed so readily, particularly by Engels.

Morgan uses a teleological view of the progress of mankind to civilisation, i.e. to European civilisation. Since history is seen through Eurocentric ~~speculations~~, it follows tautologically that only Europe has attained civilisation according to its own criteria. This historical schema, which is supposed to demonstrate the unity of mankind, thus ends up in a blatantly racist conclusion. Morgan was a 'socialist', in other words a social-colonialist. Since he assumed that Aryan domination was the logical result of the history of humanity as a whole, logically this would usher in a new era in which the unity of mankind would reassert itself in the form of universal brotherhood, with Aryan culture (including within it everything of significance in more 'primitive' forms of society) now universally predominant.

In The Origins of the Family Engels swallows Morgan's reasoning hook, line and sinker, but he also dishonestly omits those passages where Morgan (to his credit) drew the logical, explicitly racist conclusions. Thus, at the culmination of his work, Engels quotes "in conclusion, Morgan's verdict on civilisation", reproducing a passage which gives a number of 'socialistic' prophecies about how society will rise above private property and institute a new era of democracy, brotherhood, equality, etc. (70) but he deliberately censors out the following passages where Morgan gives vent to the Aryan race-myth.

There was a whole range of ideologists in Marx and Engels' time who argued that the governing factor in human history was the conflict between so-called races, and as we have seen these ideas came to influence all shades of the political spectrum. Now these ideas are totally false, but they cannot be defeated by ignoring them or pretending they don't exist, as Marx and Engels tended to do. Ideas don't come from nowhere. The view which sees history in terms of the conflict between races (or 'families' in Morgan's terminology) reflects in a distorted and wrong way the reality of the fact that capitalism has engendered a conflict between societies and nations in which the colonial peoples suffer racist oppression. This contradiction has to be faced up to squarely and analysed according to historical materialism, rather than leaving the terrain to the racists.

DUHRING'S 'STRUGGLE AGAINST NATURE'

It is interesting that Marx and Engels were apparently misled by Morgan's 'socialist' vision even despite the fact that they were not ignorant, to put it mildly, of the fact that reactionary ideas could masquerade under a socialist label, indeed, as Engels said, they had "fought harder all one's life long against self-styled Socialists than against anyone else". (71) But the fact is that, as far as the colonial question is concerned, the lines of demarcation in these struggles were not satisfactorily drawn. This can be illustrated with the example of one self-styled socialist whom Marx and Engels did polemicise against, Eugen Dühring. No-one could deny that Dühring was a reactionary who deserved to be hammered, but Dühring was also a racist, a fact which Engels apparently didn't consider important. Even after Dühring had published a racist book (72) which is considered the first precursor of Hitlerite anti-Semitism, Engels saw fit to protest against the "despicable injustice" of the University of Berlin in sacking him. (73) Hence, it is not surprising that the critique in Anti-Dühring is in some respects wide of the mark.

Thus, Dühring's reactionary 'struggle-against-nature' idea was something Engels did not see fit to attack. And this theme is in fact central to Dühring's argument, as can be seen from his continual references to the myth of Robinson Crusoe. Crusoe is in essence a colonial myth, showing how the superior intelligence of a man bred in the European environment enables him to exploit the latent natural resources of the tropics, and in so doing to subordinate the 'savage' to his will.

The pervasiveness of this myth in popular psychology reflects in a distorted form the true fact that colonialism was the necessary substratum of European bourgeois civilisation. Dühring's political economy may have been rubbish but his choice of myth did at least subconsciously reflect the importance of colonialism. However, Engels just blandly says that the Crusoe story "properly belongs to the nursery and not to the field of science." (74)

This is wrong because all ideology distortedly reflects a material basis, and in this case ~~the~~ basis is very important. Engels interprets the story purely at face value, as though it were just a myth about the origins of class contradictions within a particular society, and hence the positive exposition of political economy which he tries to draw out of his critique of Dühring is inadequate. For example, he may be correct in saying that robbery is a useless term in examining the origin of classes within a society, but in talking about colonialism robbery is a valid concept, even though a continuing exploitative system could only have been built if ~~the~~ robbery was in the last analysis an expression of the laws of capital accumulation, rather than an isolated act.

Marx himself uses the story of Robinson Crusoe to illustrate man's relations with nature, and forgets about the colonial aspect of the theme. (75) Yet the whole question of humanity's progress to mastery over the world, from the realm of freedom, cannot become a really human-centred idea unless we come to terms with and criticise the colonialist way in which control over nature has been conceived in the dominant European ideology. The real process of human control over the world will have to come about through using the vast potential of all the different societies in their history of struggle, now expressed in a changed form in the anti-imperialist movement, in order to subdue the vast potential created by capitalism and make it serve human needs.

ASSIMILATION OR LIBERATION

The capitalist tendency to homogenisation seeks to subordinate all societies to its own, but there is not even real homogenisation in the sense of assimilation, because even if the oppressed peoples wanted equality in European terms, they are not allowed it, but instead homogenisation serves as a vehicle for the most brutal division, racist oppression. In response to homogenisation the liberation movements assert their own particularity, but this itself in turn serves as the basis for a higher unity because the liberation movement is a global current synthesising within it the concrete richness of different cultures and thus creating a movement of the whole of humanity for the first time.

In the pre-capitalist era there was constant cross-fertilisation between different cultures, but there was still no single current of human history. Capitalism negated this situation, at the price of bringing about far more acute divisions, particularly racist exploitation, than had existed in any previous era. But the resistance to which this gives rise, in the context of a single world system of production, creates the possibility of negating these divisions and moving to a higher stage in human history. The idea that the capitalist era heralds a new epoch of progress is indisputably correct, but only in the sense that the revolutionary movements, which negate capitalism (although in this very negation they can subsume, in a changed form, some of capitalism's achievements, e.g. technology) become the sole forces embodying this progressive potential.

The crucial thing, then, is solidarity with the liberation movements. Mao Zedong's view of the massacres and atrocities committed by imperialism is correct, they create their opposite, the movement of resistance, and the latter takes history forward. It is not enough to condemn atrocities without wholeheartedly supporting the resistance forces to which they give rise. But Marx and Engels never really made this step. They did condemn massacres. Thus, on Algeria, Engels writes:

"From the first occupation of Algeria by the French to the present time, the unhappy country has been the arena of unceasing bloodshed, rapine and violence. Each town, large and small, has been conquered in detail at an immense sacrifice of life. The Arab and Kabyle tribes, to whom independence is precious, and hatred of foreign domination a principle dearer than life itself, have been crushed and broken by the terrible razzias in which dwellings and property are burnt and destroyed, standing crops cut down, and the miserable wretches who remain massacred, or subjected to all the horrors of lust and brutality." (76)

And, if anything, condemnations of the British army in India were even stronger. But at the same time they did not really support the forces of opposition to all this, the actual popular struggle as a thing in and for itself with its own intrinsic creative force. A typical example which could be studied closely is Engels' article Details of the Attack on Lucknow (1858) which roundly condemns the British army's "plundering, violence, massacre", ironises about "their civilising and humanising progress through India" (77), but is at the same time full of superior and patronising references to the Indians.

They never fully surmounted the view that colonialism was regrettable for all its atrocities, but still a force objectively making for progress. They didn't recognise that the only progressive element is embodied in the resistance to which colonialism gives rise.

THE POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE EUROPE

The dialectical theory of development shows how the growth of some societies was achieved at the expense of - through the process of - blocking the development of others. But Marx and Engels refused to see an intrinsic potential for development in non-European societies, and saw only stagnation. If you don't see that these societies have dynamism there seems to be nothing for capitalism to block!

An interesting source is Marx's letter to Engels of June 14 1853. The Moscow publication Marx and Engels On Colonialism includes the following passage:

"I do not think anyone could imagine a more solid foundation for stagnant Asiatic despotism. And however much the English may have hibernicised the country, the breaking up of those stereotyped primitive forms was the sine qua non for Europeanisation... The destruction of their archaic industry was necessary to deprive the villages of their self-supporting character." (78)

This clearly implies that Europeanisation is a good and necessary thing and is equated with progress. Another passage in the same letter, which is omitted this time from the Moscow publication, drives the point home still more clearly. In it, Marx refers approvingly to an argument in a book by Carey called Slavery at Home and Abroad, to the effect that

"the main body of Negroes in Jamaica, etc., always consisted of newly imported barbarians, as under English treatment the Negroes were not only unable to maintain their population but always two-thirds of the number annually imported lost their lives; the present generation of Negroes in America, on the other hand, is becoming a native product, more or less Yankeeified, English-speaking, etc., and therefore fit for emancipation." (79)

This implies that the slaves have to accept brainwashing by European culture if they are to be free. Here again, Europeanisation is regarded as a virtue. This argument about the Caribbean may help to explain why the slave revolts in that area, which were among the most spectacular liberation struggles of the early capitalist period, were completely ignored by Marx and Engels. As we have already said, the bourgeoisie did not make the same mistake, they were trembling with fear; but Marx and Engels thought they knew better and assumed the struggles had no future because there was nothing they could draw in terms of historical validity from their own intrinsic roots.

NATIONAL STRUGGLES IN THE CARIBBEAN AND CHINA

In 1865 Paul Bogle led a revolutionary uprising in Jamaica and the British colonialists unleashed a barbaric reign of terror in attempting to suppress it. Public opinion in England was polarised. This was a period when racist ideology was striving to win hegemony over the hearts and minds of the working class, but there was still considerable working-class sympathy for the oppressed (80) and this could have been built upon. But Marx

and Engels showed no understanding of the crucial issues involved. In a letter to Marx dated December 1 1865 Engels, far from expressing solidarity with the revolutionary struggle, merely remarks in passing about the atrocities committed against "unarmed Niggers", (81)

For Engels this is practically the same as reporting British colonialism to the RSPCA for whipping a dumb cur. Yet these same Africans were the people who had proudly risen up and established liberated areas in the heart of Jamaica - among the first such areas in the history of the anti-colonial movement - which the British could never subdue by force of arms. In Haiti the slaves had established their own independent state and their famous leaders won a grudging respect even from the bourgeoisie for their superb military and political skill. Engels was one of the world's leading authorities on the history and technique of warfare and in Anti-Dühring he indulged himself in writing what is meant to be an extensive historical-materialist account of the subject without even mentioning these campaigns, even though the bourgeoisie was terrified by them. (82)

How can one account for this? The fact is that the objective historic process was pushing its way into Engels' consciousness but the Eurocentric framework of his thought could neither contain, nor be broken apart by, the real process. This gave rise to sharp contradictions, which are quite well illustrated in an earlier article, 'Persia-China':

"In short, instead of moralising on the horrible atrocities of the Chinese, as the chivalrous English press does, we had better recognise that this is a war pro aris et focis, a popular war for the maintenance of Chinese nationality, with all its overbearing prejudice, stupidity, learned ignorance and pedantic barbarism if you like, but yet a popular war. And in a popular war the means used by the insurgent nation cannot be measured by the commonly recognised rules of regular warfare, nor by any other abstract standard, but by the degree of civilisation only attained by that insurgent nation." (83)

On the one hand this shows a farsighted perception of the concept of people's war, on the other hand a Eurocentric prejudice, stupidity and learned ignorance with regard to Chinese civilisation. Thus Engels assumes that the character of the war was determined by the limitations of Chinese society, and not by the barbarism of the colonialist. This is such a sharp contradiction that it is hardly surprising that when Engels came to write Anti-Dühring he abandoned his early correct insights about people's war and ignored the subject altogether. As Fanon has pointed out, (84) the military chapter in that book is quite mechanical, and the reason is not hard to find. Although in the case of white people like the American colonists in the War of Independence Engels does recognise subjective factors ("they were fighting for their vital interests" (85)), he has nothing to say about the subjective factor in people's wars for liberation, nor indeed about the powerful objective force unleashed by an oppressed society in revolt, however ground down it may have appeared to be. This is another good illustration of the organic link between Eurocentrism and mechanical materialism

MARX AND ENGELS' SUBORDINATION OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

In general Marx and Engels' position on the national question was to subordinate it to the supposed interests of the proletarian movement. On the one hand they were only valid if they could themselves produce a proletariat, and on the other they were supported only insofar as this fitted in with the interests of the proletarian movement in the 'advanced' countries. On the first of these two aspects Engels in particular held to an idea that those peoples who could not produce a bourgeoisie and hence a proletariat themselves were 'historyless'.

"These relics of a nation mercilessly trampled under foot in the course of history, as Hegel says, these residual fragments of peoples always become fanatical standard-bearers of counter-revolution, and remain so until their complete extirpation or loss of their national character..."

This is genocidal in its implications. The examples Engels gives are of European peoples like the Gaels of Scotland, Bretons, Basques and South Slavs (86) but in a certain sense this whole perspective which cheerfully contemplates the extermination of inconvenient nationalities springs from the colonial experience. The colonial peoples, more than any others, were in a position of being 'historyless' according to the imposed Eurocentric definition. We have already pointed out that the justification of colonialism in Africa played quite an important role in the formation of Hegel's world-view.

On the other hand Marx and Engels held that revolution must free the oppressed peoples, because otherwise the proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries could not be successful. Right at the beginning of their career they stated unequivocally that "a nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations" (1847) and that "Revolutionary Germany... must, along with its own freedom, proclaim the freedom of the peoples which it has hitherto oppressed." (87) The importance of these principles must be emphasised. Professional anti-communists like Carlos Moore go to great pains to conceal these principled positions. The fact is that Marx and Engels are clearly differentiated from the social-chauvinism which infected the communist movement in the pre-Lenin period and which crept back gradually after Lenin's death. On the other hand, the limitations of their position must also be recognised. The leading factor in the revolution was definitely seen as the proletariat of the advanced countries. It was not in their interest to oppress other nations - this is correct, and it was a great achievement of Marx and Engels to recognise the fact, but still it stops short of recognising the revolutions of oppressed peoples for their own sake.

Also these statements speak of the advanced proletariat freeing the oppressed peoples rather than the latter freeing themselves (we are our own liberators). At the same time Marx and Engels did recognise that oppressed peoples were struggling for their own freedom, and therefore if the advanced proletariat needed to get rid of national oppression for its own sake, these struggles should logically be supported. But this support was selective, determined by what was conceived to be the interest

of the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries. The chauvinism which developed in the workers' movement was not entirely unconnected with the 'superior' attitude which Marx and Engels cultivated in judging national movements. For example, in a letter to Engels of December 1 1851 Marx congratulates himself on the fact that Ernest Jones, the English Chartist, had - on his prompting - referred in the following terms to the Hungarian revolutionary leader, Kossuth:

"I tell him, that the revolutions of Europe mean the crusade of labour against capital, and I tell him they are not to be cut to the intellectual and social standard of an obscure semi-barbarous people like the Magyars, still standing in the half-civilisation of the sixteenth century, who actually presume to dictate to the great enlightenment of Germany and France, and to gain a false won cheer from the gullibility of England." (88)

SELECTIVE SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL STRUGGLES

There were national struggles which Marx and Engels strongly supported, particularly the Polish struggle. But this support depended on an analysis of the international situation in which the point of reference was exclusively the interest of the 'advanced' proletariat in opposition to the supposed bastions of reaction in Europe. Thus, for example:

"The partition of Poland is the cement which binds together the three great military despotisms: Russia, Prussia and Austria. Only the restoration of Poland can break this bond and thus liquidate the greatest obstacle to the emancipation of the European peoples." (89)

It must also be pointed out that the analysis of international relations on which such judgements are based is itself Eurocentric. Marx's Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century (90) gives the impression that the whole of world history revolved around the threat from Russia which, it was assumed, would gravely set back the progressive movements in western Europe if it was allowed to succeed. Those national movements which could be useful against this were supported.

Yet there were other things happening in the eighteenth century. As C.L.R. James has shown, the struggle over the slave trade and over the zones of slave production was of absolute primordial importance for international and domestic affairs in Europe. (91)

James also correctly states that the Haitian struggle was revolutionary in its own right, and thus had an absolute right to chose its own methods, tactics and alliances. The alliance with the French revolution was only conditional on the latter sincerely favouring emancipation of the slaves. Obviously this perspective is quite different from the Eurocentric one which supports national movements only when they happen to line up with the most 'advanced' revolutions in Europe.

National oppression is opposed because it weakens the metropolitan proletariat which is considered to be the main harbinger of the new era in history, not the forces unleashed by the oppressed nations themselves. Marx and Engels did not fully realise that the more humanity is oppressed and denied, the more explosively it asserts itself. Marx and Engels thought that the system in 'uncivilised' countries was brutish, but this is undialectical because humanity can't be denied or, if it is, it is precisely the oppressors and in particular the colonialists who are dehumanised and not the oppressed.

The traditional social structures are oppressive: for example women in the Horn of Africa; the traditional system denies their humanity but they are not actually turned into brutes, all that happens is that a more powerful contradiction builds up between their irrepressible humanity and the system. Those the system seeks to dehumanise most become the leading force in destroying the whole world oppressive system, which they have to do in order that their humanity can push itself through. The traditional systems have a dual aspect because they oppress the women and labouring people in general but they also incarnate an aspect of humanity's striving to master the world.

It is the revolutionary paradox of the liberation movements that they unleash the forces, especially the women and peasant masses, who were ground down even by the traditional system, but they still retain a national character, precisely because these oppressed forces from within the system revolutionise it in such a way as to resolve the contradiction by smashing what is oppressive and (even in the process of asserting their own humanity) accentuating that aspect of traditional societies which embody humanity's cultural, economic, etc. strivings to master the world.

Marx and Engels changed their view that the victorious proletariat would have to liberate the colonies, particularly in the case of Ireland, and recognised that there was an indigenous struggle there which could weaken capitalism. However, the emphasis was still that the metropolitan proletarian movements were the main historical forces of progress, and other national struggles were positive if they helped this cause. A statement like, for example, "with the drain of men and bullion which it must cost the English, India is now our best ally" (92) is still fully compatible with the Eurocentric perspective. Even on Ireland Marx and Engels remained within this framework, as we can see spelt out with extreme logical clarity in the following statement dating from 1870:

"England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the only country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent." (93)

WAS ENGELS A RACIST?

Two of Engels' letters written in 1882 are particularly important for understanding the limitations of this position on the struggles of oppressed nations. This critique at the same time demonstrates the dynamism of dialectical materialism which grows on the basis of the real historical movement and is developed both through the correct aspect of Marx and Engels' work, and the critique of their limitations. We thus demarcate our position from that of anti-communists like Carlos Moore who use the real Eurocentric and racist weaknesses of Marx and Engels in order to negate historical materialism altogether. In the following extract we place in brackets the passages which Moore, in order to distort the sense, omits:

(You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think. There is no workers' party here, you see, 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.) In my opinion the colonies proper, i.e. the countries occupied by a European population - Canada, the Cape, Australia - will all become independent; on the other hand, the countries inhabited by a native population, which are simply subjugated - India, Algeria, the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish possessions - must be taken over for the time being by the proletariat and led as rapidly as possible towards independence. How this process will develop is difficult to say. (India will perhaps, indeed very probably, make a revolution, and as a proletariat in process of self-emancipation cannot conduct any colonial wars, it would have to be allowed to run its course; it would not pass off without all sorts of destruction, of course, but that sort of thing is inseparable from all revolutions. The same might also take place elsewhere, e.g. in Algeria and Egypt, and would certainly be the best thing for us.) We shall have enough to do at home. Once Europe is reorganised, and North America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example, that the semi-civilised countries will of themselves follow in their wake; economic needs, if anything, will see to that. But as to what social and political phases these countries will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organisation, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypotheses. One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without determining its own victory by so doing. Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds.... (94)

The point is not that the bracketed passages are absolutely correct, but that they are essential if we are to make a really scientific critique of Engels' position, and thus advance historical materialism in the process. Engels recognises that the actually-existing workers' movement is completely within the framework of bourgeois ideology on the colonial question, a

correct analysis which the communist movement was later to abandon. Since its enslavement to the bourgeoisie on the colonial question is a condition for the proletariat's enslavement in general, any movements which help to rid the proletariat of this burden are a good thing for us. At the same time the situation is assessed according to what is best for us - i.e. the metropolitan workers' movement, because despite the claim to internationalism there is no real question of Engels including the colonial peoples among 'us'. The leading force in the future epoch of world history (not just the history of Europe but of the rest of the world) is unequivocally assumed to be Europe, now rationally organised by the proletariat.

From this analysis there follows logically a certain position on anti-colonial solidarity. In the name of being 'materialist' and 'hard-headed', and shunning idealism, Engels does not shrink from drawing these conclusions, as the following extract from his letter to Bernstein of 9 August 1882 shows;

"We West-Europeans should not be so easily led astray as the Egyptian fellahs or all the Romanic people. Strange. All the Romanic revolutionaries complain that all the revolutions they have made were always for the benefit of other people. This is easily explained: it is because they were always taken in by the word 'revolution'. And yet, no sooner a mutiny breaks out somewhere than the entire Romanic revolutionary world is in raptures over it uncritically. I think that we can well be on the side of the oppressed fellahs without sharing the illusions they nurture at the time (a peasant people just has to be hoodwinked for centuries before it becomes aware of it from experience), and to be against the English brutalities while by no means siding with their military adversaries of the moment. In all questions of international politics the sentimental party newspapers of the French and Italians are to be used with utmost mistrust, and we Germans are duty-bound to preserve our theoretical superiority through criticism in this sphere as well." (95)

Thus the actual resistance struggle is not supported because it represents supposedly dead-end social and economic forces.

THE CONTINUITY OF MARXIST THEORY - THE EXAMPLE OF IRELAND

Objectively Marx and Engels were the propagators of the most revolutionary ideology in history. Within the Eurocentric framework of their thought, which they were unable fully to burst apart, the most far-sighted concepts kept pushing themselves through. The laws of the operation of the capitalist system which Marx discovered are still correct, if we break with Eurocentrism in understanding them. An example of this is Samir Amin's demonstration of how the tendency to pauperisation of producers, predicted by Marx as a necessary tendency of capitalism, is realised in the dependent economies of the neo-colonial countries. (96) Moreover, there were many specific insights which were to prove very fertile in terms of the later, dialectical development of Marxism.

Thus for example the following statement from 1858;

"Is it (the socialist revolution) not bound to be crushed in this little corner (Europe), considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still on the ascendant?" (97)

This is still put forward in the framework of what is best for Europe. At the same time, however, these ideas are extremely far-sighted, and open up the way to an understanding of how capitalism was later able to surmount the crisis of the '20s and '30s and even create an unprecedented boom by realising the potential for capital accumulation by means of heightened super-exploitation and the cultivation of dependent development in the colonies and neo-colonies. This is a problem which baffled even the theorists of Comintern, eighty years earlier.

Because Marx and Engels were very close to the revolutionary movement in Ireland, and in a sense articulate the objective and subjective strength of that movement through their works, they brought forward certain ideas in this context which have applicability to the whole colonial situation. In the following passage Marx already hints at the way capitalism creams off the surplus from primary accumulation in the colonies, thus limiting the possibility for indigenous development, at the export of pauperisation, at the development of underdevelopment, and even penetratingly criticises the colonial ideology which protects the whole system:

"... a class of absentee landlords has been enabled to pocket not merely the labour but also the capital of whole generations, each generation of Irish peasants sinking a grade lower in the social scale, exactly in proportion to the exertions and sacrifices made for the raising of their condition and that of their families. If the tenant was industrious and enterprising, he became taxed in consequence of his very industry and enterprise. If, on the contrary, he grew inert and negligent, he was reproached with the 'aboriginal faults of the Celtic race.'" (98)

To imply that there was an evolution from less correct to more correct positions on the question of the non-European peoples' struggles would be simplistic. (99) There was a reaching-out towards a really dialectical analysis on Marx and Engels' part - and in this sense there is a real continuity between Marx and Amin for example - and at the same time this reaching-out was frustrated by their Eurocentric limitations. But there was also a certain evolution.

AND THE NON-EUROPEAN PEOPLES

Marx in particular was continually trying to expand his horizons and despite his illness, pressure of work on Capital and practical involvement with the European workers' movement, still devoted enormous energy in his last years to studying everything he could about non-European peoples. Shortly before his death he compiled a massive volume of notes on Indian history. Here, for example, he gives an account of the emperor Akbar (1556-1605), mentioning the latter's religious tolerance, dedication to stamping out abuse by officials

and setting up of an effective legal system, and remarks that during this reign Delhi was made "into the greatest and finest city then existing in the world". (100) This is quite different from the picture of mindless tyranny which tended to characterise his earlier views. He also refers ironically to the so-called Black Hole of Calcutta incident "over which the English hypocrites have been making so much sham scandal to this day" and remarks: "Bengal is now completely and effectively cleared on the English intruders." (101) He thus seems to be moving towards a recognition of both the intrinsic historical dynamic of Indian society and the absolute justification of the liberation struggle.

Also in his last years, Marx compiled a huge amount of notes from various ethnological works. In these he tries to learn from the concrete facts reported while making a series of acid comments in which he ridicules the philistinism of the scholars who imagine that they are judging so-called inferior races from a high vantage point, and are in fact simply exposing their own stupidity. For example, in criticising Sir John Lubbock's The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man (London 1870) he calls Lubbock a 'civilised ass' for assuming that male inheritance is the norm against which other societies must be measured. (102) He quotes the passage: "Indeed the savage who worships an animal or a tree, would see no absurdity in worshipping a man" only to add his own note: "as if the civilised Englishman does not 'worship' the Queen or Mr Gladstone" (103) The following is a typical passage in which the bracketed phrases are Marx's comments:

"D. Reverend Lang in his 'The Aborigines of Australia' had a friend, the which friend 'tried long and patiently to make a very intelligent Australian understand (sollte heissen make him believe) his existence without a body, but the black never would keep his countenance ... for a long time he could not believe ("he" is the intelligent black) that the "gentleman" (i.e. die Pfaffen Lang's silly friend) was serious, and when he did realise it (that the gentleman was an ass in good earnest), the more serious the teacher was the more ludicrous the whole affair appeared to be' ... (Spottet Lubbock seiner selbst u. Weiss doch nicht wie)" (104)

MARX'S VIEW OF STAGES

One of the most remarkable dialectical ideas which Marx developed was his view that societies could progress directly to socialism on the basis of their surviving communal structures, without having to go through the intervening stage of capitalism. Marx initially thought that the lack of private property in land was a factor holding back progress (105), and that consequently colonialism could be progressive in breaking this up, for example in India. At the same time from very early on Marx grasped the fact that the basis of the colonial contradiction lies in depriving the subject people of their own land. In the case of India this theme comes across very strongly in an important article on the Annexation of Oudh written in 1858 (106), whereas in the case of Ireland, "I have ... been convinced from the first: that the social revolution must begin seriously from the bottom, that is, from landownership." (107)

There is an uneasy contradiction between these views. But later, in studying Russia, Marx looked carefully at the views of the great revolutionary theoretician Nikolai Chernyshevsky who raised the following question:

"Must Russia start, as her liberal economists wish, by destroying the village community so as to go over to the capitalist system, or can she, without undergoing the torments of the system, secure all its fruits, while developing her own historical endowments?" (108)

In a letter to Vera Zasulich of 8 March 1881 Marx refers to the village community as a "strategic point of social regeneration" in Russia. (109) As Engels was later to say: this

"abbreviated process of development ... applies not only to Russia but to all countries at the pre-capitalist stage of development." (110)

It is obviously important that Marx and Engels came to an understanding that countries outside the heartland of capitalism could step directly into the front ranks of historical progress. However, there are significant inadequacies in this conception. In our view, the communal structures which existed in societies before there were classes reflect a basic characteristic of humanity, that is a democratic striving of working people to master their own social and natural environment in a way which is in harmony with its objective laws. People's social being determines their consciousness. Within certain limits people's consciousness is determined by the particular mode of production under which they are living, but only within certain limits. The concept of the mode of production influencing consciousness is a restricted application of the general principle that social being determines consciousness, because humanity is by nature social. The basic tendency to democracy could not be crushed even by centuries of class society, and flares up in a series of rebellions by peasants and other labouring people in all parts of the world, throughout history. The communal systems of land-tenure which existed in certain areas are only a facet of this general phenomenon. However, the restricted application, i.e. the role of the mode of production in determining the character of popular struggles, now comes into play. Chinese historians, for example, have shown the dynamic function of peasant rebellions within the context of exploiting-class society, and in this sense the democratic struggles of the labouring people are always progressive. But before the advent of capitalism it was impossible for these struggles fundamentally to change the system and set up a new mode of production; the most they could do, as in China, was to overthrow one dynasty and set up another. The mass movement was an integral part of the dynamism which existed in all societies; the function of the advent of capitalism and its opposite, the socialist revolution, has been to give this movement for the first time a realisable form.

MARX AND THE 'STAGNATION' OF THE THIRD WORLD

Although in one way Marx's theories tend in this direction, they also contain Eurocentric limitations which in some respects turn their revolutionary potential into its opposite. Thus Marx never really broke with the view that surviving communal structures were responsible for the stagnation of non-European societies. But in fact the reverse is true. The picture of isolated communities of peasants whose horizon is limited to the village:

"Such a complete isolation of the individual communities from one another, which creates throughout the country similar, but the very opposite of common, interests..." - Engels (111)

was never really accurate. This is shown very clearly in the colonial period when widespread resistance movements developed very quickly. In India the resistance flared up over large areas on many occasions from the latter part of the eighteenth century onwards and was very creative in terms of methods of armed struggle and social organisation. (112) In China the Taiping movement in the mid-nineteenth century engulfed large areas of the country.

Far from breaking down the isolation of different communities, colonialism devoted all its energies to a policy of divide and rule. This is clearly illustrated in Africa. In Zimbabwe, the whole basis of colonial policy was to exploit the differences between Shona and Ndebele linguistic groups, but the two nevertheless combined in a country-wide revolutionary movement at the end of the nineteenth century. In the Maji-maji anti-colonial war in what is today Tanzania the leader of one community sent a message to a traditional enemy saying:

"We received an order from God to the effect that all white men had to quit the country... This war ordered by God must come first..." (113)

Thus the traditional structures were not incompatible with a correct view of national and world issues. Even today when imperialism has done a lot to weaken these structures, the more isolated national minority and so-called 'tribal' peoples can be in the forefront of the socialist revolution. We can see this in the Philippines, in the Naxalbari movement in India, in Peru. The democratic trends in traditional society which have developed in opposition to local oppressors can be used as a firm foundation for a socialist, anti-imperialist movement. Cabral resolved this question concretely in relation to Guinea Bissau. (114)

None of this detracts from the fact that the traditional structures cannot on their own create a new socialist mode of production without the intervention of the capitalist world-system. But the way capitalism creates these conditions is not as Marx and Engels tended to think by destroying an existing stagnation, but rather by itself creating stagnation in the place of an existing dynamism. The capitalist world-system incorporates everything into its orbit. Its preservation of the traditional structures serves precisely as a mechanism for superexploitation, for example enabling part of the means of subsistence not to be paid for, so that labour power can be bought below its value. At the same time capitalism also

tends to disintegrate the traditional structures in order to increase accumulation. The inescapable contradiction between these two trends is an essential part of contemporary imperialism and its crisis.

Thus the democratic struggles of the masses can no longer function as a dynamic element within the context of traditional society because the latter is prevented by world-capitalism from developing any further along its own lines; nor can these struggles even serve as a mechanism for breaking up that society in the interests of an indigenous capitalist development which is likewise impossible. But the popular movement is irrepresible. It can now only be a struggle for a complete transformation. Capitalism and imperialism qualitatively increased the exploitation of the peoples of the third world in comparison to anything they had suffered under the old exploiting-class societies, and at the same time placed on the historical agenda socialism as both a realisable possibility and the only way out. The national liberation movements carry forward what is best in the historic culture of their people in the pre-colonial era, but in a changed form: the only meaningful strategic orientation is socialism. The entire world exploitative system rests on the shoulders of the masses in the colonies, and their struggle can only be one to overthrow that system.

The view which Engels developed after Marx's death tends to confuse this overall historical process with the specific form of communal land-ownership, which is a narrow and economic perspective. But more important, it fails to settle the historical question of how the stagnation of the colonial countries originated, and assumes that their 'abbreviated' development to socialism can only be in response to an impetus from the metropolitan countries. In a letter to Kautsky in 1884 Engels discusses the situation in Java (then a Dutch colony) and sets out to show

"how today primitive communism furnishes there as well as in India and Russia the finest and broadest basis of exploitation and despotism (so long as it is not aroused by some element of modern communism) and how in the conditions of modern society it turns out to be a crying anachronism (to be removed or further developed) as much as were the independent mark associations of the original cantons..." (115)

While it is true that the deliberate maintenance of pre-capitalist structures provides an essential basis for colonial despotism, Engels precisely fails to pinpoint the responsibility of colonialism. In these circumstances, the idea of being 'aroused' by some element of modern communism carries with it the implication that the socialist movement in the metropolitan countries must play a leading role. This idea is spelt out more clearly a decade later in Engels' afterword to his work 'On social relations in Russia', where the democratic traditions in non-central societies are seen as backward 'relics', passively awaiting the kiss of life from the metropolitan proletariat:

"Only when the capitalist economy has been overcome at home and in the countries of its prime, only when the retarded countries have seen from their example 'how it's done', how the productive forces of modern industry are made to work as social property for society as a whole - only then will the retarded countries be able to start on this abbreviated process of development. But then their success will be assured." (116)

ALTERNATIVE ANALYSES OF DEVELOPMENT

What is needed is a historical materialist analysis. This does not mean that we can't learn from those who are not identified as Marxists. Anything which genuinely helps develop a non-Eurocentric conception of the nation and its history is a contribution to historical materialism, even if this is not the explicit intention of the author. The whole array of different cultures and societies is the common heritage of humanity as a whole. Mahnadou Dia, for example, has pointed out that the colonial division of labour represents

"a deterioration of world economy, in its capacity as manifestation of the universal, and ... the consolidation of hegemonies" (117)

and Susantha Goonatilake, in his critique of the process of "hegemonic cultural blanketing", states that

"Cultural diversity is an array of responses to changes in the socio-economic environment and its elimination implies that the learned responses at the world's command will be fewer." (118)

These critiques of the hegemonism which grows out of the colonial experience are important contributions to the process of resolving mankind's alienation and reuniting it with its basic humanity.

At the same time we have to be aware of the weaknesses which can enter in when someone is not oriented towards Marxism. Cheikh Anta Diop has made tremendous contributions towards a genuinely historical materialist view of world history, but his own assessment of his material stops short of a truly historical materialist orientation. In L'Afrique noire précoloniale he practically affirms the concept of stagnancy or at least 'immobility' of African society, regarding it as a virtue because it supposedly preserved Africa from the disruptive influence of classes. (119) Taharka in his book Black Manhood makes a valuable contribution by marshalling the evidence to show the essentially African character of ancient Egyptian civilisation but fails to express any alternative to the Eurocentric concept of the dynamic of social development; this can be seen in his parroting the most absurd bourgeois arguments about female inferiority which hardly differ from the pseudo-scientific evolutionist ideas about the inequality of so-called races. (120)

IMPORTANCE OF CLASS ANALYSIS - CARLOS MOORE & AYI KWEI ARMAH

This is just to show that while all anti-Eurocentric arguments are valuable, and work objectively towards forging a true historical materialist world view, this is only so if they are assessed from the standpoint which is itself historical materialist, i.e. that of Du Bois, Cabral, Rodney, Samir Amin and others. The bourgeoisie, including the third-world national bourgeoisie, has every interest in denying the reality of classes, because then the nature of their own class aspirations can be masked. But without class analysis it is impossible to change the world, which involves, as Amin has pointed out, forming a progressive bloc of classes in opposition to the hegemonic bloc which sustains the imperialist system.

This distinction must be taken especially seriously when we are dealing with what could be termed professional anti-Marxists who adopt an anti-Eurocentric position.

Two important examples of this trend, which cover similar ground, are Carlos Moore's Were Marx and Engels White Racists? (121) and Ayi Kwei Armah's article "Masks and Marx: The Marxist ethos vis-à-vis African Revolutionary Theory and Praxis" in Présence Africaine No. 131. To some extent Cedric Robinson's book Black Marxism is related to this trend, although the issue is more complex and this remains a very important book.

This trend involves more or less deliberately denaturing Marx's writings in order to prevent a dialectical analysis being made, and hence communist thought being strengthened through the critique of Marx. In Moore's case this tactic involves manipulating quotations so as to make it seem that Marx is an apologist for capitalism. For example, the well-known passage in Capital Volume I where Marx refers to the primitive accumulation through colonialism and the slave trade as the "rosy dawn" of the capitalist era (122) - a bitterly ironic expression similar to the term 'civilisation-mongers' which Marx frequently applies to the colonialists - is taken at face value by Moore as though Marx were being serious.

An important case where a dialectical analysis is necessary is in Marx's statement that "Direct Slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credit, etc." (123) Here again, Moore implies that Marx is saying that this is a jolly good thing because it builds capitalism. In fact the issue is more complex. The above statement is in itself correct, in fact it is one of Marx's important insights, which was proved correct by the later work of Eric Williams, Walter Rodney, etc. The essential point in Marx's polemic against Proudhon is to draw lines of demarcation with reformism. Proudhon thought that justice could be established by eliminating the abuses of the present system; Marx shows the only way to justice is smashing the system. The atrocities and abuses of capitalism are an integral part of the system, they are an essential and inseparable part of it, and to abolish them the system must be smashed. These ideas are absolutely true and remain relevant to the oppressed masses in all countries. The Eurocentric error of Marx lay in the fact that he assumed the capitalist countries had wrapped up within themselves somehow the mainstream of historical progress so that the capitalist world had apparently sucked in not just the rest of the world's

wealth, but the whole world's historical mission as well. The bourgeois liberals condemned slavery in moral terms without seeing it as an integral part of the system they supported. Marx wanted to end that system but in breaking with the liberals he took a ridiculously cheerful and callous attitude to slavery. Above all, in his efforts to bring about the downfall of the system he did not see that capitalism had produced its own gravediggers in the slaves and colonised masses themselves.

To carry out the critique in this way strengthens historical materialism, but this is just what Carlos Moore and co. do not have an interest in doing. The explanation of the basis of this trend, would seem to be a certain overlapping of interests between imperialism on the one hand and the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations on the other. The former fears more than anything else the emergence of a genuinely creative black and third-world communism which really unleashes the struggle and creativity of working women and men, independent of any super-powers, dogma, revisionism... The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations have some contradictions with imperialism, but they also fear the independent mobilisation of their own working classes, they fear the introduction of class politics into their own societies. By class politics we do not mean sectarianism or some kind of Trotskyite absolutising of working class struggle against anything and everything. We mean the integration of Marxism with concrete conditions to create a united front of all progressive forces (including some bourgeois ones) with the worker-peasant masses as the main and leading force. They want, at best, to use the mass struggles and keep them firmly under control. Ayi Kwei Armah spills the beans and reveals the third world bourgeoisie's fear of their own working class when he writes:

"The miner's work in Africa is to assist the invading Western pirate in the robbery of his motherland. This makes the former at best a zombi; at worst a culpable accomplice, the hard-working and perennially short-changed sidekick of the Western mugger..." (124)

This is the class position underlying the whole trend. The coincidence of interests with imperialism is summed up in the proposition that communism (political economy, class politics) may be OK for the West, but it is of no use to blacks. We argue just the opposite: it is precisely African and other third-world revolutionaries who have taken up the banner of communism and created conditions for turning it into a truly universal system of revolutionary thought, and thereby also incidentally showing socialists in the metropolitan countries the way out of the strait-jacket of Eurocentric thought, if they are prepared to take it.

The contribution of Lenin

The world economic system had existed since the early days of capitalism, and so had the struggle of the oppressed nations and peoples. But the era of imperialism marked a qualitative step because this was no longer the period of capitalist expansion, but the era of the transition from capitalism to a higher system. The movements of the oppressed - which become less and less isolated, and coalesce into a single current - are able to move beyond the stage of simple resistance and are able actively to build a new social system. There was an actual struggle of the oppressed nations and peoples for self-determination even before the political label 'self-determination' was coined, and this was shaking both the Eurocentric base and superstructure of the world system. In the period leading up to World War I colonial oppression vastly increased; during the war itself vast numbers of Asian and Africans were taken to Europe as cannon-fodder or cheap substitutes for draught animals. Objectively the world revolutionary process was becoming more and more explicitly the mission of the colonial peoples. The communist movement either had to keep up with events in its thinking or else turn into a force smothering progress.

It is in these historical circumstances that we must view the work of Lenin, a revolutionary genius whose contribution appears stronger than ever from the anti-Eurocentric viewpoint which we are advocating in this paper. Standing head and shoulders above most of his European contemporaries, he got the message of the uprising of the colonial peoples. His theoretical insights and practical policies gave the communist movement an impulse which lasted - even though locked in competition with reactionary lines which later overwhelmed it - for many years after his death. Even though large sections of the official movement have now completely degenerated, Lenin's work remains a guiding star for all real communists.

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN LENINISM

A great revolutionary leader is not someone born with all the answers, but someone who can learn from the mass movement. This is what Marx and Engels did with Ireland. In a sense Leninism represents a bursting forth by the real mass movement of the oppressed peoples into the ideological superstructure of communist theory. There is thus naturally an evolution in Lenin's thought which reflects both the evolution of the actual struggle, and the extent to which he was able increasingly to use the lessons of these struggles in order to liberate himself from Eurocentrism. This evolution can be seen if we look at three examples from Lenin's work.

In 1913 Lenin wrote an article aptly titled "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx". In it he analyses the characteristics of three eras in the revolutionary movement, concluding with the contemporary period which he characterises precisely by referring to the revolutionary storms in Asia:

"It is in this area of storms and their 'repercussion' in Europe that we are now living. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese Republic, against which the various 'civilised' hyenas are now gnashing their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia, or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in the Asian and semi-Asian countries." (125)

However, there is still a limitation here in that he still tends to see the Asian movement as an extension or enlargement of a basically European pattern. (126)

This limitation was progressively transcended in Lenin's later work. Immediately after the Russian revolution, the Bolsheviks called a number of conferences of peoples of the East, and speaking at the second of these in 1918, Lenin showed that the anti-colonial movements had not only 'added to' the world struggle, but also changed its focus, and indeed its whole structure:

"It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie - no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism." (127)

The words which we have underlined at the end of this passage read as an indictment of a lot of what has passed as 'Marxist' theory in England and many other countries.

Lenin here shows how the new conditions cause some of the established patterns of politics to change into their opposites, although the specificity of the revolutions in the east is only partially appreciated at this stage.

Lenin suffered a prolonged illness before his eventual death in 1924, and could only write some short articles from his sick-bed highlighting crucial problems of the revolution.

It was precisely in this period that he returned again and again to his theme of showing how, according to the dialectics of history, the cause of the world struggle was being taken up more and more by the peoples of the East, studying this theme under different angles and developing it. Faced with the West-European philistines who said that

"The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level that makes socialism possible"

he argued

"They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics."

"Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess such vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution." (128)

"It need hardly be said that a textbook written on Kautskyite lines was a very useful thing in its day. But it is time, for all that, to abandon the idea that it foresaw all the forms of development of subsequent world history. It would be timely to say that those who think so are simply fools." (129)

This is quite a remarkable statement. The Kautskyite textbook is the formalistic statement of Marxist 'truths' without the revolutionary dialectics of change which is the real essence of Marxism. In contrast to the Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx, Lenin here sees a change in content with the new revolutions enriching Marxism qualitatively.

On the basis of his correct world-view, Lenin formulated practical policies stressing the importance of the struggle for national self-determination, as well as the close relationship between opportunism and imperialism in the metropolitan countries. These issues are still absolutely relevant.

SOME LIMITATIONS IN LENINIST THEORY

Of course Lenin's formulations also contain some limitations and weaknesses. This is quite natural: it is not materialist to expect even one of the greatest figures in history, which he certainly was, to arrive at an absolutely perfect position. His greatness lay in his ability continually to move forward in resolving fresh questions, and he was still doing this when he died. His thought is in this sense open-ended; he indicated a direction for the movement as a whole to take in advancing and breaking further new ground. The problem is that the official communist movement by and large failed to live up to this task.

Dialectically speaking, the weak areas which subsisted within Lenin's thought were precisely those in which a consistent application of Lenin's own standpoint and methods ought to have led his successors into making fresh progress.

This is why we are mentioning these weaknesses (or unfulfilled aspects of the progress to combatting Eurocentrism) here. They include the following points: Firstly, although Lenin broke with Eurocentrism in practice he didn't explicitly criticise or sum up the shortcomings of Marx and Engels in this respect. Secondly, closely linked with the previous point, he never completely broke with the viewpoint of seeing non-European societies as historically stagnant. He did not fully understand the deep-rootedness of the forward-moving dynamic of these peoples, both in terms of the development thrust of traditional societies, and the sense that the anti-colonial struggle reaches back to the earliest days of capitalist expansion, carrying forward the established dynamic of these societies in a changed form. In reality, the anti-colonial movements were new to Marxism but they were not new to history, they had always been there, but they simply hadn't been seen. Of course they underwent a major upsurge in the era of imperialism, but they didn't just spring from nowhere; however Lenin sometimes veers towards a position of seeing these struggles as being created by the era of imperialism, assuming that this disrupted an earlier stagnancy. His repeated use of the adjective 'new' in describing the anti-colonial movements is thus not completely sound, although it does reflect, on the positive side, that he saw these forces as the agents of building a new era, as having unequivocally taken over the responsibility for historical progress.

The contradiction between the great historical vision and the surviving limitations in Lenin's world-view is well illustrated in a passage from another of his last writings, where he refers interestingly to the orientation of a new theoretical journal:

"... the contributors to Pod Znamenem Marksizma must arrange for the systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from a materialist standpoint, i.e. the dialectics which Marx applied practically in his Capital and in his historical and political works, and applied so successfully that now every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India and China) - i.e. of the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the population of the world and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto conditioned the stagnation and decay in many advanced European countries - every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism." (130)

Thirdly, Lenin was not able to develop his work in the field of political economy to take account of the depth of the colonial contradiction to the same extent that he was in the field of practical politics. During the period of capitalism overall, the main danger of chauvinism within the workers' movement has been capitulation to the bourgeoisie over the colonial question. During the particular historical circumstances of the period leading up to World War I, the question of chauvinism directed against rival imperialist powers became very serious, although even here this kind of chauvinism would not have gained a foothold if it had not been for the substratum of racism, the acceptance of the right to build and maintain empires.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LENIN'S IDEAS BY THIRD WORLD MARXISTS

In the precise circumstances of the decades leading up to World War I the cutthroat competition between the great powers was so intense that they were driven to extend their formal, exclusive spheres of influence purely and simply in order to prevent their rivals doing the same. Thus colonial expansion appears superficially as a function of great-power rivalry. A more correct way of presenting the question, however, is to say that the continued existence of capitalism is indissolubly linked with an intensification of the super-exploitation of those areas which it has made dependent. The intensification of super-exploitation should not be confused with an extension of the area under formal colonial administration or with the hardening of exclusivity of colonial spheres of influence because it can just as well take place in the absence of these two factors, as the period after World War II shows.

When Lenin wrote Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism the pressing need was to refute Kautsky's theories that imperialism could move in the direction of stable development and eliminate conflict. The book does not provide a full picture of the tendencies of the era and under-emphasises some important features of that particular period, such as the greatly intensified exploitation of the subject peoples in the period immediately leading up to the first World War, and the close connection between colonialism and the formation of some of the big monopoly companies.

Lenin pointed the way in which the peoples of the oppressed colonial nations were to become the leading force in the world revolutionary process; inevitably this meant that they would also play a leading role in the future development not just of practical struggles but of theory. This necessarily meant facing the issue of Eurocentrism squarely, and thus expanding communist theory beyond the limitations from which it still suffered. And such a creative current did indeed develop. There were many innovative ideas in the few years after the Russian revolution. In what follows we are not of course arguing that every one of these ideas was correct, but that that the issues raised were the genuinely important ones. The problem is that they were often put forward in spite of or even in opposition to the dominant ideas of an international communist movement in which the spirit of Lenin's teachings was at best only partially understood.

The essential new ideas which were put forward at this time are rather difficult to state in a nutshell, but it would be helpful to pinpoint the following four questions which are really facets of a single whole. Firstly, the European movement must pay adequate attention and respect to the revolutionary movements in the colonial countries and must not marginalise them or treat them as appendages, either conceptually or in terms of practical politics. Secondly, the colonial peoples are oppressed in a qualitatively different way from the proletariat of the 'advanced' countries; the latter are also oppressed by capital, but the possibility of unity can only be brought about if the qualitative difference is recognised; this recognition forms the basis of any realistic class analysis, or any analysis of the forces which make up the world system. Thirdly, the above divisions are reflected in racist oppression which has material reality and is also protected by a powerful Eurocentric ideological superstructure. Fourthly, the colonial peoples must have control over their own struggles, if necessary through their own independent revolutionary organisations; this is the only basis for a genuinely united world revolutionary movement; to impose an external organisational control on these struggles is tantamount to reproducing colonial relations within the revolutionary movement.

The above four ideas are among the most important concepts of twentieth century world history. The fact that they were put forward by third-world Marxists is proof that Marxism is the most revolutionary ideology, and confirmation of the genius of Lenin; the fact that these ideas have more often than not been elbowed out of the official communist movement is proof that the strength of Eurocentrism must not be underestimated.

THE CRISIS AFTER WORLD WAR I - "TACTICAL" EUROCENTRISM

The period after World War I was one of acute crisis for the capitalist system; of this, both imperialists and revolutionaries were aware. Some thought that this heralded a final apocalyptic downfall of the system. Lenin probably did not deny the possibility of the system consolidating itself to some degree. What he argued, correctly, is that imperialism is the era of revolutions; whatever further developments it undergoes cannot possibly alleviate, but can only intensify, the misery and exploitation of the working masses; furthermore, because of its spatial and temporal unevenness, i.e. periodic crisis plus the existence of weak links and the rivalry of rising and declining imperialist powers, there exists the possibility of revolution at particular times and places; it is the duty of revolutionaries to seize the time.

The acute situation at that particular juncture explained a certain tactical concentration on affairs in Europe. There seemed to be a real possibility of further proletarian revolutions, while at the same time the bourgeoisie of the big powers was launching a large-scale military effort to destroy the Russian revolutionary regime which served as an encouragement to these revolutions. It was necessary to maximise the progressive potential in this situation.

But there were considerable dangers in even a tactical Eurocentrism. This can be seen in the Manifesto, supposedly a sort of updated Communist Manifesto, drafted by Trotsky and adopted by the first Comintern congress:

"The workers and peasants not only of Annam, Algiers and Bengal, but also of Persia and Armenia, will gain their opportunity of independent existence only in that hour when the workers of England and France, having overthrown Lloyd George and Clemenceau, will have taken state power into their own hands... Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will strike for you as the hour of your own emancipation!" (131)

There is a clear indication here that the revolution in the East is subordinate to that in the advanced capitalist countries. (132)

Lenin believed that the example of Soviet Russia could introduce a kind of ferment into the revolutionary situation in the East, which could then proceed with its own independent momentum. This in no way implies subordination. The report on the national and colonial question given by the Soviet representative Pavlovitch at the Baku conference of the Peoples of the East (1920) puts this idea across with the aid of a curious mixed metaphor;

"If into this compound (i.e. the East) which is densely saturated with the revolutionary bacteria we introduce a crystal in the form of peasant soviets, soviets of the toilers, the resulting crystallization will proceed with rapid strides..." (133)

There are weaknesses in this formulation, however, because firstly the national movements should be able to develop their own forms of social organisation, and secondly because the condition for a direct development to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalism, is not only the existence of the Russian revolution as an example, but also the blocked or dependant character of domestic capitalist development in the colonial or neo-colonial countries.

The theory of the East being able to skip the capitalist stage is not wrong in itself, but it can be found in conjunction with radically differing views. In Lenin's case it arose on the basis of a profound feeling for the importance of the area. Precisely because of its great revolutionary potential, the east is able to develop great creativity in finding historically new paths to socialism. But the position of saying that the East can skip the capitalist stage was also compatible with a view which marginalised the actually existing struggles. This marginalisation could take different forms and in some ways there was a clash between 'left' and right lines on the common premise of marginalising the third-world movements. The line at the Baku conference was an extremely leftist form which repudiated national movements without an explicit revolutionary orientation, and even

went so far as to justify the English working class's indifference to the Irish struggle on the grounds that

"... suppose the Irish separatists succeed in their aim and realise their cherished ideal of an independent Irish people. The very next day, independent Ireland would fall under the yoke of American capital or of the French Bourse, and, perhaps, within a year or two Ireland would be fighting against Britain or some other states in alliance with one of the world predators, for markets, for coal mines, for iron mines, for bits of territory in Africa..." (134)

This is an example of how very rightist conclusions can follow an ultra-left premise; here, the speaker assumes that the skipping of capitalism can only be in the direction of 'pure' (soviet) socialism, and hence writes off all the real, concrete conditions of the revolutions in the colonial countries. On the other hand, there is also a more obviously rightist position which can be derived from the idea of skipping the capitalist stage: this is the theory of the non-capitalist road.

"LEFT" AND RIGHT MARGINALISATION OF THIRD WORLD STRUGGLES

Contemporary Soviet discussions of the Comintern struggles over the question of the peoples of the East are at great pains to insist that the correct line was that which anticipated the theory of the non-capitalist road. (135) This theory implies that the colonial countries are backward, with poorly formed class relations, etc., but that if they stick closely by the Soviet Union then progressively-inclined regimes without a clear class character can lay the groundwork for socialism. This line converts the marginalisation of the colonial peoples in the ideological sphere into an actual blueprint for their continued political and economic marginalisation within the Soviet orbit.

There was thus implicitly (though the issues were not always clear) a Eurocentric debate between 'left' and right methods of marginalising the colonial struggles, i.e. between, on the one hand, seeing them as purely proletarian and devoid of significant national character, and on the other handing over control to a pro-Soviet faction of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. This was paralleled by another debate which started from different premises, i.e. a debate which accepted the intrinsic strategic importance of the struggles in the colonial world.

The trends which developed on a basis of these correct premises included ideas of Lenin, as well as those held by a number of outstanding revolutionaries from the oppressed nations. At the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 there was a struggle between Lenin and the Indian communist M.N. Roy. The crux of the dispute, according to Roy's later recollection, was the assessment of the objective role of Gandhi. (136) Lenin thought he was progressive in terms of the anti-imperialist struggle at that time and Roy thought his role should be assessed primarily in social terms, so it was reactionary. This debate seems to us an example of a contradiction among the

people which serves to advance the cause of communist theory, and the issues raised remain important to the present day. Lenin's position obviously has nothing in common with the theory of the 'non-capitalist road' - he is not saying that the movement led by Gandhi could build a kind of dependant 'socialism' under Soviet patronage. Roy, for his part, held a very correct position on political economy which placed the question of colonial exploitation at the centre of the picture:

"Super-profit gained in the colonies is the mainstay of modern capitalism, and so long as the latter is not deprived of this source of super-profit, it will not be easy for the European working class to overthrow the capitalist order." (137)

Roy made an incorrect deduction from these correct premises, in assuming that if the colonies are basic to the political economy of capitalism, this can only be because capitalism is breaking up the existing relations of production and spreading capitalistic ones; hence he overestimated the purely class character of the struggle in the colonies. This is in some ways a similar error to Luxemburg's. It was only much later, with the formulation of the theories about the centre-periphery relationship and unequal development, that it has been possible to arrive at a really dialectical position on this question.

The fact is that capitalism realises its super-profit not only by disintegrating traditional structures, but by maintaining, within the context of a world economy overwhelmingly dominated by the capitalism of the big powers, a certain non-capitalist sector in the colonial and neo-colonial countries, thus allowing part of the articles of subsistence and maintenance of the labourer to be assured outside the capitalist sector, so that labour power can consequently be bought below its value. The development of fully-fledged capitalist relations of production is blocked. This is one reason why central capitalism exploits not just classes but nations.

QUESTIONS OVER THE COLONIAL QUESTION - "PROLETARIANISED NATIONS"

To arrive at this dialectical view, a struggle of ideas was necessary among comrades, on the premise of not marginalising the significance of the struggles of the East. And a consensus did indeed exist on these premises, even among comrades who held widely differing positions - this was a situation where nobody held a completely all-round view of the question, which is quite normal at the outset of a dialectical struggle of ideas. Roy was only one of those who argued persistently against the marginalisation of the colonial question. (138) Pak Din Shun, the Korean delegate to the second Comintern Congress in 1920, who seems to have taken a centrist position in the early debates over the emphasis on class and national struggle, wrote a critique of the past history of the European labour movement's line on the colonial question, criticised the way the question was dealt with at the First Comintern Congress and said that the second Congress "should direct its attention to the East where the fate of world revolution may be decided." (139)

Another figure who stressed the key role played by the movement in the East was Sultan Galiev, a Moslem from one of the nations oppressed within the old empire, who played a leading role in the early period of the Soviet revolution.

"Communism has made a grave strategic mistake" he argued, "in devoting prior attention to the revolutionary movement in western Europe, forgetting that the weak point of the capitalist world is in the Orient, not the Occident." (140)

But the conclusions which he drew were sharply different from those of Roy. He is the figure which the contemporary Russian leadership finds most difficult to handle. A recent Soviet compilation on The Comintern and the East (141) does not even mention his name, although he would be one of the central figures in any objective study of this subject. (142) They don't mind discussing Roy critically, but the issues raised by Sultan Galiev are so explosive that it is safer to sweep them under the carpet, even 60 years later!

Taking the same premise as Roy that the super-exploitation of the colonies was the factor underpinning the capitalist system, he drew a different conclusion, namely that these are exploited as nations and thus become in essence proletarian nations. One of his followers writing in 1918 argued that the oppressed nations can be regarded as

"proletarian peoples, for they are the only people genuinely oppressed. They are more authentically proletarian than are the English or French proletariat." (143)

Since they form the proletariat with respect to the world system as a whole communists in these countries must form class alliances and respect local conditions.

ORGANISATIONAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE THIRD WORLD MARXISTS

The organisational conclusion which Sultan Galiev drew from this was that the revolutionaries of the oppressed nations must have control over their own struggles. He called for the creation of a separate international communist organisation of Asiatic and colonial peoples. They would have to assert their power over and above the industrial metropolises; a change in power from bourgeoisie to proletariat in the industrialised countries could not in itself remove national oppression, only an independent movement of the colonial and semi-colonial countries could do this.

A strikingly similar view to Sultan Galiev's conception of proletarian nations was put forward (almost certainly independent of Galiev himself) by Li Dazhao, the founder of Marxism in China. Writing in January 1920 Li Dazhao expressed the view that China as a whole had been proletarianised with respect to the world system. (141) Note that this thesis in no way led Li to deny the importance of class struggle or the need for communist leadership in China; the point was precisely to emphasise the fundamental relationship in the world system and bring Marxist analysis and communist leadership to bear upon this issue. In 1924 Li Dazhao went further and highlighted

Eurocentrism in an explicit and farsighted way, stating that there is a racial issue in world politics and the responsibility for introducing this lay with "the world view of the Europeans"; for them

"there is nothing else to speak of except Christianity, and as far as their world view is concerned, they think there is only the white man's world."

They see themselves

"as pioneers of culture in the world, they place themselves in a superior position and look down on other races as inferior. Because of this the race question has become a class question and the races, on a world scale, have come to confront each other as classes." (145)

On the basis of this non-Eurocentric world view, very specific and crucial questions of strategy and organisation arise. Again in the 1920s, the African communist Lamine Senghor was working in France and had a lot of trouble with the French communist party because he promoted an independent black organisation. He accepted the need for an intercolonial union which was part of the communist movement but insisted that independent of this there must be built something which, in his words,

"is not a movement of charlatans run by a white politician with humanitarian views, but a universal movement destined to uphold the rights, interests and prestige of the Black Race." (146)

This was the Comité de Défense de la Race nègre (Committee in Defence of the Negro Race) founded in 1928 by Senghor and Gourang Kouyaté, which grew out of an earlier organisation of which Marcus Garvey was co-founder. Once again, it must be emphasised that it was not Lamine Senghor's intention to liquidate communist leadership, but on the contrary he had perceived something of the incredible revolutionary potential which could be unleashed by something with the mass strength of the Garvey movement under the guidance of a non-Eurocentric communist world-view. Unfortunately Senghor died the following year, but already his initiative had met with a frosty response from the powers that be within the communist movement.

We have mentioned briefly a number of ideas which emerged from communists mainly in different parts of the colonial world in the period immediately after the Russian revolution. Hopefully we have shown that there was a definite trend, which objectively constituted the expansion of the horizons of communism so that it becomes, under the leadership of non-European communists themselves, a revolutionary theory which is truly the property of humanity as a whole. Thus issues raised in this great debate remain as lively and relevant as they were at the time, and are testimony to the vitality of communism. But they were, by and large, stifled within the official communist movement, and this led to tremendous setbacks for the cause.

Between Lenin and Mao

the Comintern period

This stifling debate on the strategy for colonial struggles was linked in a way with the issue of Soviet policy towards the non-Russian nationalities within the old Russian empire. In fact at the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1923 a resolution was passed condemning indigenous nationalism on a par with Great-Russian chauvinism, and shortly afterwards Sultan Galiev was put under arrest. (147)

LENIN'S WARNING

Lenin had already foreseen a lot of the importance of this issue. We have dealt already with his characterisation of the era, but Lenin understood not only the era but also the concrete tasks and dangers facing the movement. A particular danger for communist parties in the metropolitan countries was acceptance of their 'own' colonialism, and Lenin waged an important struggle on this issue; within Russia, on the other hand, a particular danger was the resurgence of Great-Russian chauvinism. In one of the notes dictated from his deathbed, on 31st December 1922, Lenin wrote:

"It would be unpardonable opporunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities. The need to rally against the imperialists of the West, who are defending the capitalist world, is one thing. There can be no doubt about that, and it would be superfluous for me to speak about my unconditional approval of it. It is another thing when we ourselves lapse into imperialist attitudes towards oppressed nationalities, even if only in trifles, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled defence of the struggle against imperialism. But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins." (148)

This shows, among other things, Lenin's distinction between a certain degree of tactical Eurocentrism created in that specific juncture by the need to defeat the imperialists' attacks on Russia, and the strategic picture according to which the focus will move elsewhere. But after Lenin's death Eurocentrism with regard to the assessment of the focus of contradictions became an ingrained habit.

To a considerable extent the communist movement thus missed its rendez-vous with history. It damped down the creative debate which ought to have led to a confrontation with the key issues facing twentieth-century revolutionaries. The real issue at stake was whether communism could be brought into contact with the real essence of the struggles of the most oppressed peoples, instead of making a futile attempt to impose itself in a formal and external way. The price for failing to carry out this historic task within the compass of communism has been the dissipation of the potential of the national movements into trends like Nasserism or Soekarnoism. Of course these trends and any others which oppose imperialism at a particular time are revolutionary and must be supported, but it is only the integration of the national movements with Marxism-Leninism that can fundamentally change the conditions of the oppressed peoples in the long term.

"KAUTSKYITE" ANALYSIS OF IMPERIALISM - PHONEY 2 LINE STRUGGLE

After Lenin's death the overwhelming tendency in the international communist movement was for one aspect of the era of imperialism (the laws dealing with concentration, finance capital, etc.) to be enshrined in lifeless textbooks "written on Kautskyite lines" and arbitrarily carved away from the other aspect with which it is dialectically linked, namely the rising up of the peoples of the oppressed nations to resolve the fundamental national contradiction and take the lead in developing the revolutionary movement itself. This latter aspect tended to get forgotten about.

The Eurocentric view in its most extreme form is represented by Trotsky. He held that the future of the Russian revolution depended on what happened in Europe, in contrast to Lenin's revolutionary faith in the peoples of the East as the fundamental guarantee of the revolution's success. Trotsky despised the peasantry and denied the revolutionary character of the national question.

But Trotsky's views were only an extreme form of an error which was widespread within the Soviet leadership and within European communism in general. Hence the struggles conducted against him and against other opposition trends after Lenin's death failed on the whole to highlight the real lines of demarcation; to a considerable extent they have the characteristics of a phoney two-line struggle, in which the main premises are not called into question. Among all the Soviet leaders, apart from Lenin, the most correct was Stalin.

In 1918 when, as he put it, "the eyes of all are naturally turned to the West," he wrote an article entitled "Don't Forget the East". This was a very progressive stand at the time. However, even here Stalin's formulations were quite mechanical:

"It is the task of communism to break the age-long sleep of the oppressed peoples of the East, to infect the workers and peasants of these countries with the emancipatory spirit of revolution, to rouse them to fight imperialism, and thus deprive world imperialism of its 'most reliable' rear and 'inexhaustible' reserve." (149)

This statement lacks the sense, which is present even in Lenin's least satisfactory formulations, of the oppressed nations creatively taking up the banner of the world communist movement.

And, in general, despite his status as a theoretician on the national question, Stalin's grasp of some of the issues is surprisingly shaky. Thus in one of his more theoretical works, written some time after 'Marxism and the National Question', Stalin astonishingly argues that national oppression is essentially a function of the landed aristocracy and in the case of England, where they share power with the bourgeoisie;

"national oppression is milder, less inhuman - if, of course, we disregard the fact that in the course of this war, when power has passed into the hands of the landlords, national oppression has become much more severe (persecution of the Irish, the Indians)."

And he goes on to say that in Switzerland and North America, where there are only bourgeois and no landlords in power,

"the nationalities develop more or less freely, and, generally speaking, there is practically no soil for national oppression." (150)

Perhaps the most striking piece of Eurocentrism here is the irrelevance accorded to the suppression of native Americans and black slaves as an essential determination of the whole character of north American nationalism. But more broadly the whole political economic basis of national oppression under imperialism is neglected, its fundamental character for the capitalist mode of production in general.

POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE PERIOD OF THE COMINTERN

The weaknesses of the overall world-view of the communist movement during the inter-war period are particularly revealed in the field of political economy, which is the most systematic expression of world-view.

An interesting example is Leontiev's textbook Political Economy which was the established orthodoxy for the international communist movement in the 1930s. It is difficult to characterise Leontiev's procedure otherwise than as a falsification of Lenin. Thus, in his polemic against Bukharin and other opposition elements, he speaks of the contradictions which become intensified under imperialism, but these are formulated in such a way as to marginalise the colonial question:

"the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the struggle within the capitalist camp, anarchy of production, crises."

To justify this he quotes Lenin as follows:

"Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental attributes of capitalism in general." (151)

But if we look at the original, Lenin in fact goes on to say:

"But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves all along the line." (152)

Lenin advocated massive attention to national contradictions in the era of imperialism, and the task for ongoing theory was to explain how these were related to the overall political economy.

As we have pointed out, Lenin's statements about the 'newness' of the anti-colonial mass movement in the era of imperialism is not altogether dialectical. But these statements do at least point the way forward to a realisation of the characteristics of the era where the liberation struggles (whose roots must then be sought deeper than Lenin understood) are a major factor propelling humanity towards a higher social and economic system. Leontiev turns his back on these insights and retrenches himself behind a picture of imperialism as simply an extension or intensification of a capitalist system shorn of any reference to its essential colonial background.

But Leontiev, incredibly, devoted less than one page out of 282 to discussing the enslavement of the colonies. Clearly, for him this is the most peripheral subject imaginable. The Soviet position after Lenin started as a departure from dialectics, a wooden and one-sided treatment of the era of imperialism.

"Any fragment, segment, section of this curve (of human knowledge) can be transformed (transformed one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clerical obscurantism (where it is anchored by the class interests of the ruling classes)." (153)

The obscurantism in the field of theory which came in after Lenin's death probably became anchored in the class interests of the ruling classes in the first place in the imperialist countries. This is because Eurocentrism, if in the Soviet Union it could initially be regarded to some extent as an

error (even though from the beginning it had also the aspect of Great-Russian chauvinism, of which Lenin was very conscious), in the case of the imperialist countries can only have the objective character of an apology for colonialism, by downgrading the importance of the colonial problem.

Thus, when the Communist Party of Great Britain published its own 'Marxist Study Courses' on Political Economy (1932-33) it even outdid Leontiev by devoting only one paragraph (in the middle of p.522) out of a total length of 548 pages to a direct assessment of colonialism. The book is characterised throughout its length by an apoplectic fever-pitch of polemic against Trotskyism and social democracy yet nowhere are the lines of demarcation correctly drawn. Trotsky's theory of imperialism is attacked because

"He completely ignores capitalist monopolies. As far as he is concerned finance capital is identical with loan capital. The struggle to partition the world is depicted by Trotsky as a struggle merely for markets where to unload commodities." etc. etc. (154)

In other words, everything except the national question and Trotsky's contempt for the peasant masses, which is precisely the main contradiction.

These things are censored out of the realms of political economy, which is however where they definitely belong. The contradiction with Trotsky thus to a considerable extent takes the form of a phoney tweline struggle where the main premises are not called into question.

Comintern theory imposed a conceptual strait-jacket on attempts at creative political thought. Because of its Eurocentrism it failed to see the relationship between imperialism and the colonies as the essential basis for accumulation and division of labour. Hence it was impossible to understand the twin developments of the post-war period, namely a considerable recovery and expansion of capitalism combined with the maturing of unprecedented revolutionary contradictions in the third world.

When the capitalist world-economy moved into a period of intense crisis at the end of the 1920s and during the '30s, the Comintern put forward a false 'general crisis' theory which implied capitalism was stuck in a rut it couldn't get out of and neglected the question of superexploitation and the colonial or neo-colonial division of labour. (155) In a sense these Eurocentric errors prepared the ground for the emergence of modern revisionism because people were thrown into confusion by the unpredicted expansion of capitalism in the post-war boom and the parties in the industrialised countries failed to see the growing revolutionary contradictions which the boom itself generated. The understanding of the crisis (because we are once again in such a period) is one of the most important tests of our ability to shed Eurocentrism.

DEAD HAND OF ORTHODOXY - THE CASE OF PALME DUTT

It seems that after the wave of creative Marxism had been dispersed after the early '20s a kind of dead hand descended which effectively circumscribed any promising new developments.

To illustrate this, we can look at the development of one of the leading theoretical figures in the European movement, himself of third world origin, R. Palme Dutt. His early work shows some promising tendencies which were nipped in the bud by his enforced adherence to the overall premises of the accepted orthodoxy. His book World Politics 1918-36, although it does not rise to the level of comprehending accumulation on a world scale, does attach considerable importance to unequal exchange, which is one of the important aspects of the recent creative development of theory. He writes:

"The essence of the relations of the colonies and imperialism is inequality. The colonial peoples are compelled, by a whole series of devices and regulations, depriving them of their land, but taxes, poll taxes, etc. to labour and produce the raw materials for prices which leave them on a starvation level. The prices of the goods which are exported to the colonies are on a high level. It is unequal exchange, which is in fact maintained by armed force, and which yields the high colonial super-profits to the capitalists of the ruling country. To this unequal exchange is added the direct tribute on the export of capital." (156)

There is a lot of strength in this. A major weakness is Dutt's insistence that the actual sovereignty of the colonial power is "the pivot of the whole complex" (157) - on this basis it is difficult to appreciate neo-colonialism when it arose, where the powers can maintain domination without formal sovereignty.

The essential point is really that exploitation is seen as a bad thing, but not as a characteristic of a system. Dutt perceived superexploitation at an empirical level, but is prevented by the general climate of Eurocentrism in the movement from drawing the conclusions. Hence his thought slips off into a sterile byway of seeing the exploitative relationship as being entirely reproduced by force (even though this view had effectively been debunked by Engels in his examination of the 'force theory' in Anti-Dühring) and is blocked and imprisoned there. Thus what starts off as a correct perception turns into its opposite, and by the early '60s when formal colonialism was on the wane Dutt insisted heavily

on the fact that in 1963 only 1.7% of the world's population was under direct colonial rule, thus parroting the Soviet assertions that colonialism was no longer a problem. (158)

The mechanism which forced Dutt to block off the creative impulses he had and ultimately turn into a leading counter-revolutionary was the Eurocentric global view in which he was obliged to believe, even though it stood in contradiction with some of his more correct assertions.

In Dutt's 1936 book we can already see the effect of certain orthodox tenets from which he dare not depart. Thus, with pure orthodoxy, he discusses the colonial question primarily from the viewpoint of a redistribution among the great powers; he also argues that what might in 1913 have appeared as a world system advancing "to ever closer world interdependence and interrelationships" had now been revealed as one

"with centrifugal tendencies if break-up of closer world relations towards a system of restricted world trade, separate and competing financial bases of unstably related currencies, weakened international division of labour (our emphasis) and intensified warfare of the monopolist blocs." (159)

This view, which is pure Comintern theory, is incorrect. The effective dominium of the great powers over the oppressed nations is, as we have already said, a prerequisite for their squabbles over the division of spheres of influence. It is wrong to stress only the squabbles. In the same spirit, it is absolutely wrong to see only the splitting apart of international relations during the '30s (protectionism, tariff barriers, declining trade between the powers). This is tantamount to saying that the whole content of international economic relations was the relations between great powers. But even the heightened protectionism of the 1930s was explicitly and deliberately linked with closer integration between the metropolises and their respective spheres of influence. The tendency to increased superexploitation of the colonies within the international division of labour thus continued unabated through the world economic crisis. The only peculiarity of the period prior to the end of World War II is that there was temporarily an increased stress on their exclusive exploitation by particular imperialist powers.

The crisis of the '30s was a period of unparalleled misery for the colonies, but not because they were less involved in the international division of labour; on the contrary they suffered all its ill effects. For example, the tendency to the forcible conversion of colonies to cash-crop production went on apace; this accentuated their enslavement within a world market economy over which they have no control. As Walter Rodney has shown, profits from this source actually increased during the depression (160) while at the same time world capitalism was objectively preparing the groundwork for its more successful resurgence after World War II, when it used primarily a multilateral rather than exclusive strategy of exploitation. Given the fundamental weaknesses of the official world-view it is hardly surprising that individual communists could not make much theoretical progress.

ASSESSMENT OF THE COMINTERN

The question of the historical assessment of the role of the Comintern is quite complicated and will require a lot of careful study. There were certainly some errors of dogmatism, as well as organisational interference in the affairs of parties. However, we do not accept the view which is sometimes expressed today, to the effect that each party has an absolute right to determine its own orientation and no-one from outside can say anything about this. The struggle between different orientations in the international communist movement has very often taken on an international character. This is natural, and it is philistine to expect anything different in the future.

The problem lay not in the notion of a world revolutionary strategy per se, but in the content of that strategy, in particular a deep-seated tendency to subordinate anti-colonial struggles to a strategy worked out essentially in the industrial heartlands, and as a function of issues there. This political strategy is itself a reflection of Eurocentrism in the ideological sphere. Consequently, the communist movement could never really come to terms with the national movements because it persisted in marginalising them, treating them as backward and subordinate and not entitled to the dignity of determining their own identity.

Two more or less parallel tendencies developed in the degeneration of the communist movement, which were mutually reinforcing. One was the Eurocentrism of Soviet foreign policy and its reflection in the analyses of Comintern, and the other was the growing social-colonialist line within the European communist parties.

Thus the movement had not only a Eurocentric analysis of the world situation but also a concrete strategy increasingly closely tied to the foreign policy of the Soviet state. During the period of the growth of fascism in Europe from the beginning of the 1930s up until the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, the USSR relied very closely upon drawing what was virtually a qualitative distinction between those of the European powers who were respectively either warlike or peaceable, and using the latter group - whose two main representatives, France and Britain, were also the major colonial powers of the day - to checkmate Hitler. Although there was an embryonic movement in Latin America, the Middle East and elsewhere which expressed disgust at the whole system of great-power domination over international relations, very little attention was paid to it, let alone the liberation movement in the colonies proper. Not that this policy neglected the importance of class forces, but precisely the class forces in question were those in the imperialist countries. Increasingly, the Communist International was turned into a tool for marshalling such class forces behind this foreign policy - albeit a policy which the Soviet leaders certainly saw as being in the interests of the world movement.

DIMITROV'S REPORT TO THE 7TH CONGRESS

This tendency is expressed with particular clarity in Dimitrov's report to the 7th World Congress of Comintern held in 1935. In it, the colonial struggles are dealt with as an afterthought, and in an extremely patronising way. Dimitrov lists a number of social forces which can be enlisted in the struggle, including unity of action with the Second International, the building of influence over Catholic, anarchist and unorganised workers, workers affected by Fascism, the peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia of the industrial countries. Only at the end of this long list does he mention the colonial movements, and even here the orientation is one of "transforming the colonies and semi-colonies into one of the most important reserves of the world proletariat." (161)

There is nothing wrong with the Soviet Union having a policy to prevent Hitler launching war. What is wrong is the Eurocentric way in which a qualitative distinction between fascist and democratic forces is presented as the main feature of the world situation. For the colonial people in general, most of whom were oppressed by the 'democratic' powers in alliance with metropolitan social-democracy, this distinction is meaningless. If the strategy implied that they should downplay their struggles so as not to weaken the anti-Hitler front, it is even counter-revolutionary. (162) At the very least Dimitrov's report is guilty of marginalising the colonial question, and this even affects the question of alliances within the metropolitan countries - Communists were called upon to ally closely with the labour movements which they had previously stigmatised, correctly, as social-colonialist; apparently this issue was no longer considered an important line of demarcation.

Towards the end of World War II the Soviet Union concluded the Yalta agreement with Britain which sought to stabilise post-war international politics as a function of a delimitation of areas of influence. In order not to rock the boat of this essentially Eurocentric 'stability', the Soviet Union even tried to persuade the CPC not to cross the Yangzi river and liberate the whole of China, but the Chinese ignored them. From a theoretical point of view, Stalin's Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR published in 1952. (163) makes some correct points of abstract Marxism about the inevitability of inter-imperialist contention, etc. but the third world is nowhere to be found; its rising-up was the outstanding feature of the era, but Stalin evidently didn't think it was important.

THE CASE OF THE C.P.G.D.

The question of the errors which crept into the communist movement in the imperialist countries themselves is also very important; particularly, this will need to be studied very closely with respect to Britain, and we can only make a few remarks here. As we have already said, the overall world-view enshrined in political economy was one which implied that the colonial question was relatively unimportant. At the same time, probably because of the long-lasting

influence of the impetus given by Lenin, the metropolitan parties remained formally committed to colonial independence. However, the independence movements themselves were not regarded as an autonomous thing to be supported, but were on the contrary subordinated to the movements of the metropolitan proletariat.

The slogan of international proletarian solidarity was used in such a way as to undermine national struggles. The only path to genuine proletarian internationalism (which of course we uphold) lies through recognising, to the revolutionaries of the oppressed nations, the right to follow their own path of struggle, including the formation of whatever class alliances are necessary. But this was not done in the Comintern period. Among other things a more or less institutionalised tendency existed for the CP of the metropolitan country to exercise a role of tutelage over the colonial CPs. In a sense this practice follows logically from the Eurocentric premise which elevates pseudo-proletarian internationalism above the authentic interests of the national movements and assumes that the metropolitan proletariat is naturally more advanced because more numerous and 'organised'.

Thus in a sense the metropolitan communist parties abrogated to themselves the right to determine the response of the oppressed to their own oppression. In the CPGB's case, as late as the close of World War II, it maintained a formally correct position, at least to the extent of recognising the right of the colonial peoples to chose independence. However, in practice this involves retreating from any struggle of a type which could really further such independence. There is no support for the actually existing independence movements; everything is made to depend on a gesture of 'giving' independence from the centre, so the process is subordinated to, even reduced to a product of, the political process at the centre.

The understanding of this political process is itself completely wrong. Taking the standpoint of "British Labour", the CPGB argues that, in giving the colonies independence the Labour movement "will be following the best traditions of the movement from the earliest times to the present day". The negative trend of hanging onto the empire "was in the main the standpoint of a relatively small number of leading personalities, such as J.H. Thomas, the last 'Labour' Secretary for the Colonies"; "there is no question that the former trend (in favour of independence) is the true expression of a Labour outlook and requires only to be developed and put into immediate practical application." (164)

This is in direct conflict with the correct point made by Engels to the effect that "the workers gaily share in the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies", (165) let alone the teachings of Lenin. The CP thus not only refuses to give solidarity to the actual struggles of the colonial peoples, it also turns its back on the main task which could promote their independence, namely recognising and combatting the colonial consensus which deeply permeated the 'labour movement' then as it does now. The viewpoint which sees the centre of the world historical process as being concentrated in the industrial countries cannot of course recognise the historical importance of the actual struggles of the peoples in the colonies themselves - instead there is a

patronising attitude which can easily turn into fully-fledged social-colonialism.

THE DOCTRINE OF 'COMMUNIST RESPONSIBILITY'

The rightist Eurocentric position regards the metropolitan movement as 'responsible' for the colonies and uses this patronising 'responsibility' as a thin disguise for colonialism. Thus recognition of the evils of imperial rule can be used as an argument to justify maintenance of that rule in order to undo the evil! A Left Book Club publication in 1945 argues that

"Where harm has been done, it must be undone... The problems are so great that for Britain merely to 'give the colonies their freedom' without recognising any further obligations towards them would be cowardice, not generosity." (166)

This line of argument became the basis for the position of the CPGB, which went so far as to argue in 1951 in *British Road to Socialism* that

"The enemies of Communism declare that the Communist Party, by underhand subversive means, is aiming at the destruction of Britain and the British Empire. This is a lie. On the contrary, it is precisely the Tories and the Labour leaders who are doing this by their policy of armed repression and colonial exploitation",

and goes on to call for

"a new, close, voluntary association..." (167)

But surely there were other issues involved in the degeneration of a party like the CPGB, such as the analysis of the state? Does our argument imply that these were unimportant? The best way to answer this is to say that unless we take the issue of Eurocentrism seriously it is very hard to wage a decisive struggle against these problems.

The theory of the parliamentary road to socialism, for example, is an important issue in the degeneration of the communist movement, and undoubtedly needs to be struggled against; it is not our central concern to analyse this here. What we are simply saying is that the issue of the parliamentary road is not such a purely 'domestic' issue as it is sometimes made to appear. Both democracy and state terrorism are closely linked with colonialism. The democratic veneer which is used in the metropolitan countries was made possible only by the advantages derived through the exercise of naked terror and super-exploitation in other areas of the world, while fascism is the translation into Europe of what has always been practised in the colonies - another point which Dimitrov's analysis of fascism misses, incidentally. The present day state machine, and in particular the army, its principle component, has evolved very much in symbiosis with colonialism, as has the ideological superstructure, including particularly racism.

The 'parliamentary road' theory itself, together with its concomitant theory of 'non-capitalist development' in the third

world, emerged against the background of an analysis of the world system promoted by the Soviet Union which exaggerated the contradiction between the socialist and capitalist countries at the expense of the contradiction between the liberation movements and imperialism, implying that the former was decisive; thus, the increase in strength of the Soviet Union within the world balance of forces was supposed to alter the conditions for struggle in all countries. Finally, the evolutionary theories of socialism caught on in the industrialised countries partly because of the relative stability of the post-war boom, itself based upon super-exploitation of the rest of the world. All this goes to show that a meaningful polemic against the 'parliamentary road' theory cannot possibly be conducted so long as we are ensnared by Eurocentric premises.

China and the Modern Marxist - Leninist Movement

It was historically inevitable that the international communist movement should be jolted out of its Eurocentrism, and the medium for doing this was the revolutionary upsurge in Asia, Africa and Latin America, particularly in connection with World War II and its aftermath.

In this no single event was more important than the Chinese revolution. It is the ML movement's close historical connection with that revolution, and through it with the rest of the struggles in the third world, which has been responsible for our movement's profoundly progressive character and its latent ability to overcome even the gravest errors and move forward.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

The ML movement grew directly out of the historic polemic against modern revisionism launched by the Communist Party of China. But even apart from this the Chinese revolution represents, by its very existence, a blow against Eurocentrism. In this the following aspects may be emphasised.

First, the obvious fact that it was a non-European society taking the initiative in making a revolution of historic importance. It proved that the centre of creativity could lie outside the "developed" areas.

Secondly, Chinese theory and practice had revealed the enormous revolutionary strength in the peasantry, the basic force in the third world but reviled and marginalised by the Eurocentric conception. The Chinese broke with the Eurocentric non-dialectical infatuation with advanced productive forces producing advanced struggles, and showed that the commitment to change of the masses in a super-exploited oppressed nation was the decisive factor. This represents a blow delivered against economism and against mechanistic views of the relationship between base and superstructure which, as we have shown, are closely linked with Eurocentrism.

Thirdly, the Chinese revolution is living proof of the deep historic roots of the progressive movement in the third world, drawing as it does upon the historic dynamism of pre-colonial society as well as the tradition of struggle by the labouring masses against oppression, together with a tradition of national resistance dating back to the earliest period of foreign incursions. Subjectively, the Chinese have stressed, and this has been a consistent theme from the '50s through to the present day, the historic importance of the civilisations and cultures in the non-European areas, as well as the long history of links between them.

In essence, then, the practice of the Chinese revolution represents just that expanding of the boundaries of Communism which was historically inevitable. It changed the whole way people had to look at the world. And the Sino-Soviet polemic when it came about carried this whole process into the realm of theory. Overall, the correctness of the polemic should be affirmed. However, the issues which it objectively represented were not always clearly posed, and it suffered from significant limitations which adversely affected the anti-revisionist movement to which it gave rise, particularly in the imperialist countries.

In order to have a more concrete idea of the main strengths of the CPC's position following the outbreak of the anti-revisionist struggle, it is interesting to take a look at three sources, which also give an idea of what the limitations were. These are one of the original documents from the Sino-Soviet polemic, the article Apologists of Neo-Colonialism, first published in October 1963; the article Long Live the Victory of People's War, first published in September 1965 under the signature of Lin Biao; (168) and Mao Zedong's two statements on the Afro-American struggle published in August 1963 and April 1968.

"APOLOGISTS OF NEO-COLONIALISM"

In Apologists of Neo-Colonialism the CPC correctly stated that

"The storm of the people's revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America requires every political force in the world to take a stand." (169)

In general, this article is a brilliant exposure of social-chauvinism; as such it is a beacon for communists in the industrialised countries, while at the same time it also effectively criticises the theory of non-capitalist development in the third world, and shows that even after the winning of

formal independence, the revolutionary struggle must continue.

At the same time, the Chinese position had some limitations. Throughout the polemic, the Chinese concentrated on restating the basic principles of Leninism which the other side had departed from. They saw this as the main front on which the struggle must be conducted, and did not want to have to fight on too many fronts at the same time. It is perhaps understandable that they should have adopted this orientation, but it sometimes detracts from the need to go further, to settle accounts with a one-sidedness which existed even in the original Marxist standpoint, and to break new ground in the application of dialectical and historical materialism. Thus the question of the nature of neo-colonialism is not gone into very deeply, and in particular is not taken into the realms of political economy.

In Apologists the definition of the term is very weak, and in a way the Chinese seem to counterpose a political definition of neo-colonialism to the economic conception of the tasks of the third world advocated by the CPSU. Moreover, the Chinese were committed to a view which held that Stalin was the strongest among the post-Lenin leadership and, for example, in 1925 he warned against the danger of following the "path of nationalism and degeneration" if the Soviet Union were to retreat from supporting the liberation movements and instead play around at power politics. These passages are correctly quoted in Apologists (170). But the other aspect is that Stalin shared some Eurocentric weaknesses with the Opposition, and this approach makes it difficult to come to terms with the basic ideology.

The ideas of people like Sultan Galiev had been condemned during the Stalin era, and the notion of 'nationalist deviation' was a powerful stigma. When Yugoslavia was kicked out of the socialist camp in 1948 the CPC was careful to assure Stalin that they were not like that. This was one aspect of Stalinism which the later Soviet leadership strongly affirmed!! Thus, the Chinese sometimes found themselves in an unnecessarily defensive position.

The Russians already adopted some vile racist positions in the Polemic, and even scooped to accusing the Chinese of

"playing upon the national and even racial prejudices of the Asian and African peoples" and "creating racial and geographical barriers." (171)

Now, from the kind of standpoint adopted by Lamine Senghor or Sultan Galiev or Li Dazhao, the CPC could simply throw the accusation back at the accuser and say, "we didn't invent these things, racist exploitation of some areas of the world by others really exists and if you can't see this, it's because of your own racism".

It is a fundamental point that colonial peoples should not have to be defensive or apologetic when faced with accusations of racism with respect to the oppressor nations. But, for whatever reasons, the Chinese failed to take such a clear stand, and retreated behind a defence which practically amounts to saying: this isn't really what we said and, anyway, Marxism doesn't recognise these categories. They do not accept the challenge of developing Marxism creatively from the standpoint that if these categories exist Marxism should recognise them. On the

whole, the CPC sidesteps the issue of racism. They do refer at one point to the way the Russians are resurrecting the 'yellow peril' idea; but they fail to counter-attack, as Samir Amin was later to do, by saying that the main historic problem has been a 'white peril' (which very much includes Russian imperialism). (172)

MAO ON THE AFRO-AMERICAN STRUGGLE

Mao Zedong's statements on the Afro-American struggle confirm the existence of some weaknesses on the issue of racism, combined with Mao's immense strengths. The 1963 text includes one of the most important single sentences ever written by a communist leader:

"The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people." (173)

In a phrase, Mao thus pinpointed the missing dimension in Communist political economy, the fact which all the textbooks were silent about, and pointed the way forward. At the same time, Mao's analysis has a strong tendency to see racism as only a kind of policy adopted by the top leaders of the US. In the same statement he already clearly said that "it is only the reactionary ruling circles among the whites who oppress the Negro people". (174) It is interesting that only a couple of months later Mao received a visit from the black American activist Robert Williams, who in the course of a rally in Peking gave a more dialectical analysis of the question:

"I am aware of the fact that US racism grew out of capitalist exploitation, but today it has become a part of the American way of life. It is a part of the nature of a Yankee. This is not to say that all American whites are racist. Some of them are our brothers and allies, but they are much too few in numbers. No, not all Americans are savages, but we must ask ourselves where are the decent people of the USA while all of these atrocities are being committed in the name of their cause of white supremacy and representative democracy?" (175)

But this did not prevent Mao from reiterating his earlier position in the statement which he published in April 1968 following the assassination of Martin Luther King. He describes the contradiction "between the black masses ... and US ruling circles" as class contradiction and says that

"The black masses and the masses of white working peoples in the United States share common interests and have common objectives to struggle for"

and predicts that the black struggle "is bound to merge with the American workers' movement..." (176)

There are, of course, widely differing views among revolutionaries over the analysis of the objective character and correct strategy for the black struggle in North America, but a minimum basis of agreement among the different trends would probably include the

following points:

The national dimension of the black struggle, the qualitatively different oppression suffered by blacks and the existence of racism among ordinary whites, the serious recognition of which is a precondition to realising black-white unity against imperialism.

All of these points Mao underestimates.

In the polemic, the Chinese moved close to a position where they recognised that the struggle between the liberation movement of the peoples suffering racist oppression and super-exploitation on the one hand and imperialism on the other was the decisive factor in the progress of world history in the present era. The Russians tried to goad them into saying this explicitly:

"The chief contradiction of our time is not, we are told, between socialism and imperialism, but between the national liberation movement and imperialism. In the Chinese comrades' opinion, the decisive force in the battle against imperialism is not the socialist world system, and not the international working-class struggle but, again we are told, the national liberation movement." (177)

But in 1963 the CPC backed away from a clear affirmation that this was indeed what they were saying. In our view what the Russians were accusing the Chinese of saying is basically correct; however, the CPSU only reveals its reactionary nature by counterposing the liberation movements to the international working class struggle: strategically, the leading and main forces in the liberation movements are precisely the most revolutionary components in the international movement of the working class and working masses.

"LONG LIVE THE VICTORY OF PEOPLE'S WAR"

Two years later, the article Long Live the Victory of People's War at last took a clear stand by declaring:

"The contradiction between the revolutionary peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the imperialists headed by the United States is the principal contradiction in the contemporary world." (178)

The article also draws some conclusions in terms of a basic strategic world-view:

"Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called the 'cities of the world', then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute the 'rural areas of the world'... In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas." (179)

In our view these statements, despite some weaknesses in formulation, are essentially correct and indeed constitute a logical summation of the most progressive trend in communist thought

since Lenin. These ideas are as important to revolutionaries in the industrialised countries as they are to those in the third world. They probably represent the highest point reached by the CPC on such questions. The 'Three Worlds Theory' put forward in the early '70s provides some refinements but is in some respects a step backwards as far as clarity is concerned. It recognises that there is a movement by the governments of the third world for a juster international order, and correctly argues that this should be supported, but does not reflect sufficiently strongly the fact that this is distinct from the revolutionary struggle of the labouring masses in the third world which is the basic factor for progress and of which the movement of states only forms one partial expression.

Despite its strengths, the article Long Live the Victory of People's War also has its limitations. It is argued in an idealistic and dogmatic way, so that the concept of world cities and countryside is derived from Mao's concept of People's War, whereas it is truer to say that Mao perceived the same reality as people like Sultan Galiev did in different ways, namely that the peasant masses are a great revolutionary force in the context of a world imperialist system built on the backs of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America who thus cannot stir and raise themselves up without bringing the whole super-incumbent structure crashing down.

A dogmatic and idealist approach became quite ingrained in the CPC after the anti-rightist movement of the late '50s. At the beginning of the polemic against revisionism there may have been good reasons to concentrate on restating Leninist orthodoxy, but after this had been done the emphasis should have switched to developing the theory of imperialism creatively. However, this is just what did not happen. The Cultural Revolution reinforced dogmatism and idealism to the nth degree, making it practically impossible for a hundred flowers to bloom. Thus, in the field of political economy, for example, there was practically no creative development. (180) So, although China was the storm-centre of revolution, the theoretical breakthroughs were largely made outside it and in a disorganised way. The impulse came from China but it was not carried through.

THE MARXIST-LENINIST MOVEMENT IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

The way in which the anti-revisionist movement was conceived in the imperialist countries, once we got down to dealing with 'concrete conditions', was often in the form of returning to a supposedly pure orthodoxy which had been corrupted by the 20th CPSU party congress or the "British Road to Socialism", whereas in fact this "communist tradition" was deeply imbued with Eurocentrism, which in Britain's case served as a basis for an active apology for colonialism. So, what was an authentic and vital two-line struggle in the form of the Sino-Soviet polemic could easily be transformed in our own conditions into a phoney two-line struggle which failed to draw lines of demarcation with the real enemy and only perpetuated Eurocentrism under different forms.

The viewpoint which stresses only the rupture brought about by the 20th CPSU Congress or the British Road to Socialism misses precisely the aspect of continuity in the errors of the

international communist movement which spanned these changes. On the one hand, with respect to the fundamental contradiction, the most important aspect of revisionism, there was continuity. After Lenin's death the CPSU had failed to develop a world view which placed the colonial struggles centre stage, and in the imperialist countries the CPs had at best vacillated between 'left' and right forms of social-colonialism. On the other hand, in certain respects there was a real rupture, as on the question of the peaceful road to socialism.

But as we have already pointed out, even this theory can only properly be criticised if we break with Eurocentrism, notably in the field of political economy. Even the stress on class struggle is progressive only if we break with the standpoint of seeing such struggle as a conflict over a cake whose colonial origins are not called into question. Of course, we affirm the progressive character of the struggles waged by the communist movement in the '20s, '30s and '40s against capitalism, fascism and (as far as this went) colonialism, but there were also fundamental limitations which explain the subsequent degeneration.

JURQUET AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE

The anti-revisionist movement in the imperialist countries rarely attained a creative level (at least prior to the present period when it seems to be entering into a new and more promising phase). The limitations will be clearer if we look at what is undoubtedly one of the best things to emerge from that movement, namely Jacques Jurquet's multi-volume study of the Algerian national revolution and the Communist Party of France. It should be noted first of all that this work follows closely the lead given by the Chinese in Apologists of Neo-Colonialism (presumably if they had discussed the Irish question in the polemic then British MLs would have written a book about that!); but as soon as Jurquet tries to venture beyond the bare bones of the Chinese position he reveals serious inadequacies.

An interesting example is the analysis of a polemic which occurred in the French Communist press in 1921. (181) This was initiated by the publication of an article which is very strikingly rightist and racist, referring disdainfully to the "negroes of the Congo, only just removed from cannibalism", arguing in general terms that the nationalism of the natives had to be approached with some circumspection, the better to combat it. Nationalist sentiments are viewed as 'survivals', as prejudices which have to be done away with, but, this author argues, carefully and with subtlety. The rightist line proposed in this article was subsequently adopted by the party as the basis for the dominant position on colonial questions. This article was immediately attacked by a violent polemical rejoinder. Arguing with some justification that the notion of a painstaking study of colonial questions serves mainly as an excuse for doing nothing active, the new article argues the urgency of "the utilisation of the colonial question in the interests of communist propaganda" (shades of the RCG!) advocates following the example of the Russians in going into such areas to "exploit the sentiments of national resistance for communist ends", and says that it is essential to "awaken among the workers of the colonies the concept of their own class interest, which opposes them to the class of landowners

and capitalists and unites them with the metropolitan proletariat."

Jurquet simplistically analyses this clash as a genuine two-line struggle, but it seems to us a classic case where both sides share the perspective of viewing the colonial peoples as objects of history, adjuncts to the metropolitan struggle. The difference is simply between seeing the 'natives' as too backward for social change, and seeing it as necessary to drag them into it (and in so doing use them as tools in promoting the struggle of the Centre). Nowhere is their nationalism accorded a forward-looking character, as Lenin saw it, heralding an amazing force on the stage of world history, which is the voice of whole peoples saying: we are here, we will not be ignored and intend to remake the world.

EUROCENTRISM IN THE BRITISH MARXIST-LENINIST MOVEMENT - THE RCL

If Jurquet's analysis can be criticised for its superficiality, the 'Maoist' movement in Britain had an even worse position. In fact - and this is particularly true of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL) - we actually reproduced (or even developed) previous errors on the colonial question. That this need not have been the case can be seen from the contribution of Michael McCreery - for a long time belittled by the RCL and its precursors - which despite its limitations did highlight the importance of previous chauvinist errors in the communist movement. Indeed, McCreery's historical article The Way Forward written in January 1964 devoted major attention to attacking the CPGB's chauvinism on the colonial question. (182) This is its undying merit. However, McCreery stops short of placing the existing anti-colonial struggle in the centre of the picture, and thus the basic premise of the peripheralisation of these struggles is not challenged.

The old RCL for its part did not even build on the positive though limited contribution of McCreery.

As far as the third world is concerned, the 'Three worlds theory' came rather conveniently to hand as an excuse for not strongly attacking British imperialism's role as an international exploiter. Although this was not the intention of the Chinese, the Three worlds theory laid itself open to the interpretation that the exploitative role of the non-superpower industrialised countries was significantly, perhaps even qualitatively, reduced. Facts have shown this to be untrue, but for a time we tended to view national defence against the Soviet war threat as practically our major task in the intermediate term; instances of imperialist conduct by Britain were a tiresome historical anomaly which distracted attention away from this task.

But it was on the Irish question that the colonialist dogmas re-emerged most clearly. The line on Ireland can be seen as a hotch-potch of the old right and 'left' Eurocentric ideas. Because of the backwardness of the Irish struggle imputed to a so-called "unfavourable balance of forces in the struggle against British imperialism" the League was unwilling to give up its colonial responsibility for northern Ireland and thus insisted on maintaining the "strategic principle of a single party in a multi-national state". The 'bloodbath' myth in relation to

Ireland only reproduces the old colonial fallacies applied to Africa and the Indian subcontinent which held that there were only a group of savages who would start massacring one another as soon as the benevolent influence of colonial rule was removed. At the same time the insistence on trying to run the movement in Ireland is justified on the grounds of making it more revolutionary and in particular more based in the working class.

There is a very close link between on the one hand the political economic understanding of exploitative international relations on a world scale and on the other the issue of practical support for the liberation movements. Until it came to realise this the League could not possibly establish the correct lines of demarcation with revisionism and social-chauvinism. Whatever the reasons which may explain the existence of a certain Eurocentrism in the early metropolitan workers' movement, once the forces of the world which had been denied their identity by imperialism began increasingly to assert decisively their self-determination in a full sense (cultural, economic, political), the 'left' was bound to split into two camps over the question of whether to support or oppose the forces of the oppressed nations.

THE QUESTION OF THE SOVIET UNION

This is the real essence of the Maoist movement. From this standpoint we can get a clearer idea of at least the parameters for understanding one of the key problems identified by Maosim, namely the degeneration of the Soviet Union.

Although it took time for the Soviet Union to develop into an actual target of liberation struggles, this development was for a long time implicit in the position which denied the fundamental character of colonial oppression and the vanguard nature of the struggles there. The Soviet position has consistently denied the right of the oppressed nations to act as a distinct force in defence of their common interests. The mechanistic Soviet view of historical development subordinates 'backward' peasant struggles to those of the 'advanced' proletariat, as in the theory of the 'non-capitalist' road, and holds within it the seeds of an actual exploitative relationship. The Russians prettify the international division of labour which serves as the basis for exploitation, participate in it from a position of strength and argue, in what is basically a revamped form of the bourgeois theory of comparative advantage, that it isn't a major problem because if there is a demand for the third world's commodities they will 'naturally' get a fair price for them.

The potentially exploitative nature of this theory, which was later penetratingly criticised by Emmanuel for example, (183) had already been exposed quite early on by the great revolutionary Che Guevara in a speech in Algiers in 1965:

"How can one apply the term 'mutual benefit' to the selling at world-market prices of raw materials costing limitless sweat and suffering in the underdeveloped countries and the buying of machinery produced in today's big, automated factories?"

"If we establish that kind of relations between the two

"groups of nations, we must agree that the socialist countries are, in a way, accomplices of imperialist exploitation." (184)

Thus, unless the question of world-view, and particularly the analysis of political economy is treated with very serious attention, a correct line can never be rooted firmly.

ORTHODOX EMPIRICISM - THE CASE OF THE CPBML

In the ML movement in this country there was basically a lack of theory. Despite this, certain implicit assumptions were made in the field of political economy and these were fundamentally Eurocentrist. There was a certain commitment to fighting opportunism, for example, but this could not get anywhere unless the basis of opportunism in colonialism was taken into account. It was very easy to return to the 'pure orthodoxy' of the old 'left' attack on opportunism of the early 1930s, where the Eurocentric premises were not called into question.

An excellent illustration of this is the CPBML. (185) Although they had no real theory, a definite conception of political economy established itself by default. A treasure-house of Eurocentric conceptions can be found in their Second Congress document The British Working Class and its Party (1971). The following passage gives something of the flavour:

"The truth is that the more highly industrialised a country is, the more productive is its labour power and the greater is the value produced by its working class. Workers are able through struggle to make some inroads into this value they create in the form of wage increases - inroads which could not have been made in a non-industrialised economy where the value has not been created. Poverty, therefore, is far greater in the colonial non-industrialised world than it is in a country like Britain. Yet the form that poverty takes varies depending on the level of industrialisation, and there is scarcely a worker in Britain who is more than one-wage-pocket away from extreme destitution. But if absolute poverty is less in Britain than in the colonial world, the exploitation is no less, for what the workers produce is stolen by the capitalists." (186)

Thus the super-exploitation which the third world people naively imagine they suffer from is an illusion, or at least by some unexplained historical miracle they 'happen' not to be industrialised; as for any connection between the industrialisation of one part of the world and the oppression of the other, perish the thought! The implicit assumptions in the RCL were probably not very different, but we must at least be grateful to the CPBML for spelling them out so clearly.

THE THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION! OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP

But while the ML movement was content with non-theory, some other forces in the 'left' were going in for it in a big way. Particularly interesting is the Revolutionary Communist Group organisation which for a time asserted a certain force of attraction on us in the RCL, partly because they seemed to have 'done the theoretical work' which looked superficially strong.

In 1975 they came out with a piece which can be regarded as a concentrated elixir of Eurocentrism in a modern, 'left' form, a very lengthy theoretical article entitled "Inflation, crisis and the post-war boom".

This article seeks to explain all phenomena of modern economics by reference to relations within or between the major powers; imperialism is mentioned only in a footnote, and then only to say that "we cannot discuss the theory of imperialism here". (187) The post-war boom, which everyone knows or should know was predicated upon the availability of cheap raw materials from the third world and their declining terms of trade vis-a-vis the others, is explained purely and simply in terms of relations among the capitalists (replacement of capital values destroyed in World War II, etc.). This analysis of the post-war boom is reproduced in its entirety in the RCG's Manifesto of 1984. (188) Thus, we can say that over the past decade the RCG have learned nothing fundamental.

What has happened in the intervening period is that the RCG has grafted onto this fundamentally rotten trunk some empirical references to imperialism and national oppression. But because of their false political economy, they cannot understand these phenomena. Noteworthy in the 1985 article is the strong attack made on various social-democrat programmes for the British economy on the grounds that they

"are reactionary because they try and turn their backs on the historical development of the international division of labour,"

and the RCG for their part call for a "further development" of this division. (189).

Thus the colonialist and imperialist international division of labour which holds the third world in thrall is here not just affirmed but made into a major platform.

Here again, they have not learned anything and persist today in presenting raw material prices as though they were regulated by supply and demand, (190) with prices falling because of the collapse of the post-war boom. Not only is this completely in contradiction with Marx's view of supply and demand as a means regulating the movement of prices around a point determined by more profound factors, but it also ignores the fact that raw material prices fell precisely with the post-war boom at its height, and is in essence a revamping of the Soviet revisionist revival of the discredited theory of comparative advantage.

In the process of grafting anti-imperialist references onto this root-stock, an important historical role is played by the article "Racism, Imperialism and the working class" which the RCG published in 1979. This article was the object of some discussion within the RCL. We cannot go into this fully, except to say that the debate shows that there was still some tendency for the RCL to be confused by phoney two-line struggles. The RCG's position is chauvinist and Eurocentric insofar as it refuses to recognise the historical basis for black people's struggles, both the oppression through colonialism and the actual struggles against it. (both in their own countries and after they came to Britain). The implication is that they are lucky to have come to this country to be educated by the RCG. (191)

The same attitude underlies the statement in the 1984 Manifesto that black people are "instinctively anti-imperialist". (192) No recognition is given to their ability independently to rise to a political and theoretical level, still less to their pioneering role in doing so. The right of black people to determine their own identity, to organise and to run their own struggles in nowhere recognised.

THE RCL CRITIQUE AND M DUFFIELD

A sub-committee of the RCL produced a critique of this article which makes a lot of correct points along the same lines we have been arguing and more besides, and played a very positive role in developing our line. This is an important basis for unity, for shared correct assumptions within the League. However, in a way which is perhaps understandable this article, in making a correct point very strongly, also puts it undialectically and reveals quite significant weaknesses which have to be resolved if we are to advance in the direction indicated. (193)

This article leans to some extent on a paper by M Duffield entitled "Racism and Counter-Revolution in the Era of Imperialism" (194). Now, as we see it, whatever contradictions exist between Duffield and the RCG are in the nature of another in the list of pseudo two-line struggles based on shared Eurocentric premises. Taking as a pretext Mao's statement about internal conditions being the basis for change, Duffield takes the standpoint of the worst political economy of the 'thirties by refusing to see political economy as a world phenomenon and insisting on seeing relations within the imperialist country as the only really significant ones. Time and again, he heavily insists on seeing capital accumulation within Britain as a self-sustaining (or he sometimes uses the term "self-generating") process, thus denying the whole history of primary accumulation from exploitation of the colonies plus the continuing process of super-exploitation and the way the imperialist countries cream off the accumulated surplus which could otherwise be used as a basis for capitalist industrialisation in the third world. At best, these things are regarded as peripheral and in no way essential. He considers that the obstacles to industrialisation in the third world have been removed, and that here, too, capital can be "self-generating". He sees crisis as something basically due to conditions within the imperialist countries, rather than structural factors related to the world economy.

In all this, the fundamental similarity with the RCG's basic assumptions is striking. The difference lies mainly in their respective attitudes to that theoretical trend which has opened up the possibility of a political economy of imperialism taking account of the super-exploitation of the third world as a basis and third world struggles as the main force. Duffield actively attacks this trend (albeit from a point of ignorance of the actual content of the theories in question) whereas the RCG prefers superbly to ignore it. This shows that the lines of demarcation were not correctly drawn; although the position of the authors of the sub-committee article was basically correct and different from that of Duffield, they failed to see this difference and hence, at times, found themselves sliding into errors similar to those of the RCG. We must appreciate the importance of Lenin's statement that

"The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics..." (195)

The RCG certainly makes this error in a big way.

THE FALSE SEPARATION OF IMPERIALIST POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

This is expressed in striking form in the RCG Manifesto, where the so-called "economic crisis" of imperialism is discussed in a pedantic, marginal and Eurocentric way, entirely separate from the "political crisis of imperialism". The RCL sub-committee's article for its part betrays a clear perspective that there are economic laws governing the class struggle in Britain, and that there are national contradictions which are entirely separate, and that the RCG are reducing the latter to part of the former. Thus, it is said the RCG article "reduces the struggle of national minority people against British imperialism to some aspect of the fundamental contradiction in economic terms, that between labour and capital, and is essentially a form of left reductionism". Here it seems to us that the authors are taking at face value the RCG's economistic and Eurocentric treatment of the class struggle in Britain and understandably thinking they want no part in this, they therefore hive off the national contradictions into another realm altogether. Along the same lines is the statement which was put forward within the RCL, at one time to the effect that we are not really fighting imperialism at all in this country, we are fighting capitalism. There is assumed to be an economistic, narrow phenomenon called capitalism operating within the bounds of this country, and something entirely different called imperialism happening outside. In the same way, some of our early coverage of the Miners' Strike in Class Struggle deals with issues in a basically narrow, Eurocentric and economistic way, neglecting the interdependence of this question with the national question. Obviously, the problem of Britain's energy resources can only be understood in the context of an interdependent world-economy. Even the bourgeoisie recognises this, but it suits them to cover up the real mechanisms and pretend that prices are governed by some such factors as supply and demand, as does the RCG. Marxists have to go deeper.

In general, it suits the imperialist countries to use imported rather than indigenous raw materials because, owing to unequal exchange, this leads to a higher rate of profit, and the EEC as collective representative of the biggest imperialist economic bloc took a conscious strategic decision to switch to imported petroleum. Even the temporary success of OPEC in the early '70s didn't in the long run undermine the ability of the imperialist states to control prices to their own advantage.

The most interesting theoretical discussion of the question of raw material prices uses some of the concepts set out in Marx's Capital; for example, the theory of ground rent. (196) This is proof that the Marxism is still the most vital theory in illuminating the contemporary world. But this means breaking with the view which sees Marxism in a narrow way as though particular national economies existed in isolation. Instead, we have to view his laws on a world scale, and understand how capital exploits whole nations.

Summing up and looking forward

The purpose of this paper was mainly to criticise Eurocentric limitation which prevented us from applying Marxism creatively to solving the problems of our revolution. The next task is obviously to apply Marxism creatively to analysing our concrete conditions. We will not attempt to anticipate this work here but it would be useful, inconclusion, to draw a few threads together.

CLASS AND NATION

To begin with, in connection with the controversy as referred to above, it must be stated quite emphatically that the struggle of national minority people, and the national question in general, is part of the fundamental contradiction between labour and capital. To see it otherwise is unmarxist. But it is not a contradiction in purely "economic terms", which is also an unmarxist concept. There are no abstract economic laws separate from class struggle. Moreover, the contradiction between labour and capital, particularly in the era of imperialism, takes on an international character and finds its highest expression in the contradiction between oppressed and oppressor nations. The labour-capital contradiction manifests itself both in national and class forms, and these are themselves interrelated.

The dynamics of the internal class struggle operate within the context of a world system in which there are oppressed and oppressor nations, and the conditions of this system help to determine the behaviour of classes. Nor should the labour-capital contradiction be understood in an economistic way. It has an important cultural dimension, for example, partly because of the importance of national oppression as a manifestation of this contradiction, and partly because of the way in which the superstructure can react upon the base. All these factors are neglected from the economist standpoint.

THE LABOUR-CAPITAL CONTRADICTION AT A WORLD LEVEL

We already remarked above in discussing the question of energy that dialectical and historical materialism remain essential guides to understanding the world system, and that much of Marx's specific analysis of the laws and processes of capitalism remains relevant, if we read it in a world sense. For example, the problem which baffled even the brilliant minds of the CPBML leadership, in the passage quoted above from their 1971 document, can be understood from this standpoint. It is clear that there is a possibility for the working class to better their economic position through class struggle (this is something Marx was very clear about) (197) but Marx also showed that there is a tendency at the same time to the pauperisation of the direct producers

through capitalism's drive for a higher rate of profit. There is tension between the two tendencies, and today the contradiction has to an important sense been internationalised with the metropolitan working class establishing the value of its labour power at a higher level, and pauperisation has been realised particularly in the third world where, in Samir Amin's words,

"the absolute pauperisation of the producers exploited by capital manifests itself in all its brutality. But it is precisely here that the pro-imperialist tendency within Marxism stops short, because it is from here on that Marxism becomes subversive". (198)

These ideas are subversive because they bring us closer to the reality of the concrete situation, and strip away some of the ideological veils which hide this; they recognise and thus challenge the status quo. An understanding of the reality of the exploitative system is indispensable to any revolutionary action, especially in the metropolises where Eurocentric, mechanical materialist and economicist ideological veils are particularly confusing.

But if we are to make this transition to a really internationalist perspective, we have to break with some deep-seated accepted notions. What is needed is both a correct, universal application of basic Marxism, and an expansion of its horizons, a creative development into areas which Marx only hinted at. This involves placing in a central position problems which Marx merely alluded to, as when he said, in passing, that "Direct slavery is the pivot of bourgeois industry..." (199) What is needed is a view of history which takes the whole of humanity and not just part of it as its point of reference.

A lot of different revolutionary elements have played a part in developing this view, but we should particularly stress the work done by black and African Marxists from Du Bois through Lamine Senghor to C L R James, Cabral, Rodney, Samir Amin, etc., and of course the mass movements which these thinkers reflect.

This is a contribution which has been very inadequately understood in the European Marxist-Leninist movement. To quote Cedric Robinson's summing-up of an important aspect of Du Bois' thought:

"No theory of history which conceptualized capitalism as a progressive historical force, qualitatively increasing the mastery of human beings over the material bases of their existence, was adequate to the task of making the experiences of the modern world comprehensible. For Du Bois, America in the first half of the 19th Century, a society in which manufacturing and industrial capitalism had been carried to slave production, had been a microcosm of the world system. The advanced sectors of the world economy could expand just so long as they could dominate and rationalize by brute force the exploitation of essentially non-industrial and agrarian labour. The expansion of American slavery in the 19th Century was not an anachronism but a forewarning. But so too, he believed, was its defeat." (200)

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

In setting out our view of this necessary development, we must however once again stress, as we did earlier in the discussion over Carlos Moore, the importance of clear lines of demarcation with those who throw the baby of historical materialism out with the bathwater of Eurocentrism. Robinson too falls into this category, as when he writes;

"Hegel's dialectic of Aufhebung, Marx's dialectic of class struggle and the contradictions between the mode and relations of production, Darwin's evolution of the species and Spencer's survival of the fittest are all forged from the same metaphysical conventions." (201)

But the concept of a Darwinian bourgeoisie armed with a teleological historical mission is not really part of Marxism. The essence of historical materialism, which Marx introduced, is dialectical and not unilinear or mechanical. Certain shortcomings in Marx's thought, notably in the field of relations between different societies and in terms of the general developmental thrust of non-European peoples, led to the infiltration of elements of vulgar evolutionism and mechanical materialism which stand in contradiction to the living essence of dialectical and historical materialism. It is precisely these elements which Black Marxism, along with certain other forces, managed to expose and undermine (although they continue to dominate the pro-Soviet current and most European 'left' forces). Using these important contributions, it is quite possible to arrive at a view of the world system which not only vindicates historical materialism, but takes it to a higher stage. (202)

In our view the concepts of mode and relations of production remain of fundamental importance, even though there were limitations in Marx and Engels' understanding not only of the nature of non-European modes, but also of the interaction between different modes internationally during the period of the growth of capitalism. An application of historical materialism from the standpoint of humanity as a whole thus yields a more complete world-view, reflected perhaps more systematically in Samir Amin's concept of unequal development.

UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT

This concept helps to explain the fact that European world dominance was the result not of the advanced character of its civilisation, but precisely because of the backward and incomplete character of the social system prevalent there at the dawn of the capitalist era, namely feudalism. In order to appreciate this it is necessary to break with the dogmatic and mechanical understanding of the succession of modes of production which holds that in all circumstances there must be a rigid succession of the following five totally distinct modes, viz. primitive communism, slave society, feudalism, capitalism and communism (with the proviso that societies at more 'primitive' stages could, under the aegis of the USSR, skip a stage or two on the road to socialism). This dogma, which was consolidated in the '30s, is a step back in comparison with Marx who at times recognised the European limitations of some of his ideas about the succession of modes of production. (203) Even his concept of an Asiatic mode was banished from the rigid orthodoxy. (204)

One of the most striking negative effects of this dogma is that slavery is regarded as essentially characteristic of the pre-feudal mode of production, so that its role in the genesis of capitalism is marginalised to the position of an inconvenient historical anomaly.

According to Amin's conception of unequal development, feudalism, far from being the highest product of world civilisation to date, was in fact a marginal and incomplete form of a wider family of modes of production which he calls 'tributary'. The very incompleteness of feudalism meant that it provided less resistance to the growth of capitalist relations of production than in other societies.

Although the thinking which underlies Marx's concept of the mode of production is basically correct, the ossified concept of an unchanging succession, based upon European experience (a narrow interpretation of European experience at that, abstracted from its links with other societies), led to a non-dialectical absolutisation of the individual mode of production. This problem is just another example of the phenomenon we have already noted many times, the necessary connection between Eurocentrism and mechanical materialism. The reality of history is the living dialectics of real life. Hence an important refinement of historical materialism is provided by the concept of 'social formation' which stresses the articulation of elements of different modes of production under the auspices of a dominant mode. Today capitalism is the dominant mode on a world scale.

It is in fact at a world level that the concept of social formation becomes particularly important. Growing out of the whole historical process of colonialism and 'decolonisation' is a situation where world capitalism is the dominant element in a series of dependent social formations. The peripheral position of Europe thus gave way to a situation in which the advanced capitalist societies have, in the very process of their capitalist development, peripheralised the rest of the world.

The world system thus becomes really Eurocentric in the sense that certain 'central' capitalist formations exploit those societies which have become peripheralised, particularly because the process of capital accumulation at a world scale is conducted according to the needs of the former group.

CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

The existence of a world capitalist system characterised by centre and periphery determines the circumstances in which the revolution develops in various places. The advanced capitalist countries are 'autocentric' in the sense that the logic of their social and economic development is decisive in determining what happens in the exploited nations; this conception of autocentricity does not deny, but on the contrary accentuates their dependence upon super profits extorted from the oppressed nations, hence the vulnerability of central capitalism to the revolutionary storms in the periphery. The ruling class in the metropolitan countries enjoys not only the surplus value generated by its 'own' workers but also that generated by the labouring population in the colonies and dependent areas. This gives it some leeway to defuse the social conflict at home.

Obviously, this does not just mean simply that the metropolitan ruling class is exploiting a larger body of workers outside its own boundaries, because it is not just exploiting 'more workers' but nations. By creaming off the surplus value generated by working people of other nations it is denying the basis for an independent development of those nations, even along the lines of an indigenous system of class exploitation. Not only does this undercut the possibility for a development along the lines of the traditional class system, but also it makes difficult or impossible the initial accumulation of capital which could lead to industrialisation along the classical pattern of capitalism; the capital goes to the imperialist countries instead, thus the emergence of a true bourgeoisie in the third world is very difficult. It is continually frustrated by world imperialism in its efforts to industrialise.

In the controversies in the communist movement in the 'twenties and 'thirties a lot of importance was attached to the role of the national bourgeoisie in its contradictions with imperialism. But this whole perspective is rather narrow. The national component in the revolutionary movement of the colonial world should not be equated with the nascent local bourgeoisie's frustrated desire to develop capitalism. The assumption of a necessary tendency to develop through the same stages as in the 'classic' western industrial system is a form of assimilationism and moreover the 'classic' industrial revolutions were based not just upon accumulation of a surplus from the domestic labouring population, but upon the following other elements: the initial capital accumulation even in the strictly domestic sphere involved the violent breakup of traditional sectors; the process also had the essential dimension of colonial exploitation and the slave trade, and the process of capitalist nation-building involved the violent homogenisation of the now existing states through the suppression of minorities as well as a process of the most devastating wars with rival powers, stretching over many centuries. Obviously, other non-capitalist societies had their wars, but nothing on this scale, nor did they generate racism.

It has yet to be shown that capitalism can be built in any other way, and the experience of Japan, the only country outside Europe and its settler-colonies to achieve capitalism, only confirms this.

CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL OPPRESSION

Thus it is not enough simply to assume that imperialism 'prevents' the development of capitalism in the oppressed nations. On the one hand capitalism as it really exists in the real world includes as an essential element the systematic subordination of these very same areas, while on the other hand capitalism is not simply a matter of 'economic development' in the abstract, but appears to be linked inexorably with national oppression.

The socialist movement has already placed on the agenda the possibility of building a new society without these evils which are an essential part of capitalism, even if it were hypothetically possible for some of the third world countries to 'develop' by oppressing others. But in fact even this is very unlikely to be possible.

The industry of the existing capitalist powers was built not just by 'removing' something from the exploited countries, but by fundamentally altering their economic and social structure, so that the existing structures have grown in such a way as to serve the needs of the industrialised countries.

Thus it is not simply a question of blocking the development of capitalism or the bourgeoisie, but of creating dependent socio-economic structures in which the different elements in the bourgeoisie are not merely frustrated by world capitalism but also in a sense moulded by it. The bourgeoisie in the third world tends to be parasitic and wasteful precisely because the blocking of avenues to indigenous capitalist development makes it very hard to invest productively that portion of the surplus value the metropolitan capitalists do allow the locals to accumulate. Since consumption is largely by the upper-class sector, industrialisation by import substitution cannot reach the fundamental market constituted by the labouring population.

The export of raw materials or cash crops cannot in itself serve as the basis for industrialisation because of the pricing structure which forces down the prices of whatever the dependent economies produce. The control of pricing is outside the grip of the producers, and all attempts to change this situation have been frustrated. In fact the laws of the system are such that the price differentials between agriculture and industry which are characteristic of the developed countries tend to be transplanted into the third world where the productivity of agriculture is much lower, thus making it very hard for an agricultural revolution to be launched, as the basis for industrialisation.

Thus the oppressed nations are consigned to a kind of stagnancy, but at the same time the operation of the world capitalist system is no longer simply a question of markets for industrial goods and the plunder of raw materials, though these remain important, but the creation of dependent social structures within the context of an international division of labour which entirely serves imperialism.

Thus within the picture of stagnancy there is change, but of a kind which only serves to accentuate dependence. In this context the concept of 'social formations' is again important, because it points to the interpenetration of elements of different modes of production under the auspices of a dominant one, in this case the world capitalist system. One of the most important elements in the dependent social formations is the maintenance of pre-capitalist areas, under the control of the dominant capitalist mode, which allow the supply of part of the value of workers' labour-power from outside the capitalist sector, thus enabling labour-power to be bought below its value, and a super-profit to be realised.

THIRD WORLD STRUGGLES FOR INDUSTRIALISATION

The economies and societies of some dependent countries have changed quite radically in the era after formal colonialism ended. In the teeth of bitter imperialist opposition a progressive struggle has been carried out for a degree of industrialisation and for sovereign control over raw materials, for example. Despite the fact that the system opposed these changes, it has in fact shown a remarkable capacity to absorb or incorporate them without challenging the fundamental power-relationships.

An important example has been the building of a state-capitalist industrial sector in some countries, which has given rise to a new state-bureaucratic, sometimes also military, ruling class. But it is still a dependent class. The Soviet Union attempts to carry out 'social engineering' in the neo-colonial world by basing itself upon this class, in the same way as the USA has sought to foster new social groups dependent upon it, through schemes like the green revolution and Alliance for Progress; the Soviet version is the theory of the non-capitalist road. But the dynamic for development cannot simply be cancelled out. Unable to continue along the lines of the old society, it will be bound to burst through in new, revolutionary forms.

The manner of the third-world countries' insertion into the capitalist world economy governs the character of the revolution there, and this in turn is of decisive importance for the international proletarian revolution overall in the current period. Because a break with the world capitalist system is necessary, the revolution in the third world can only be something extremely radical possessing a crucial characteristic already foreshadowed by Maoism, namely self-reliance. This means reliance on the consciousness and mobilisation of the labouring masses, something we can already clearly see in the revolutions in the Horn of Africa, for example. Insisting upon the radical character of the revolution and pointing out that because of the dependent character of third-world capitalism, bourgeois revolutionary movements can very easily be co-opted into the system, by no means implies a leftist approach of repudiating alliances or writing off the historical legacy of the progressive aspect of the bourgeois revolution. On the contrary.

Although the laws of the system act to maintain dependence, this is not the same as saying that the leaders of the imperialist countries planned the whole thing; on the contrary they have consistently opposed even those changes which the system was subsequently well able to accommodate. The system is thus anarchic. It goes through chaotic periods of revolutionary change which have not so far destroyed dependence as a world system, but which provide opportunities for the revolutionaries ... revolutions are not mechanically inevitable, they require the element of human will, but they can occur in such periods, and if they are consolidated, areas can be withdrawn from the dependent periphery of world imperialism.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

The element of national independence remains a key question. Although it is true at one level that the independence of the former colonies has not enabled them to break the dominance of the industrialised countries, the struggle for independence was nevertheless necessary and highly progressive. We should reject a Trotskyite tendency, of seeing this change as practically insignificant. The world today is not the same as in the nineteenth century, or in the 1930s. The independence movement, even under bourgeois leadership, has raised the fundamental questions of democracy, human dignity, the right to a decent and secure existence, and the overthrow of the racist, oppressive power-structures of international relations.

Thus the analysis of the capitalist world-economy confirms the points already made by the Chinese in the early '60s. Firstly,

taking the world situation as a whole, there must be a revolutionary solution; secondly, it is the position of Asia, Africa and Latin America within the world system which most immediately determines the need for a revolutionary system; and thirdly, it is the struggles in these areas for national liberation, including those against neo-colonialism, which will be the decisive force propelling forward the world revolution at the current stage. It is equally important for revolutionaries in the imperialist countries to understand these facts, because they constitute the parameters determining the unfolding of the revolutionary process here.

All these factors are only accentuated by the current structural crisis of the world imperialist system. In a country like Britain we obviously have to understand future trends in industry, energy, etc. from the point of view that this is a country inserted into an international division of labour. At one level Britain's comparatively 'developed' character is a reflection of a specialisation within that division in which the 'third world' is forced to accept a subordinate role. But even more important, in the current crisis the system is coming up against some of the limitations of the international division of labour as it is presently constituted. The crisis is potentially very acute, and even if the moderate demands of the 'third world' are not met, it could be explosive.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

The factors causing the stagnation of the third world also make it difficult for these countries to evolve in any direction, even one which favours the continued existence of world capitalism on a new basis. Unless the dependent countries develop in a new, dependent, way, unless new industries can be implanted there, the scope for exploitation of a labouring population there will not be great enough to guarantee the continued expansion of central capitalism. It is not impossible for capitalism, through a period of immense and devastating changes, to move to a new period of expansion, as it did after World War II, through the intensified exploitation of the third world. But this crisis does also provide the opportunity for the revolutionary masses to prevent the refurbishment of capitalism and in fact to overthrow it. The blueprint for a way forward for world capitalism would obviously be to transfer some of the actual production processes, e.g. textiles, increasingly to the third world, while stepping up the specialisation of the industrialised countries in the high-technology field which will guarantee domination over the world production process as a whole.

A section of the national bourgeoisie realises that this process of industrialisation would provide some crumbs for them, and the demand for the new international economic order in one sense reflects precisely the evolution of a new division of labour in which the dominance of central capital would be even more secure.

But the essence of the movement goes deeper. To begin with, even if these adjustments are indeed in the interests of the survival of capitalism on the basis of a new international division of labour, as a section of the bourgeoisie (e.g. the Brandt Commission) believes, the dominant section of the imperialist ruling class refuses to take the long view, and prefers a solution of grinding down the third world, and in a lesser degree their own working class, even more savagely.

Secondly, the issue of the new international economic order poses the question of the democratisation of international relations which is in essence revolutionary and not a mere bourgeois demand even though it appears initially under this form. This is probably the reason why the imperialist trend represented by Reagan is unwilling to concede any ground at all to the demand for democracy, since this would be politically dangerous even though the actual concessions demanded in the NIEO could in themselves probably be incorporated into the imperialist system. If the third world win their government's initial, timid demands then the mass movement may be tempted to ask for the whole cake and not just the crumbs, whereas if they are denied these concessions the masses will get desperate and turn directly to revolution. This is the dilemma which faces the imperialists.

Thirdly, there is another way of looking at this transition from the NIEO to revolution. The call for democratisation focusses initially upon the imperialist-dominated decision-making structure such as the IMF which very concretely acts to prevent economic development by imposing policies which (among other things) destroy the domestic market by decimating the purchasing power of the labouring people ... while the US government itself persistently runs up staggering budget deficits. But it is not simply a question of scandalously unfair decisions being carried out by certain individuals in the IMF or the transnational corporations. In and through these decisions the laws of capital accumulation are asserting themselves. The world system is denying the accumulation of capital in the periphery, while at the same time keeping the value of labour power in the oppressed nations down to a level where super-profits can be assured. Hence the democratic struggle in this dimension inevitably implies a struggle against capitalism itself.

THE END OF REFORMIST SOLUTIONS?

Thus the system's frustrations of development in the third world has to be seen in a dual aspect. On the one hand it is frustrating the attempts of an essentially dependent bourgeoisie to carry out a capitalist development which would be exploitative and which is in any case an illusion. On the other hand the campaign for the new international economic order, and for the right to economic development in general, even though led by the national bourgeoisie, nevertheless poses fundamental questions of the lack of democracy and, above all, the racism of the present world set-up; these are issues which the bourgeoisie cannot possibly resolve but the revolutionary forces can.

The crisis is calling into question a whole range of things which had previously been important for the maintenance of the system. The 'models' of capitalist economic development in the third world have revealed their fragility. Similarly, the Soviet attempts to promise 'non-capitalist' development without fundamentally breaking with the system have revealed themselves as insufficient. The notion of a reformist solution represented by the NIEO does not fall into the same category, because it embodies certain aspirations which revolutionaries can unite with, but even so it is becoming clearer that the imperialist bourgeoisie are less and less likely to offer a reformist 'way out'. They are rejecting global Keynesianism and opting instead for outright repression. In fact, the last few years seem to have witnessed a counter-attack by imperialism aimed at recuper-

ating those areas where the national bourgeoisie had temporarily increased the strength of the third world relative to imperialism, through such factors as nationalisation of resources and raising petroleum prices. Above all, the present crisis, as a symptom of the reactionary drift of world imperialism, is characterised by an intensification of racism. This is a deeply rooted feature of the system.

RACISM IN THE CURRENT CRISIS

We began in emphasising the key importance of racism as a factor protecting world capitalism and this point should be re-affirmed in conclusion as a key factor in the contemporary crisis.

The present crisis is characterised by a growth of racism. To understand this, we have to break both with economism and with the narrow view of political economy which makes abstraction from the world system. Historical materialism does not deal with abstract so-called 'laws' operating at a purely 'economic' level but with the total life of societies, especially the classes which make them up.

Racism reflects the whole experience of the oppressor societies through colonial experience and the development in those societies of a homogenisation which served to weld them in the three important areas of conflict into which capitalism threw them, namely colonial expansion itself, domestic class struggle, and the conflict with rival imperial powers. At the same time, taking the standpoint of historical materialism we can see that there are certain laws of political economy in the wider sense which specifically influence the intensification of racism. With the formation of a capitalist world-economy, the rate of profit tends to equalise itself, so that the notion of an average profit exists not just throughout a particular national economy, but at a world level. But the determination of the value of labour power in the form of wages has not averaged itself out, on the contrary the disparity has probably increased. How can one justify the fact that a human being is worth less, many times less, if she or he happens to come from Asia, Africa or Latin America? Imperialism uses both armed intervention and economic levers to maintain this inequality. Far from dying out with colonialism, racism becomes an even more important part of the system when the formal barriers to equality are less rigid.

There are powerful pressures in the struggle to undermine this inequality in the determination of the value of labour power, and these are counteracted by a very strong thrust from imperialism. This view of the way the system determines an upsurge of racism by no means denies, but actually should emphasise, the interpenetration of base and superstructure. Ideology reacts back upon the social and economic base, and this is true not only of racism but of the ideological struggles which challenge it.

REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES IN ENGLAND

In looking for a solution to our own quest for a revolutionary strategy, we have to bear in mind this background; the historical process of the development of our society is one in which the self-serving character of its economy has been predicated upon the subservience of others. This situation on the one hand continues (because exploitation continues, and England is still a central state with respect to the evolutions of world capitalism)

while at the same time it is threatened by a counter-tendency, that of revolution, which undermines the ability of the bourgeoisie to determine the economy in a self-centred way, hence also to determine the relations of classes in a self-centred way. Previously the subservience of other areas of the world could be used to serve the maintenance of bourgeois rule in this country, notably by giving certain concessions to the working class, and even more important by creating a racist sense of national solidarity. Today racism is on the increase. But this is by no means simply an expression of the strength of the system. On the contrary the growth of the liberation movements in the oppressed countries, and with it the restoration of their historical initiative, is bound to undercut the bourgeoisie's ability to control class conflict within the supposed master-race. The undermining of England's central position, acquired during the capitalist era is thus very much to the advantage of revolutionaries.

In Britain the crisis has specific features, reflecting this overall picture. There is an important restructuring of the economy, but not in the long-term perspective of a new international division of labour, rather in the short-sighted perspective of repression and racism. British imperialism seems to be staking everything on a strengthening of its parasitic role.

From the point of view of the imperialist countries, two things are clear. One is that their whole structure is conditioned by their central position in the world imperialist system; the other is that the temporarily Western-centred era in history which was forcibly brought into existence by world capitalism is coming to an end: the initiative in making world history is moving once again precisely towards the areas which had temporarily been peripherised whose historical initiative is now again being restored, this time in the form of the national liberation movement which is the most creative current in world history. The whole structure of the world system makes it inevitable that this creativity will express itself increasingly in an explicitly socialist form.

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References

1. Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) Conference Issue, February 1983, p.29.
2. This term (which was first thought up by a European) has come under some criticism for being derogatory. Pending the development of a better alternative, we still use it where it is essential to stress the common struggle faced by the super-exploited countries, which are mainly to be found in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
3. Of course we do not see world conflicts in 'racial' terms, and reject the concept of 'race' in its totality; but 'black' and 'white' have a socio-political reality, as long as the real system of racist oppression and exploitation remains.
4. The case for the lack of racism in the ancient white world is strongly argued in F M SNOWDEN Before Color Prejudice - the Ancient View of Blacks, Cambridge, Mass. etc. (Harvard UP) 1983, although this author makes fundamental errors in his analysis of ancient Egypt. The case for racism going a long way back in European society is developed by C J ROBINSON in Black Marxism, London (Zed) 1983: these arguments need to be studied very carefully, although Robinson seems to bend over backwards to devalue the concept of class struggle. Othello is sometimes cited as an example of a non-stereotyped view of a black man, but P FRYER shows that this work was exceptionally non-pejorative by the standards of the time. (Staying Power, London, etc. Pluto 1984, p.140). Also, Othello is after all a character embodying uncontrolled passion.
5. R H PEARCE The Savages of America, 1965
W D JORDAN White Over Black - American Attitudes towards the Negro 1550-1812, Chapel Hill (Univ. of North Carolina Press) 1968 and P D CURTIN The Image of Africa - British Ideas and Action 1780-1850, London (Macmillan) 1965, are all examples of really interesting books which need to be read.
6. An example of this trend is G L MOSSE Toward the Final Solution - A History of European Racism, London, etc. (Dent & Sons) 1978.
7. It is worth noting that even on German nazism the serious analytical literature is quite weak, which reflects American efforts to make sure nothing distracted from anti-communism during the cold war period (see E NOLTE "The Problem of Fascism in Recent Scholarship" in H J TURNER ed. Re-appraisals of Fascism, New York (New Viewpoints) 1975.
8. W B YEATS The Shadowy Waters (Coll. Poems), London, Macmillan 1963, p.500)
9. K MARX and F ENGELS Selected Works in 3 vols. Moscow (Progress Pub.) 1969-70 (hereafter MESW) Vol.I, p.14.

10. This concept was still put forward even at a fairly developed stage of the Aryan race-myth, e.g. the work of Georges VACHER de LAPOUGE (see E NOLTE Three Faces of Fascism, New York etc. (Mentor) 1969, p.358.
11. GOBINEAU, Essai sur l'Inegalite des Races humaines, Paris 4th ed., 2 vols in 1, ND. (first ed. 1854) Vol.I pp.101-2.
12. A Kun'a N'DUMBE III, Hitler Voulait l'Afrique, Paris (eds. l'Harmattan) 1980, p.165.
13. See NOLTE Three Faces op.cit. p.635 note 18.
14. Kiffe ABRAHAM From Race to Class, London (Grassroots) 1982, p.21
15. Dr James HUNT, F.R.S. (Pres. of the Anthropological Society of London) "On the Negro's Place in Nature" Journal of the Anthropological Society Vol.II (1864) quoted in TAHARKA, Sundiata Black Manhood, Washington D.C. (Univ. Press of America) Revised ed. 1979, p.31
16. Quoted in PEACE op.cit. p.8.
17. Emer de VATTEL The Law of Nations first pubd. 1758. This is taken from a passage in the Washington ed. (1916) reprinted in P D CURTIN Imperialism, London (Macmillan) 1972, p.45
18. H J FIELD Towards a Programme of Imperial Life. - The British Empire at the Turn of the Century, Oxford (Clio Press) 1982, p.89.
19. The Problem of Asia (1900) quoted in C K LEITH World Minerals and World Politics, New York (Kennicat Press) 1970 (reprint of 1st ed. 1931) p.21.
20. The Premisses of Socialism and the Tasks of the Socialist Party quoted in L'Imperialisme Aujourd'hui - Traite sur l'Imperialisme, Stade supreme du Capitalisme, Paris (eds. du Centenaire) 1976, p.238.
21. T CARLYLE "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question", first pubd 1849, full text reprinted in CURTIN Imperialism op.cit. p.138.
22. E DÜHRING Cursus der National- und Socialökonomie, Berlin (Theobald Griebner) 1873, pp.74-5.
23. O MANNONI Prospero and Caliban - The Psychology of Colonization London (Methuen) 1956 (first pubd in French 1950, but the English edition has an extremely reactionary preface by the Director of Studies in Race Relations at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, which makes it even better negative material.) A forceful critique of Mannoni is made in Aime CESAIRE, Discourse on Colonialism, London etc. (Monthly Review Press) 1972.
24. See H RIDLEY Images of Imperial Rule, London (Croome Helm) 1983. This is a very interesting book, but unfortunately the author swallows Mannoni uncritically.
25. G W F HEGEL La Raison dans l'Histoire, Paris (eds. 10/18) ND p.246.

26. Quoted in CURTIN The Image of Africa, op.cit. p.367.
27. HEGEL op.cit. p.266.
28. CURTIN Image, op.cit. p.386.
29. From an argument put forward in Maryland in 1635, PEARCE op.cit. p.19.
30. October Vol.I no.2 p.9.
31. C DARWIN Descent of Man from the passage reprinted in CURTIN Imperialism, op.cit. p.24.
32. C DARWIN The Voyage of the Beagle, London (Everyman) 1959, p.430. Our emphasis.
33. PEARCE op.cit. p.6.
34. From a speech in Bulawayo in 1893. Text in "VINDEK", Cecil Rhodes, His Political Life and Speeches 1881-1900, London (Chapman Hall Ltd) 1900, pp.343, 344.
35. CESAIRE op.cit. p.45
36. ibid. p.13.
37. Lewis H MORGAN Ancient Society or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilisation, Chicago (Charles H Kerr & Co.) 1908 (first pubd 1877), e.g. p.39.
38. ibid. p.562.
39. PEARCE op.cit. p.ix.
40. FEI Xiaotong Towards a People's Anthropology, Peking (New World Press) 1981 makes some very good point in arguing that a progressive anthropology must be people-based: "It seems that these living people (the indigenous population of the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia) were long gone from the minds of our anthropologists and what they knew and what they kept talking about was ... the mere shadow of these people dancing under my tutor's (Bronislav Malinovsky's) pen nib." However, Fei shies away from a direct confrontation with Morgan.
41. MORGAN op.cit. pp.vii-viii.
- 41a W E B DU BOIS The Suppression of the African Slave-trade to the United States of America 1638-1870, New York (Russell and Russell) 1965, p.71.
42. Quoted in JORDAN op.cit. p.434.
43. A former surgeon, Knox served with the British Army in Azania, and thus had an opportunity to witness the freedom struggle at first hand. After his involvement in the Burke and Hare body-snatching case, Knox lost his right to practise medicine and became a professional racist. His racist lectures are written in a very popular and demagogic style. No-one in the socialist movement took people like this seriously.

44. R KNOX The Races of Man, London (Henry Rowland) 2nd ed. 1862, pp.244-5.
45. O SPENGLER The Decline of the West Form and Activity, London (G Allen & Unwin) ND (1926) p.37.. Spengler came in for some criticism from the Nazis for his pessimistic world-view, but not on this question.
46. For the Nazis, admiration of Mackinder see P H HAYES Fascism London (G Allen & Unwin) 1973, p.26; V MASER Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' An Analysis, London (Faber & Faber) 1970, p.122.
47. See for example W SCHNEEFUSS Gefahrenzonen des britischen Weltreiches, Leipzig (Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag) ND (1938) p.121.
48. Quoted in R A HUTTENBACK Racism and Empire. White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-governing Colonies 1830-1910, Ithaca etc. (Cornell UP) 1976, p.16.
49. Quoted in HAYES op.cit. p.24.
50. BRECHT, Die Dreigroschenoper.
51. MARX and ENGELS The Communist Manifesto Peking (FLP) 1970, pp.45, 46.
52. LENIN, Marx-Engels-Marxism Peking (FLP) 1978, p.67.
53. ENGELS, Anti-Dühring, Moscow (Progress Pubs) 1969, p.37.
54. Karl MARX, Oeuvres Economie Tome II Paris (Gallimard) 1968, p.1529.
55. T R MALTHUS, An Essay on Population, London (Everyman) 1958, Vol.I Book I Ch.VIII.
56. *ibid.* Vol.II p.30.
57. "The necessary turning-point of history is therefore the open confession, that the consciousness of God is nothing else than the consciousness of the species; that man can and should raise himself only above the limits of his individuality, and not above the laws, the positive essential conditions of his species." FEUERBACH, The Essence of Christianity, New York etc. (Harper & Row) 1957, p.270.
58. *ibid.* p.257.
59. MARX "The British Rule in India" (1853) MARX ENGELS, On Colonialism, Moscow (Progress Pubs) 4th enlarged ed. 1968 (hereafter ME On Colonialism) p.41.
60. MESW Vol.III p.358.
61. R LUXEMBURG, The Accumulation of Capital - An Anti-Critique, New York (Monthly Review Press) 1972, pp.59-60
62. MESW Vol.II p.22.
63. MARX Capital Ch. XXXIII (Oeuvres Tome II p.1225 note a.).

64. MARX ENGELS Ireland and the Irish Question, Moscow (Progress Pubs) 1971 (hereafter ME on Ireland) pp.399-400.
65. Letter of 14 June, 1853. ME On Colonialism p.313.
66. Quoted in J C Wood, British Economists and the Empire, London etc. (Croome Helm) 1983, p.87.
67. W V ROSTOW, The Stages of Economic Growth - A Non-Communist Manifesto (1960).
68. Tamas SZENTES "The main Theoretical Questions of 'Underdevelopment'" in J NYILAS (ed.) Theory and Practice of Development in the Third World, Leyden (A W Sijthoff for Akademiai Kiado Budapest) 1977, p.24.
69. MARX Grundrisse quoted in M GODELIER Preface to MARX, ENGELS, LENINE Sur les Societes precapitalistes - Textes choisies, Paris (ods. Sociales pour Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches marxistes) 1973, p.50.
70. MESW Vol.III p.334.
71. MARX and ENGELS Selected Correspondence, Moscow (Progress Pubs) 2nd revised ed. 1965 (hereafter ME Sel. Corres.) p.355.
72. Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten- u. Kulturfrage. Dühring is sometimes considered the first person to have advocated (in a later work) the extermination of the Jews.
73. ENGELS Anti-Dühring, op.cit. p.14 (from the preface to the 1885 edition).
74. *ibid.* p.199.
75. MARX Oeuvres, op.cit. Tome II p.368.
76. ME On Colonialism, p.158.
77. *ibid.* p.181.
78. *ibid.* p.314.
79. ME Sel. Corres. p.84. Emphasis in original.
80. See FRYER, op.cit. pp.177-9.
81. ME On Colonialism, p.323.
82. ENGELS Anti-Dühring, op.cit. part II ch.III.
83. MARX On China - Articles from the New York Daily Tribune 1853-60, London (Lawrence and Wishart) 1968, p.50. (This article was in fact written by Engels.)
84. FANON The Wretched of the Earth, London (Penguin) 1967, p.50.
85. ENGELS Anti-Dühring, op.cit. p.201.
86. Quoted in I CUMMINS, Marx Engels and the National Movements, London (Croome Helm) 1980, p.38.

87. Quoted in R ROSDOLSKY "Friedrich Engels u. das Problem der 'geschichtslosen' Völker ..." in Archiv für Sozialgeschichte (Herausgegeben von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung) IV Band - 1964, Hannover (Verlag für Literatur u. Zeitgeschehen) pp.9-, 91.
88. *ibid.* p.170.
89. Quoted in Georges HAUPT "Les marxistes face a la Question nationale ..." in HAUPT et al. (eds) Les Marxistes et la Question nationale 1848-1914, Paris (Maspero) 1974, p.16.
90. MARK Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century (ed. Eleanor MARX AVELING) London (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.) 1899, for example pp.74-5.
91. C L R JAMES, The Black Jacobins Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution New Edition, London (Allison & Busby) 1980, especially pp.52-3, 80-1, 146.
92. ME On Colonialism, p.319.
93. *ibid.* pp.337-8 (from Marx's letter to Meyer and Vogt, 9 April 1870).
94. Letter to Kautsky, 12 Sept. 1882) ME Sel. Corres. p.351. Emphasis in original. The deliberately distorted version of this passage is given in Carlos MOORE, Were Marx and Engels White Racists? Chicago (Institute of Positive Education) 1972, p.38.
95. ME On Colonialism, p.341. Our emphasis.
96. S AMIN, Le Loi de la Valeur et le Materialisme historique, Paris (Minuit) 1977, pp.35-6.
97. ME On Colonialism, p.320.
98. ME On Ireland, p.70.
99. H B DAVIS, Nationalism and Socialism - Marxist and Labour theories of Nationalism to 1917, New York etc. (Monthly Review Press) 1967 seems to tend towards this view, but it is not very convincing.
100. MARK Notes on Indian History, Moscow (FLPH) ND (1960), pp.40-43.
101. *ibid.* p.81. Emphasis in original.
102. MARK The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx, transcribed and ed. L KRADER, Assen (Neth.) (Van Gorcum & Co.) 2nd ed. 1974, p.340.
103. *ibid.* p.345.
104. *ibid.* p.349. Emphasis in original. (The last comment means that Lubbock is making himself an utter laughing stock.)
105. See e.g. ME On Colonialism, pp.311, 314.
100. *ibid.* p.184 ff.

107. *ibid.* p.237 cf. the letter of 9 April 1970 to Meyer and Vogt, ME On Ireland p.407.
108. ME SW Vol.II p.406
109. Quoted in DAVIS *op.cit.* p.94
110. MESW Vol.II p.404.
111. *ibid.* p.394.
112. See S BANERJEE, India's Simmering Revolution, London (Zed) 1984 Ch.1 and the sources cited.
113. Quoted in T O RANGIER, Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, London (Heinemann) 1979 p.350.
114. See C SIGRIST, "Akephale politische Systeme und nationale Befreiung" in J H GREVEMEYER (ed.) Traditionale Gesellschaften und europäischer Kolonialismus, Frankfurt-am-Main (Syndikat) 1981.
115. ME On Colonialism p.345.
116. MESW Vol.II p.404.
117. Mamadou DIA, Dialogue des Nations, Alger (Societe nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion) 1980 p.28.
118. Susantha GOONATILAKE, Crippled Minds - An Exploration into Colonial Culture, New Delhi (Vikas Publishing House) 1982 p.v.
119. Cheikh Anta DIOP, L'Afrique noire pre-coloniale - Etude comparee des Systemes politiques et sociaux de l'Europe et de l'Afrique noire.... Paris (Presence africaine) 1960, e.g. pp.5, 7.
120. Thus, according to Taharka, the male qualities, developed over a long period of evolution, include "aggressiveness, strength, speed, endurance, courage, agility, a sharpening of the intellect, resourcefulness and good co-ordination", whereas females for their part are simply endowed with "a greater amount of maternal instinct." TAHARKA *op.cit.* pp.5, 6.
121. See note 94.
122. "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation." "If money, according to Angier, 'comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek', capital comes dripping from head to foot from every pore, with blood and dirt." MARX, Capital Vol.I Ch.XXXI.
123. MARX Poverty of Philosophy Ch.II sec.I (Oeuvres Tome I p.80)
124. Ayi Kwei ARMAH, "Masks and Marx..." Presence africaine, Nes Series, 3rd quarter 1984, p.64.
125. V U LENIN, Marx-Engels, Marxism, Peking (FLP) 1978 p.78.

126. Of course, as a dialectician, Lenin realised that a change in quantity could also transform itself into a change in quality, and this is indeed how he probably saw it in this case. However, he does refer to the Asian peoples as fighting for "these same European ideals..." (ibid).
127. V I LENIN Coll. Works, Vol.30, p.159. Our emphasis.
128. V I LENIN Coll. Works, Vol.33, pp.476-80.
129. ibid. p.480.
130. LENIN, Marx-Engels-Marxism, op.cit. p.576.
131. Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International, London, etc. (Ink Links and Humanities Press) 1980, p.32.
132. Trotsky also assumes that the small peoples can freely exist only because the proletarian revolution will "free the productive forces of all countries from the tentacles of the national states", and calls upon them to direct their affairs "without any detriment to the unified and centralised European and world economy". (ibid. p.31).
133. Baku: Congress of the Peoples of the East, London (New Park Publications) 1977 (a translation of the original Russian publication of the documents of the congress), p.100.
134. ibid. p.102.
135. See ULYANOVSKY, R A ed. The Comintern and the East, Moscow (Progress Pubs.) 1979, especially the article by M A PERSITS "Eastern Internationalists in Russia and some Questions of the National Liberation Movement (1918 - July 1920)".
136. ibid. p.424.
137. Quoted in S BASHEAR, Communism in the Arab East, London (Ithaca Press) 1980, p.14.
138. He also made a strong attack on this issue at the Third Congress of Comintern in 1921.
139. Article in the Communist International Nos.11-12, June-July 1920, p.2315, quoted in BASHEAR op.cit. p.13.
140. Quoted in A BENNIGSEN, "Sultan Galiev: The USSR and the Colonial Revolution" in W Z LAQUEUR ed. The Middle East in Transition, London (Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1958, p.404.
141. i.e. ULYANOVSKI (ed.) op.cit.
142. He was during the early period among other things Stalin's assistant in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities, and editor of its paper Zhizn Natsionalnomy.
143. Quoted in BENNIGSEN op.cit. p.401.
144. Quoted in M MEISNER, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism, New York (Atheneum) 1970, p.401.

145. *ibid.* pp.190-1.
146. FRONT CULTUREL SENEGALAIS, Lamine, Senghor - Vie et Oeuvre, no place of issue, 1979, p.14.
147. He was freed the following year, but condemned to ten years' forced labour in 1928. He may have been killed some time in the late '30s but the sources do not agree on this.
148. V I LENIN, Selected Works, Vol.3, Moscow (Progress PH) 1971, pp.753-4.
149. J V STALIN, Works, Vol.4, Moscow (FLPH) reprinted London (Red Star Press) 1975, pp.174-5.
150. J V STALIN, Works, Vol.3, p.1E.
151. A LEONTIEV, Political Economy - A Beginner's Course, San Francisco (Proletarian Publishers) ND, p.19.
152. V I LENIN, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Peking (FLP) ~~1970, p.104~~.
153. V I LENIN, Coll. Works, Vol.38, p.363.
154. COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, Political Economy - Marxist Study Courses, Chicago (Banner Press) 1976, pp.540-1 (1st published in pamphlet form 1932-3).
155. Some of these points were suggested by the excellent chapter on the general crisis theory in R LOTTA and F SHANNON, America in Decline, Vol.1, Chicago (Banner Press) 1984, especially pp.245, 253.
156. R P DUTT, World Politics 1918-36, London (Gollancz) 1936, p.200. Emphasis in original.
157. *ibid.*
158. See the passage quoted in The National Liberation Movement Today as seen by Dutt, Khrushchev and others, London (Forum for Marxist-Leninist Struggle) 1964, p.2.
159. DUTT, *op.cit.* p.78.
160. W RODNEY, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, London and Dar es Salaam (Dogle l'Ouverture and Tanzania PH) 1972, pp.172-3.
161. G DIMITROV, For the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism, London (Red Star Press), p.59.
162. George Padmore broke with Comintern on this issue. His subsequent positions, as expressed for example in his book Pan-Africanism or Communism, are far from being correct, but he was correct at that time in objecting to the subordination of the African struggle to an external Eurocentric strategy.
163. Peking (FLP) 1972; despite its title this booklet has quite a programmatic character, and contains an important section on the world situation.

164. COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, The Colonies; The Way Forward - A Memorandum issued by the Executive Committee of the CP, London, Hovenber 1944, p.55.
165. MARX and ENGELS, Selected Corres. op.cit. p.351.
166. Alexander CAMPBELL, It's your Empire, London (Left Book Club) 1945, p.8.
167. Quoted in McCREERY, M. The Way Forward, London, etc. (WPPE) ND, p.33.
168. LIN Biao (Piao) was the number two in the Chinese leadership during the early part of the Cultural Revolution. In 1971 he launched an unsuccessful coup attempt and died in a plane crash fleeing to the Soviet Union. It has been said that this article was the work of a writing group and was plagiarised by Lin Biao. To the best of our knowledge, it was not criticised in China at the same time as Lin's other ideas after his fall.
169. The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement, Peking (FLP) 1965, reprinted London (Red Star Press) 1976, p.187.
170. Polemic op.cit. pp.207-9. The text quoted is in J V STALIN, Works, Vol.7, pp.169 ff.
171. Polemic op.cit. p.212.
172. S AMIN "Der Marxismus in Asien und Afrika", Kommune, 1 Jahrgang Nr.4 (April 1983).
173. MAO Tse-tung (MAO Zedong) Statement Calling on the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination by US Imperialism and Support the American Negroes in their Struggle against Racial Discrimination, (Aug.8 1963), Peking (FLP) 1964, p.6.
174. ibid. p.5.
175. The speech is printed among the 'supplementary material' in MAO, Statement... (Aug.8 1963) op.cit. p.84.
176. MAO Tse-tung (MAO Zedong), Statement by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in Support of the Afro-American Struggle against violent repression. (April 16 1968) Peking (FLP 1968, pp.3-4.
177. Polemic, op.cit. p.201.
178. LIN Piao (LIN Biao), Long Live the Victory of People's War, (Sept.3 1965) Peking (FLP) 3rd.ed. 1967, p.53.
179. ibid.
180. For example, L'Imperialisme Aujourd'hui, Paris (editions du Centenaire) 1976, translated from a Chinese text published around 1974-5, is basically disappointing and contains hardly anything original; a similar criticism would apply to other textbooks from the same source, e.g. Etudions l'Economie politique.

181. J JURQUET, La Révolution nationale algérienne et le Parti communiste français, Paris (Editions du Centenaire) three vols. continuing, 1973- . The episode referred to is covered in Vol.II (Paris 1974) pp.100-109, from which all the quotations are taken.
182. Michael McCreery was the first and best of those who argued in the early '60s that genuine communists should break with the CPGB. He died very young in 1965.
183. For example A EMMANUEL, Unequal Exchange Revisited, University of Sussex, Institute for Development Studies, 1975.
184. Ch GUEVARA, Che Guevara Speaks - Selected Speeches and Writings, New York (Pathfinder Press) 1967 (repr.1982) p.108.
185. The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist Leninist), headed by Reg Birch, was once the best known organisation in the Maoist movement in this country. Today it is quite insignificant, but it caused great damage in the early '70s at a time when relatively large numbers of people were interested in Marxism-Leninism. Its line was thoroughly riddled with social-chauvinism, but this fact was not deeply grasped, even by many of its critics.
186. COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST), The British Working Class and its Party, London (CPBML) 1971, p.6.
187. P BULLOCK and D YAFFE, "Inflation, Crisis and the Post-War Boom" in Revolutionary Communist, 1975, p.20 note 108.
188. The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain, London (Larkin Publications) 1984, p.25.
189. BULLOCK and YAFFE, op.cit. p.7.
190. See the article "Oil crisis threatens international banking collapse" in Fight Racism Fight Imperialism, February 1983.
191. "The underlying strategy has been to try to create illusions amongst blacks by pretending that the battle against racism can be won if it is funnelled through the British state. We have shown that this is impossible..."
M.WILLIAMS et. al. "Racism, Imperialism and the Working Class", Revolutionary Communist, June 1979 p.27
192. The Revolutionary Road to Communism. p.19
193. Since this passage was drafted the Subcommittee's article was extensively revised and published in the 1985 edition of October. Our critical remarks do not apply to the article in this new form, but we are still including them here to show how advances in political line are inseparably linked with comradely criticism and struggle.
194. M. DUFFIELD, Racism and Counter-Revolution in the Era of Imperialism - A Critique of the Political Economy of Migration Paper presented to CSE Conference, Bradford, July 1981.
195. V.I.LENIN Imperialism op. cit. (Peking ed.) p.110

196. e.g. Mohssen MASSARAT, "The Energy Crisis" in P. NORE and T. TURNER eds. Oil and the Class Struggle London (ZED PRESS) 1980; S.AMIN La Loi de la Valeur et le Materialisme Historique Paris (Eds. de Minuit) 1977 Ch. VI.
197. see for example Marx's polemic with Weston in Wages, Price and Profit.
198. S. AMIN, La Loi de la Valeur... op. cit. p.36. The published English translation distorts the sense of this passage.
199. MARX Oeuvres Economie Tome I p. 1446.
200. C.J.ROBINSON Black Marxism London (Zed Press) 1983 p.323.
201. ibid. p.19.
202. The following represents only the beginning of an attempt to discuss some of the elements necessary if we are to explain the current capitalist crisis. We have mainly just assembled elements from the arguments of various people who have made important contributions to the study of this question; the main creative work in relation to our own situation remains to be done. In assembling these ideas we have tried to be critical and not eclectic. There are writers like Gunder Frank who seem to err in the direction of emphasising class struggle at the expense of national struggle. There are even writers like Arghiri Emmanuel who take an anti-working class stand; but these people have made important contributions on some issues of which we can make use if we aim for a consistent dialectical analysis, and criticise what is negative. Obviously in terms of overall world-view our views are very close to those of Samir Amin, whose contribution has been absolutely decisive, and whom we regard as a key figure in the contemporary M-L movement. There are also some differences with him: the most important is that we hold to the concept of dialectical materialism which he does not, and there are also a number of specific differences. It would have been cumbersome to have given footnotes on all the points where we have taken up ideas developed by Amin or to have referred positively or negatively to the ideas of other authors. Indeed it is not the basic purpose of the present article to conduct a full-scale critique of theories concerning the political economy of the capitalist crisis.
203. See Marx's letter to V.I. Zasulich, March 8 1881, where he says explicitly that "The 'historical inevitability' (of the process of the genesis of capitalism discussed in his Capital) is expressly limited to the countries of Western Europe (emphasis in original) - MARX AND ENGELS' Sel. Corres. op.cit. p, 339.
204. SU Shaozhi et. al. , Marxism in China, London (Spokesman Books) 1983 p. 58.

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203, Seven Sisters Road, London N.4.
