

*restricted circular*

# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



occasional internal bulletin  
of

Revolutionary Communist League of Britain



C O N T E N T S

\*1. China

The Primary Stage of Socialism and the development of Marxism.

source: Social Sciences in China

2. Australia

Statement of the Communist Party of Australia (ML)

source: Vanguard

3. Burma

On the 40th Anniversary of the Armed Struggle.

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A Brief outline of the Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands / MLPD

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Who do you mean when you say 'maoist' ?

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Comment: Another set of initials.

This is the third of an occasional internal bulletin designed to circulate correspondence and information on international contacts, making available their analysis and comments.

Often the result of bi-lateral meetings, these articles are for information and direct quotation is not advisable. There may be unacknowledged disagreements, thus articles should not be considered as official RCL positions. Circulation is restricted to League members unless otherwise advised

This article appeared in Social Sciences in China ( Vol. IX No. 1:1988) in a regular column on the latest thinking of Chinese Philosophers and social scientists. It provides a summary of a discussion on :

! THE PRIMARY STAGE OF SOCIALISM

AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARXISM

A forum discussing the statement on the primary stage of socialism in the report by Zhao Ziyang delivered at the CPC's Thirteenth National Congress entitled "Advance Along the Road of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" was held in Beijing on the morning of November 4th, 1987. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the China Society for Research in Marxism, Institute of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the journal *Marxism Research*. Yu Guangyuan, president of China Society for Research in Marxism, presided over the forum. More than 80 theoreticians, journalists and publishers attended the meeting.

## 1. A Major Development of Marxism

The consensus of the meeting was that the theory of the primary stage of socialism is the central content of Zhao's report. This was the first time that the CPC used the Marxist point of view to make an explicit, systematic, comprehensive and profound exposition of the theory. This should be deemed as an important breakthrough in the theory of scientific socialism and a major development of Marxism. Some participants talked about their understanding of the theory in the perspective of the history of evolution of Marxism. In the very beginning, Marx understood the development of the future society as such: It will be many years before communism can be established, which will undergo several phases namely, democratic republic, socialist republic, socialist-communist republic and pure communist republic. Then, in his article "Critique of the Gotha Programme," Marx put forward the theory of the first and a higher phases of communist society. The first phase of communist society will be a communist society "not as it has *developed* on its own foundation, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."

"In a higher phase of communist society," Marx pointed out, "after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and with it also the anti-thesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but itself life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly, only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" Marx's theory that communist society will develop in phases has an important significance, providing the basis of the methodology for probing the problem of phases of development of socialism for later Marxist scholars.

Lenin leading the Russian people not only turned socialism from theory into practice but also made significant contributions to the theory of development of the future socialist society. The Socialist October Revolution in Russia won its victory under conditions in which capitalism was underdeveloped, social productive forces were backward and small production was dominant, which was quite different from that envisaged by Marx and Engels, namely that the proletarian revolution would first triumph in several developed capitalist countries simultaneously. Proceeding from the realities in Russia, Lenin had his own understanding of the process of development and phases of socialism. First and foremost, he defined what Marx called the first phase of communist society as socialism. Second, he pointed out that from capitalism to communism it has to go through several phases: a transitional period from capitalism to socialism, socialism and a higher phase of communism. At the same time, he also pointed out that the socialist society itself is a process of development, i.e., from an underdeveloped socialism to developed socialism. These inferences by Lenin conform to the actual conditions of the Soviet Union and all economically backward countries after the victory of their proletarian revolution. Owing to his passing away too soon, Lenin was not able to make more concrete analysis of the development phases of later socialist society.

After Lenin, Stalin and his subsequent successors' understanding of the development phases of socialism in the Soviet Union underwent changes in the process of the practice of socialism. In the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union completed the nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture. In 1936, Stalin proclaimed that exploiting classes had been completely eliminated and socialism had been realized in the Soviet Union, which means "the first phase of communist society as called by Marxists had been realized." At the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Stalin declared in his summary report on the Party

Central Committee's Work: We are marching towards communism. Therefore, we have to surpass all the major capitalist countries economically. He also said, only by also surpassing all the major capitalist countries economically, can we expect that the Soviet Union will have abundant consumer goods, ample products, so that we can proceed from the transition of the first phase of communism to the second phase. And he believed that it would take ten to fifteen years to realize this. Later practice showed that these ideas of Stalin were quite at variance with the actuality.

After Stalin passed away, his successor Nikita Khrushchev was also impatient to go over to communism. In 1959, Khrushchev formally put forward his theory of comprehensively building up communism: At the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1961, Khrushchev, besides talking again about the period of comprehensively building up communism, declared that "we'll complete the build-up of communism within 20 years," and he believed "the present generation of the Soviet people will live under the system of communism." Obviously these opinions of Khrushchev did not conform with the reality of the Soviet Union either. The subsequent leaders of the Soviet Communist Party did not break away from the mistake of rashly trying to bypass the first phases as regards the problem of the development of socialism, though their formulations were somewhat different from Stalin's and Khrushchev's. It was not until Mikhail Gorbachev became the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that he for the first time said that the present Soviet society remained "in the phase of developing socialism" and he raised the demand of "perfecting the social relations of the developing socialism."

The understanding of the CPC of socialist society was mainly the same as that of the Soviet Union before the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee. After the session, the CPC restored the Marxist ideological line of seeking truth from facts and acquired a new understanding of development phases of socialism on the basis of summing up the historical experiences since 1949, positive and negative. In the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China" passed at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, it was for the first time clearly stated that "China's socialist system remains at its initial stage." This was repeated in the report of the Party Central Committee to the Twelfth Party Congress in 1982. In September 1986, in *The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC on the Guiding Principles for Building a Socialist Society with an Advanced Culture and Ideology* a preliminary exposition of the thesis was made, which says: Since China is still in the initial stage of socialism, we must apply the principle of distribution according to work and develop the socialist commodity economy and competition. Also, for a long time to come, we shall develop varied sectors of the economy, always en-

sure the dominant position of the public sector, and we shall encourage some people to become prosperous first, before the objective of common prosperity is achieved. This statement drew attention both at home and abroad. However, this was said in terms of building an advanced culture and ideology, therefore, it was done in a specific perspective, or, it was expounded in connection with socialist reconstruction, but was not and could not be a comprehensive exposition. Hence, great importance was not attached to it. The exposition made by Zhao Ziyang on the primary stage of socialism at the Thirteenth Party Congress is both comprehensive and very profound, making the theory fully established. We can very well say that a problem of overall importance in the contemporary socialist practice in decades since the passing away of Lenin has been solved. As a result, our socialist theory agrees with the realities better, the significance of which is immeasurable. The establishment of this theory provides the most solid theoretical foundation for China to build socialism with Chinese characteristics.

## 2. The Theoretical Foundation of Building Socialism

Building a socialism with Chinese characteristics has two implications: One is socialism, the other is Chinese characteristics. Socialism belongs to the category of universality while Chinese characteristics belong to that of particularity. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a combination of universality with particularity, that is, combining the universal truth of Marxism with the practice of China's socialist construction. To build socialism with Chinese characteristics means to build socialism proceeding from the Chinese national conditions. What are the most fundamental national conditions of China? The participants at the meeting believed it to be that the present Chinese society remains in the primary stage of socialism. It is of the first importance to the building of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the most essential basis on which to formulate and implement the correct line and policies.

Why should we say that China remains in the primary stage of socialism? The participants made analysis in terms of both history and reality. First of all, China used to be a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country with vast territory. During the more than one hundred years since the Opium War in 1840, it suffered repeated failures in the old democratic revolution and finally won victory of the new democratic revolution. Under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people overthrew the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capitalism and have embarked on the socialist road. It is precisely because the Chinese socialism has emerged from the womb of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society whose productive forces lagged far behind those of developed capitalist countries that Chinese

socialism is destined to go through a fairly long primary stage in order to accomplish industrialization and the commercialization, socialization and modernization of production, which many other countries have achieved under capitalist conditions. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, although China has embarked on the socialist road, entered the socialist society and its productive forces have seen a fairly large development, the backward state of its social productive forces have not been completely changed and its per capita gross national product (GNP) still ranks among the lowest in the world. The picture is very clear: out of a population of more than one billion, 800 million people live in rural areas and, for the most part, still use hand tools to make a living. A certain number of modern industries coexist with many industries that are several decades or even a century behind present-day standards. Some areas that are fairly developed economically coexist with vast areas that are underdeveloped and impoverished. A small amount of science and technology is up to the highest world standards while the scientific and technological level as a whole is low, and nearly one-quarter of the population is still illiterate or semi-literate. Zhao Ziyang said: "The backwardness of the productive forces determines the following aspects of the relations of production: socialization of production, which is essential for expanding socialist public ownership, is still at a low level; the natural economy and semi-natural economy constitute a considerable proportion of the whole economy; and the socialist economic system is not yet mature and well developed. In the realm of the superstructure, a number of economic and cultural conditions that are necessary if we were to promote a high degree of socialist democracy are far from ripe and decadent feudal and capitalist ideologies and the small-producers' forces of habit still have widespread influence in society and often corrupt Party cadres and public servants. All this shows that we still have a long way to go before we advance beyond the primary stage of socialism." In short, building socialism in a big, backward oriental country like China is something new in the history of the development of Marxism. We are not in the situation envisaged by the founders of Marxism, in which socialism is built on the basis of highly developed capitalism, nor are we in exactly the same situation as other socialist countries. So we cannot blindly follow what the books say nor can we indiscriminately imitate the examples of other countries. We have to proceed from China's actual conditions to find the way to build socialism with Chinese characteristics in the practice of integrating the basic principles of Marxism with the Chinese realities.

It is precisely on the basis of the scientific theory of the socialist primary stage that Zhao Ziyang put forward in his report the Party's basic line on building socialism with Chinese characteristics, namely, to lead the people of all Chinese nationalities in a united, self-reliant, intense and pioneering effort to turn China into a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and modern socialist country by making economic development our central task while adhering to the four cardinal

principles — that is, keeping to the socialist road and upholding the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Party and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought — and persevering in reform and the open policy. In brief, this line means making economic development the central task and adhering to the four cardinal principles and persevering in reform and the open policy. Many participants said this is a creative theoretical generalization of Marxism, and a significant result of the Party's ever deepening understanding of socialism. Many people present at the meeting believed that it can be very well said that this basic theory and line is the key to seeing and answering various questions and the essential basis on which to formulate policies in various fields at the present stage.

The participants also spoke freely and to their hearts content about the features in economic, political and cultural as well as in other fields in the primary stage. Some said: "The one central task" is a good formulation. In a country as economically backward as ours, it can only take economic development as the central task, there cannot be any other central task after the completion of the socialist transformation of private ownership. Deng Xiaoping once said, the basic task of a socialist society is to develop the productive forces, that is of particular significance to China. In the primary stage, we must strive to shake off poverty and backwardness, and it is all the more important to put the expansion of the productive forces at the center of our work. Whether it is helpful to expand the productive forces should become the point of departure in our consideration of all problems and the basic criterion for judging all our work.

In the discussion, the participants pointed out that to expand the productive forces, it is necessary to reform the existing structures including that of economy, politics, technology and culture, and to open to the outside world, because the rigid structures built up over the years have seriously hampered the development of the productive forces. Reform is the driving force of developing the productive forces, the way China must follow.

So far as ownership and distribution are concerned, the consensus at the meeting was that absolute perfection of public ownership and distribution according to work are not what is required in the primary stage of socialism. Instead, we can only develop diverse sectors of the economy with the public ownership at the dominant position and have diverse forms of distribution with distribution according to work as the principal form, and, with the objective of common prosperity in mind, we should encourage some people to become well-off first through honest work and lawful business operations. Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee, this has been clear in the guiding thinking of the Party. However, the understanding of the problem has not come to complete unity both within and outside the Party. There is this or that misunderstanding and deviation.

The theory of the primary stage of socialism established at the Thirteenth CPC Congress provides us with a powerful ideological weapon to more forcefully overcome various erroneous ideas and deviations so that the people of the whole country can more keep in step to build socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### 3. A Powerful Ideological Weapon

Just as the term "socialism with Chinese characteristics," the theory of "the primary stage of socialism" also has two implications: First, Chinese society is already a socialist society. We must persevere in socialism, never deviate from it. Second, China's socialist society is still in its primary stage. We must proceed from this reality and not try to bypass this stage. Many participants believed that this scientific thesis is a powerful ideological weapon for us to combat erroneous ideological deviations, Left and Right. Under the specific historical conditions of contemporary China, to believe that the Chinese people cannot take the socialist road without going through the stage of fully developed capitalism is to take a mechanistic position on the question of the development of revolution and that is the major cognitive root of Right mistakes. On the other hand, to believe that it is possible to skip over the primary stage of socialism, in which the productive forces are to be highly developed, is to take a utopian position on the issue, and that is the major cognitive root of Left mistakes. The theory of the primary stage of socialism is an antidote to the above-mentioned Left and Right erroneous understandings, and the only correct theory true to the fact. It is in perfect accord with the Chinese conditions.

In the long period of the primary stage of socialism we must maintain vigilance because neither Left or Right mistaken ideas will be completely eliminated owing to the fact that economic backwardness cannot be changed very soon and there are influences from the outside world. However, Left thinking, especially that in the form of adhering to obsolete ideas, and ossified. Left thinking poses a much more grave problem. We must take full account of this situation. Zhao Ziyang said: "The struggle to eliminate the interference and influence of the two erroneous tendencies — hidebound thinking and liberalization — will last throughout the primary stage of socialism. Since the old Left habits of thought are deep-rooted and since they are the source of the obstacles to reform and the open policy, the major task for quite a long time will be to overcome the hidebound thinking."

In the discussion, the participants analyzed and expounded that to overcome the Left mistaken deviations of the ossified thinking will be the main task for a fairly long time to come, taking into consideration of the historical experience of the international communist movement and the CPC in the more than 60 years since its

founding, as well as the problems in the present practice of the reform and implementation of the open policy. Some participants pointed out that the CPC committed both Right and Left mistakes in the course of the democratic revolution, but as a whole, the main danger was the Left. The Chinese communists represented by Mao Zedong overcame the Left mistakes and led the Chinese revolution to victory. Deng Xiaoping pointed out repeatedly that from 1957 to 1978 the Left problem delayed China from development for nearly 20 years. Recently he said again that it would not be easy to correct the Left thinking which has prevailed for several decades. We should mainly oppose the Left, for it has become a force of habit. Now few people in China oppose the ongoing reform, but when it comes to the formulation and implementation of specific policies, some are liable to recall with nostalgia the past, and habitual things would crop up and take effect. Deng further pointed out that we had interference from both the Left and Right, but the greatest danger was still the Left. The force of habit was stubborn, old ideas and concepts were deep-rooted in some people's minds, which are not easy to change.

Some participants reviewed the history since the founding of the People's Republic and said that starting from the late 1950s, influenced by the Left deviations, China was too impatient for quick results, and sought absolute perfection, believing that the productive forces could be dramatically expanded by relying simply on subjective will and on mass movements and that the broader the scale and the higher the level of the socialist ownership, the better. Also, for a long time, we relegated the task of expanding the productive forces to a position of secondary importance and continued to take class struggle as the key link. Many things which fettered the growth of the productive forces and which were not inherently socialist, or were applicable only under certain particular historical conditions, were regarded as "socialist principles" to be adhered to. Conversely, many other things which, under the socialist conditions, were favorable to the growth of the productive forces and to the commodification, socialization and modernization of production, were dubbed things capitalistic and to be opposed. As a consequence, a structure of ownership evolved in which undue emphasis was placed on a single form of ownership, along with a corresponding political structure based on overcentralization of power. All this greatly hampered the development of the productive forces and of the socialist commodity economy. This shows how important it is to oppose the ossified thinking, to completely free ourselves from the old ideas, old structures and old regulations. The historical lesson is clear as such: Being ossified in thinking and sticking to the past would inevitably lead to destruction of the productive forces and disaster for the people.

Why is it that the Left thinking has been so stubborn, difficult to overcome and sometimes looked so arrogant with strong backing? Those who attended the

ecting analyzed the problem in the following aspects:

Firstly, historically, Left thinking was in the dominant position for 20 of the 38 years since the founding of the People's Republic, in both the political and economical life and the realm of ideology. With this long time prevalence, things of the Left became deeply rooted and had widespread influence, which cannot be easily changed. With some comrades, the Left has become a force of habit. They could get things done in the old ways without a hitch and they are not receptive to new things, nor would they want any change in the *status quo*.

Secondly, viewed socially and in a class perspective, China used to be a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, where commodity economy was underdeveloped and peasants and the natural economy were in the dominant position. In the old China, the peasants were subjected to suppression and exploitation. They were not reconciled to their situation and would make revolution to overthrow the old system. But when they took part in the revolution, they tended to seek quick victory of the revolution and wanted to become prosperous as soon as possible in disregard of the subjective as well as the objective conditions. This way of thinking has been a ready hotbed for Left ideas in the CPC. Some of the prevailing Left concepts are actually linked to the small producers' conventional outlook. For instance, small producers are for "equalitarianism," those who take the Left concepts believe that "to allow a part of the people and areas to become prosperous first" means "the polarization of the rich and the poor." Small producers stick to the natural economy, those who take the Left concepts accuse that to develop the commodity economy means to develop capitalism. Small producers uphold closing the country to the outside world just like drawing a circle on the ground to serve as a prison to restrict their own activities, those who take the Left concepts consider the policy of opening to the outside world is to worship and have blind faith in things foreign. These are only a few examples.

Thirdly, viewed from the cognitive root. Here the main problem is a one-sided view of what being the Left. As some people see it, a person acting Left is but a cognitive problem, he who does so thinks of revolution and wants revolution, while a person being Right is matter of standpoint, he who acts right is no more revolutionary or rather is a counterrevolutionary. It is based on this one-sided understanding and the consequent erroneous attitude towards the Left and Right mistakes that has led to the opinion and psychological makeup: Better to be Left than Right, and rather be Left but never be Right. All this encouraged the repeated occurrence of Left mistakes which could not be overcome for a long time. As a matter of fact, there is no difference of better or worse between Left and Right, neither of them is more lovable, for neither of them are Marxism; both of them represent departure of the subjective from objective and theory from practice, endangering the revolution and construction. Viewed from the history of China's revolution and construction, the Left mistakes have brought graver harm.

At this late hour, if anybody should still uphold that it is better to be Left than Right, that only the Right must be opposed but not the Left, or that the Right must be fought against ruthlessly while the Left be dealt with lightly, it would tantamount to disregarding the historical experience, ignoring the main danger in reality, which is diametrically against the Party's guiding line that has been enriched and developed since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee. As regards the problem of combating the erroneous deviations, the only correct understanding and attitude are, as repeatedly pointed out by Deng Xiaoping and reaffirmed emphatically by Zhao Ziyang in his report, that to combat Left whenever it appears and combat Right whenever it occurs, and as a whole, the main task is to fight against the Left. Only by persisting in this understanding and attitude can we ensure China to march forward in the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Zhao Ziyang said in his report: "Marxism is a science that keeps developing in practice. In the contemporary era it is generally recognized that Marxism needs further extensive development." He especially reviewed the process in which the CPC has deepened its understanding of socialism since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee. In the process the CPC has developed a series of theories and views in the realms of philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism. These fundamental views constitute an outline of the theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. They provide initial explanations of such basic questions as the stages of China's socialist development, its tasks, motive forces, conditions, planning and the international environment. By elaborating these ideas, the Party has scientifically charted the course for our advance.

Zhao Ziyang also pointed out in his report:

The primary stage of socialism covers a long process of historical development. We do not yet know much about the conditions, contradictions and changes in this stage or the laws governing its development. Many of our principles, policies and theories have yet to be tested, and they will have to be constantly enriched, revised and improved through practice. We shall not let ourselves be bound hand and foot by treating isolated these from books as dogmas, nor shall we regard things that have proved effective in practice as flawless models: We must encourage people to explore new paths in practical work and to adhere to the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" in theoretical research. The standpoint of experience and practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the theory of knowledge. Without exploration, without innovation, and without comparison between different views, our cause will be lifeless. The hope for constant growth in our theory and our cause as a whole lies in our determination to give full play to the scientific spirit and creative vitality of Marxism and to arouse the courage of the whole nation to experiment and innovate.

# Statement of Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)

"SOCIALISM GUARANTEES THE EXTENSION  
OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM"

At the moment attention is focused on a debate, the fundamental essence of which concerns the dictatorship of the proletariat and the concepts of "freedom and democracy".

Whilst all international experience is watched and examined with interest, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) subscribes to the view that in the final analysis, the people of every country under the leadership of the Communist Party will determine their own road to socialism. They will do so free from all outside interference, and by the correct application of the principles of dialectical materialism to their own national characteristics, background and traditions.

**Socialism is incompatible with external interference or aggression.**

It is our belief that there is no such thing as democracy in general or dictatorship in general.

Under capitalism the form of state is in reality the dictatorship of the ruling capitalist class. This dictatorship can be expressed through a parliamentary democracy or the open violence of fascism.

Within the parliamentary form an illusion of freedom is created. This freedom is limited to the few who own the means of production. It is freedom for the rich to accumulate profits and the poor to starve. Nevertheless every avenue of

freedom should be utilised by the people to further their struggle for a better life.

Freedom of expression for the majority of people is virtually impossible when literally a handful of millionaires own the press, radio, TV, halls. In Australia Murdoch, Bond, Skase exercise this monopoly. The law courts, police and army ensure that any opposition expressed by the majority does not get out of hand.

The right to elect parliament creates the illusion that the majority determine policy. In reality an enlightened public opinion, vital for the operation of democracy, is denied by the manipulation of the previously mentioned millionaires who are upholders of the present system. In addition bribery and corruption are a common feature of parliamentary institutions preventing the will of the majority from determining events.

When it is no longer possible for the capitalist class to suppress the majority and at the same time allow certain democratic freedoms, the illusion of freedom is cast aside. Democratic rights are abolished. Outright violence, a fascist regime is substituted for parliamentary democracy. Irrespective of what form of the state apparatus operates, both uphold the economic, political rule of capitalism.

Sooner or later people's experience in struggle will lead them to conclude that their problems cannot be resolved within the system and that capitalism must be abolished. Guided by the principles of Marxism, the Communist Party will take

an appropriate part in every action.

The people will develop their own forms of struggle against the old regime.

This broad front of struggle will constitute the framework for and determine the form of a new state apparatus which will organise production, build a people's army to stamp out any attempts by the few to re-instate the old order and *introduce widespread democracy for the majority.*

The ownership of the means of production, access to the press, radio, all forms of propaganda and education will be in the hands of the majority of people. The concept of power in the hands of the people stands opposed to any form of bureaucratic control.

In essence this state apparatus will also be a dictatorship. But it will substitute the dictatorship of the majority of the people over the minority (the dictatorship of the working class and its allies) for the dictatorship of the minority over the majority. It will ensure the widest democracy. It will create a state apparatus to give expression to this democracy. Real representative bodies fully accountable to the people and with the right to recall unsatisfactory elected representatives will come into being. By doing away with the division between legislative and executive bodies, the illusion of freedom characteristic of bourgeois parliamentary democracy will be replaced by people's control over every facet of their lives.

Every fundamental change in the history of the people has consisted of the suppression of the previously dominant class. In

England in 1649 the monarchists, kings and noble barons who endeavoured to restore feudalism were suppressed by the representatives of the newly developing system.

In Russia in 1917, under the correct leadership of V.I. Lenin at the head of the Communist Party, the majority of the workers and peasants rose to sweep away the old system of exploitation. They established a new state apparatus expressed in the Soviets — elected councils of workers, peasants and soldiers.

They successfully repelled the armed resistance of the old exploiters who were joined by armies of intervention from around the world in an effort to restore the power of the landlords and capitalists.

It is regrettable but inevitable that in the process of struggle that in the process of unprecedented upheavals some excesses occur. Excesses experienced during the dictatorship of the people can in no way be compared with the excesses of the dictatorship of the capitalists, which is responsible for incalculable horrors. Starvation, torture, destruction of millions in imperialist and colonial wars are the hall mark of the old system.

In the process of struggle the form of state which best coincides with the characteristics of each country and the tasks undertaken by the people to build a society in which production is for use, and not the profit of a few, will be found.

The ruling class never lets-up in its attacks upon the people's struggles for peace and freedom.

They seize every opportunity, to undermine the basic principles of Marxist theory even at times utilising

the very name of Marxism, to create confusion around the general aims and objectives of communism and the position occupied by the dictatorship of the proletariat in that struggle.

The Communist Party, relying upon the broadest possible support from the majority of people in action, plays an essential role. Leadership in revolutionary struggle cannot be proclaimed. It must be won.

Each Communist Party continually sums up practice. It sets out to master fundamental Marxist principles and the essential characteristics of its own country. It has no interests separate and apart from the majority of its people.

Again it is almost inevitable that in determining the correct road for building a new socialist system, mistakes in the relationship between the people and the communist party will occur. All practice, positive and negative, needs to be continuously summed up and proper conclusions drawn. Collective responsibility must be accepted both for victories and defeats.

Providing the Communist Party listens to the wishes of the people, ensures that its policy gives expression to their every mood, such mistakes will be short-lived and easily rectified.

Throughout this socialist stage of society many new problems will confront the people.

Tackled from the standpoint of dialectical materialism we can have complete confidence that finally such problems will be resolved in favour of a Communist society guaranteeing freedom for all.

VANGUARD

July 13, 1988

On March 28, 1988 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Burma issued this statement entitled "The Proposal Presented to the Country by the Communist Party of Burma on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Armed Revolution in Burma". The statement is published in full.

## I

### The armed revolution in Burma is now 40 years old.

The "independence" of the country is also 40 years old now.

The armed revolution broke out just after such an "independence" because the ruling class denied the people's political activities and political freedom.

Instead, the people were subjected to a suppression of the highest degree — armed suppression. In other words, the masses have no other means but to take up arms inevitably when the ruling class resorted to armed counter-revolution.

We may categorise the ruling classes the armed revolution had to deal with during the past 40 years, as follows:

The first 10 years was the period of fighting mainly against the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) government and the latter 30 years or so is the period of fighting against the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) military government.

Even during the first 10 years of the struggle against the AFPFL government, the military clique headed by U Ne Win, which later became the present military regime, had been the mainstay of that government. Therefore, we can say that the military clique has been the main target of the armed revolution all along.

## II

The Communist Party of Burma has time and again asserted our position to solve the problem of civil war politically. We had negotiated with the military regime twice — the first time in 1963 and then again in 1980-81 to cease the civil war and re-establish internal peace.

The Communist Party of Burma, by taking into consideration the basic interests of the people had made the necessary concessions. During the negotiation, our party adopted a serious and business-like attitude.

However, the BSPP military regime only demanded to accept the one-party dictatorship of the BSPP and abolish the Communist Party, the People's Army and our Base areas. In fact they were trying to gain the terms which they had failed to achieve during these 40 years of military confrontation on the negotiating table. If so, why did the military regime ask for the terms which they know they can never achieve? Visibly, the military regime has idealistically decided to cling stubbornly to their one-party dictatorship of the BSPP and to solve the problem of the civil war only by military means.

During the 1980-81 peace negotiations, the military regime unilaterally declared that talks were over forever and ceased the negotiations. At that juncture, the Communist Party of Burma explained to them reasonably that we still desire to go on with the negotiations and that they should not close the door of the negotiating table permanently. But it only fell upon the deaf ears of the military regime which had made up its mind to obstinately trudge along the reactionary course of practicing one-party dictatorship of the BSPP and continuing the civil war.

Even after the talks had ended as mentioned above, the Communist Party of Burma urged the military regime time and again to negotiate whenever the occasion arises. If the military regime changes its present reactionary lines and policies, the Communist Party of Burma is always ready to hold talks with them. But the military regime had chosen to practice their one-party military dictatorship and wage the civil war desperately. Very recently, the government blatantly claimed that they will never hold talks with the Kachin and Karen armed revolutionary forces, and that they will wipe out these forces militarily. As long as the military regime is desperately carrying out the reactionary civil war, the Communist Party of Burma has no other choice but to wage the just people's war resolutely in defence of ourselves.

How stupid of the military regime to be unable to draw lessons from the hard fact that nothing resulted from their 40-year-long military efforts to wipe out the armed revolution forever!

## III

To gain independence, the multi-national people of Burma had relentlessly struggled for over a century. They had taken up arms against the British imperialists and the Japanese fascists. Thousands of noble patriots had laid down their lives writing the glorious pages of Burma's history.

The Communist Party of Burma, which was formed with advanced elements from the struggle of the anti-imperialist cause, has also taken a militant role in the front line of the fight for the cause of national independence since its inception. Numerous Communist Party members had, together with other glorious patriots, borne the brunt of the bloody ordeals and made indelible sacrifices.

When they were making sacrifices without blinking during the struggle for independence, the noble fighters had only one common ideal of building an independent Burma. Marching forward, they knew no hardship nor feared any sacrifices whenever they thought of building a united, integrated, peaceful, prosperous and progressive Burma.

At last, the "independence" which the people had so much longed for and shed blood over had been attained. To be precise, it is even 40 years old now. The state of Burma, which the ruling classes had built to their heart's content, is now fully materialised. The object of the social living conditions of the multi-national people of the so-called "independence" which the ruling class of Burma has been carrying out, is now nakedly unveiled. How do they appear? One can find a country, positioned among the world's poorest nations, still stationed at the 18th century mark, and in a shambles; people, toiling at the lowest level of living standards and mercilessly crushed under the iron heels of the military regime.

Who takes pride and who is satisfied with this state of affairs? Ne Win's military regime is the only one who takes pride and the imperialists are the only ones who are satisfied with this state of affairs. On the contrary, the great majority of the people of Burma is willing to change this present state of affairs as soon as possible.

## IV

Since 1985, the Communist Party of Burma had proposed the whole people as well as patriotic personages to change the present situation as soon as possible. This proposal coincided with the wishes of the people and consequently, they are in favour of it and demanded a change.

Under such conditions, Ne Win was also compelled to speak about making "changes" in the middle of 1987. There were even hints that "changes" will be made not only in the economic sphere but also in the political field. But the people of Burma, who are well accustomed to "Ne Win's way", bided their time and watched dubiously. What then is "Ne Win's way"? Pick a system or an ism or an issue which was popular at the time, take away its revolutionary, progressive essence and substitute it with reactionary, backward content, then utilise it to one's own likes. Such is "Ne Win's

way". Of course, there are many examples to prove it. Just look at their Burmese way to "socialism" which had deprived socialism of its revolutionary, progressive essence and substituted fascist bureaucratic capitalism in its place. It will be more clear if one looks at other institutions branded "socialist" or "people" such as: "socialist democracy", "socialist economy", "people's assembly", "people's militia", etc., etc.

A few months ago a speech made by Ne Win was broadcast to the nation. His speech contained a phrase worded, "though politically independent, economically not independent". This is a term the Communist Party of Burma had been asserting for the last 40 years. Ne Win had taken up this term and through "Ne Win's way" of metamorphosis, changed its essence. The real meaning of this term is to oppose imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic-capitalism and building an independent national economy on a sound reliable basis. Whereas Ne Win has deleted this revolutionary and progressive essence and replaced it with chauvinistic, fascist nationalism. Once, in that speech, he even brazenly threatened "you'll find yourselves in trouble".

Although Ne Win dared not lift a finger against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capitalism, he went so far as to insult his own nationality as an "idle" one.

From the above examples, it is quite obvious that Ne Win and Co. have neither the will nor the ability

to make a change. It is also crystal clear that they are crying "change" only to lead the infuriated masses astray and to benumb their militancy.

## V

The Communist Party of Burma in all seriousness, wishes to present the following proposals to the people, the patriotic revolutionary monks and the patriotic personages of Burma.

1. Abolish the present BSPP one-Party dictatorship military regime and form a provisional government.
2. Abolish the present constitution and draft and put forward a new constitution that can guarantee the people's democratic rights and demands.
3. The forthcoming provisional government must implement the following basic tasks:
  - (a) Cease the civil war and restore internal peace.
  - (b) Completely restore the people's democratic rights.
  - (c) Rebuild national unity.
  - (d) Develop national economy and gradually raise the people's living standards.
  - (e) Practice independent and neutral foreign policy in foreign relations.

To concretise these, it is necessary to exert all efforts by all means.

In order to realise the above-mentioned proposals, the Communist Party of Burma shall actively take part in the process with positive suggestions.

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## UPDATE

In July 1988, General Ne Win resigned from leadership of the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party after five months of sporadic but violent unrest against the government, in which about 200 were reported killed.

Brigadier SEIN LWIN was quickly appointed head of state and government as well as leader of the BSPP. Sein Lwin has a reputation for ruthlessness and for loyalty to Ne Win. He followed Ne Win through the army and was rewarded minor government posts after Ne Win's 1962 military take-over.

Sein Lwin quickly declared martial law in the capital, Rangoon, after protests at his appointment erupted. In early August, the Lon Htein riot police shot at thousands strong anti-government demonstrations, killing 100s and wounding more to try and disperse them.

The student-led opposition to police repression and worsening living conditions have called Sein Lwin a ruthless oppressor and a butcher. He has become the main target of their protest. Sein Lwin was responsible for the hated Lon Htein before taking overall power. He was responsible for the orders to "yike that, pyit that" (beat kill, shoot kill) given over police radios to disperse the demonstrations in March and June. Six hundred people are still being held from earlier protests.

In Burma, the ninth poorest nation in the world, with a foreign debt of \$ 3.8bn, basic food prices have spiralled and unemployment rampant in this nation of 38 million. There are no **plans** for fundamental political reform. One European diplomat warned :

" The people here have been pushed to the limit and they are going to react."

Meeting with comrade of the MLPD (Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany)  
held in early August 1988.

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The MLPD traces its origins back to the Sino-Soviet Polemic of the early 1960s. At that time it was argued that the emphasis should be theoretical work on the practical issues of class struggle as preparation for party building. In the beginning the organization was comprised mainly of working class youths, so rank-and-file work in factories developed cadre. Intellectuals were affiliated to the organization through mass organization. There was a limited focus for practical work but general propaganda on international and political questions. The organization was then called the Communist Workers' League of Germany: KABD. The theoretical emphasis was independently examining the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. This work laid the basis for understanding quite quickly the restoration of capitalism in China. Besides a continual analysis of revisionism the MLPD has undertaken theoretical investigation into state monopoly capitalism, which has an english edition.

By the beginnings of the 1980s preparations were deemed advanced enough to found the party. The MLPD were critical of those sixties MLs who were mainly intellectuals and asserted leadership over the working class and then subsequently disintegrated in the mid-70s. At its founding the MLPD had a 90% worker composition in its Central Committee and membership. Its chair was a mechanic by trade, Stefan Engel. The 1st Congress planned to widen political activity beyond the factory. By the 2nd Congress in 1985, the MLPD was organized in both factory and neighbourhood units (members distributed equally between the two) and activity in 130 towns; represented in most important but not all factories.

The recently held 3rd Congress (june 1988) was one of ideological unity. The MLPD had developed systematic rank-and-file work: 140 localised monthly papers/bulletins now produced, and at Whitsun organized a youth rally attended by 7,500 -- largest attendance so far. MLPD believes that conditions for class struggle are more advantageous and ML influence can grow. Of special importance to MLPD was the steelworkers struggle: a year long rank-and-file activity saw mass influence and temporary leadership in mass struggle; MLPD's largest group in steelworks increased 3-fold.

Three resolutions on further work were discussed at 3rd Congress:

1. There was to be a new offensive in party building utilising the forthcoming European Parliamentary elections under the slogan of "Workers and Farmers together against a Europe of the Monopolies"
2. With the changing class structure of Germany, work amongst the petty bourgeois intellectuals was of increasing importance, and the need to reorganize the ML League of intellectuals to strengthen the ideological depth of the MLPD, and developing it as a mass organization was decided.
3. It was decided to undertake the task of promoting the unity of MLs internationally and built for the 2nd International Conference of MLs in 1990. The 1st Congress saw unity on the nature of Gorbachev's revisionist course despite differences on other questions. The number of participants was small : 5 European parties and the Communist Party of Peru (Red Fatherland). There was a declared willingness for exchange and practical co-operation. There was the proposal to develop an International Information Exchange and Workers Aid Organization (Funds for strikes etc.)

The viewpoint of the MLPD is that given the state of ML parties a "new international" would not be possible, but that it is important that unity is on the basis of principle and not hang together for the sake of it. The agenda for the 2nd Conference would be proposed on basis of equal rights for ML parties.

MLPD has a weekly paper : Red Flag with a print run of 10,000. It produces two monthly youth magazines, a farmer's magazine and quarterly economic newspaper.

Its theoretical journal, Revolutionary Way has reached 24 issues. Its editor Wille Dickhut was instrumental in the formation of the MLPD. He was a KPD member since 1920, a survivor of Dachau after captured for resistance activity and an influential, but not C.C. member when expelled from KPD in 1960s.

The MLPD is developing a film and video library, and its next project is a film entitled: A Journey Into the Country of Apartheid.

The Basic Programme and Practical Programme of the MLPD as adopted at the 1st Congress in June 1982 are available in English editions.

While never participating members of Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, and critical of its leading lights, the MLPD Basic Programme states :

" The teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung and the defence of the idea of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution form the essential foundation for the formation of a new international communist movement."

The MLPD believes :

" As a result of the revisionist degeneration of the Communist Party of China following the death of Mao Tsetung, capitalism was also restored in the People's Republic of China."

The MLPD has produced translation of two pamphlets explaining their reasoning on this matter. A translation of the MLPD's work on the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union is to appear in the winter of 1988.

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**REVOLUTIONÄRER  
WEG**



**Probleme des Marxismus-Leninismus  
Theoretisches Organ der MLPD**



## WHO DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY 'MAOIST'?

By MAE NGAI

John Trinkl's 3-part series (Guardian, Aug. 21, Sept. 4 and 11) on the history of the left and the party-building movement provided some useful perspectives. While pointing out some weaknesses of the left, Trinkl did not cast the history of our movement in an entirely negative light and urged activists to pay attention to concrete political work.

Trinkl and some of those who responded to his articles, however, raised broad allegations against the so-called Maoist sector of the communist movement of the 1970s. Charges ranged from collaboration with U.S. imperialism to ultrasectarian "vanguardism." The League of Revolutionary Struggle is mentioned in passing as the last remaining representative of this "Maoist" trend and thus by association is laden with all the negative baggage from the past.

Several points need to be made:

First, Trinkl and others, in speaking of the "Maoist" sector invariably refer to that part of the left that came out of the white student movement. But social democrats, Trotskyists, anarchists and other tendencies came out of the white student movement as well. Characteristics attributed to "Maoism" were actually problems the white student movement and most trends that came out of it suffered from as well: namely, individualism, chauvinism, commandism, dogmatism, impetuosity, inexperience.

Secondly, the sector of the new communist movement that considered itself sympathetic to China during the 1970s never was unified in its outlook. The positions of groups differed over questions such as party building, Angola, the evaluation of the gang of four, the theory of the three worlds and the Afro-American national question, among many others.

### NEVER SLAVISH

Third, while some groups may have slavishly followed what they believed was the international line of the Communist Party of China during the 1970s, the League maintained its independent views. We never sided with U.S. imperialism or encouraged a "united front" with the U.S. bourgeoisie, supported the Shah of Iran, or attacked the MPLA in Angola, or any other such positions. Furthermore, the League has never considered itself "the vanguard organization of the U.S. proletariat."

Our differences with these points in part explain why we never organizationally united with those who held those perspectives. While we admired and respected the revolutionary contributions of the Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, we always maintained that the focus of our attention had to be placed on solving the concrete problems of the socialist revolution in the U.S. We never called ourselves "Maoist."

Fourth, while Trinkl acknowledged that the dynamics of the new communist movement that emerged from the Black liberation movement possessed its own characteristics, he did not elaborate. Neither did he mention the communist movement that came out of the other oppressed nationalities, such as Chicanos, Latinos and Asians. This is a major weakness, since large numbers of oppressed nationality activists continue to be active in the revolutionary movement.

The League has to be examined in this context. We remain one of the largest communist organizations in the U.S., composed of over 75% oppressed nationalities and over 70% from working-class backgrounds. For Trinkl to assess only the experience of those organizations that primarily came out of the white student movement one-sidedly and narrowly defines the communist movement.

Fifth, Trinkl focuses on the failures of our movement, on the organizations that collapsed and the efforts that never reached fruition. To be sure, there were more setbacks than success stories, but the task is to determine what enabled certain groups to survive and grow, what set apart their experiences from those who failed.

The League continues to develop as a Marxist-Leninist organization in part because many of our members have been involved in the mass struggle for fifteen, twenty years. While we have and continue to make our share of mistakes, we have done our work from the perspective of trying to solve the concrete problems of the revolution in the U.S. No other consideration, such as allegiance to another party, or a need for "orthodoxy" has governed how we developed our political outlook.

Like others, many of us in the League became revolutionaries in the 1960s not because of the polemics in the international communist movement, but because of our experience in the struggle against national and class oppression. And we took up Marxism-Leninism because it provided the clearest explanation of this oppression and an outlook that indicated the way forward. We have always tried to apply Marxism-Leninism creatively, to understand the particular conditions of the U.S. and what it will take to make the socialist revolution.

We did not join the Communist Party USA in the 1960s, not because of the international polemics, but because from our own experience we saw their failure to provide any revolutionary alternative. The CPUSA called Malcolm X a police agent, dismissed the Black Panther Party, and with such positions, insured that a whole generation of revolutionary activists would turn away from it.

The problem facing the left today is, with a movement that is splintered and appears at an ebb, what is the way forward? We believe that the left must strive to integrate with the struggles of the people and on the basis of this experience, study and the lessons of other progressive forces, step by step solve the immediate and strategic problems of making the socialist revolution. We also believe the left must find ways to work together despite many differences that will not quickly or easily pass. Revolution in the U.S. will be a protracted process. For every day the left does not work together, we only hurt ourselves.

Many individual activists are unaffiliated or even leery of left organizations. Our hope is that in the course of working together against imperialism unaffiliated individuals as well as organized left groups can begin to find a common ground for more trust, discussion, struggle and ultimately greater unity.

The Guardian - U.S. weekly  
January 29th 1986

Mae Ngai is with the League of Revolutionary Struggle.

## COMMENT : A NEW SET OF INITIALS ON THE SCENE

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In the first issue of "International Review" space was given to a commentary that focused on the liquidationist crisis that has plagued the revisionist CPGB in recent years. Recent developments among dissent and expelled members opposed to the increasingly Kinnockite CPGB has resulted in a new set of initials you may come across : C.P.B. By simply dropping "Great" from its title, some 'tankies' have announced their re-birth as the Communist Party of Britain.

The CPB came to light at its "re-establishment" Congress at North London Poly over the weekend of April 23-24 this year. One of the speeches to the assembled faithful was given by Andrew Rothstein, veteran of the founding congress of the CPGB in July 1920. Despite the CPB's attempt to claim a revolutionary heritage by linking itself to the early CPGB, what the proceedings confirmed was that the CPB was essentially a split from the CPGB, made up of an assortment of Communist Campaign Group and Morning Star supporters. Initial claims that a "re-established" party would "organise the majority of communists in Britain" have been scaled down in the light of a membership of over a thousand.

However, the CPB is essentially a product of the degeneration and disintegration of the Moscow approved "communist movement". In reality the CPB has only "re-established" the CPGB of the 1970s. The Preparatory discussion document, "The Re-establishment Congress of the Communist Party -- A Perspective", firmly anchored the organization in the utopian and reformist British Road to Socialism. This programme is said to need "up-dating".

That the CPB was born out of opposition to the "Euros" rather than the product of ideological unity and political principle is demonstrated by the filtration with the New Communist Party. Ex-BL militant Derek Robinson's remarks on the NCP at the Congress have been edited out of the published report of its proceedings. He said:

" We're going to have formal discussions with our comrades in the NCP and other communist organizations ... on the basis that we can create the objective conditions to unite to form that single party of Britain that is the vanguard of the working class."

NCP leader Eric Trevett welcomes such overtures despite the fact that he followed the late Sid French and Surrey Party District in breaking away from the CPGB in 1977 on the basis of opposition to the 'British Road...' which the CPB takes as its political programme.

With no paper, no pamphlets, no journal, it is this selection of the Congress proceedings published that is evidence that CPB exists. It has given rise to the thought that people join it in order to retire from active politics. Indeed print worker, and part-time General Secretary Mike Hicks ( elected by 17 votes, against 14 for Derek Robinson by the executive committee) promises only two editions of the CPB's theoretical journal this year. CPB says it is short of money; £4,000 was raised for its launch against a target of £25,000.

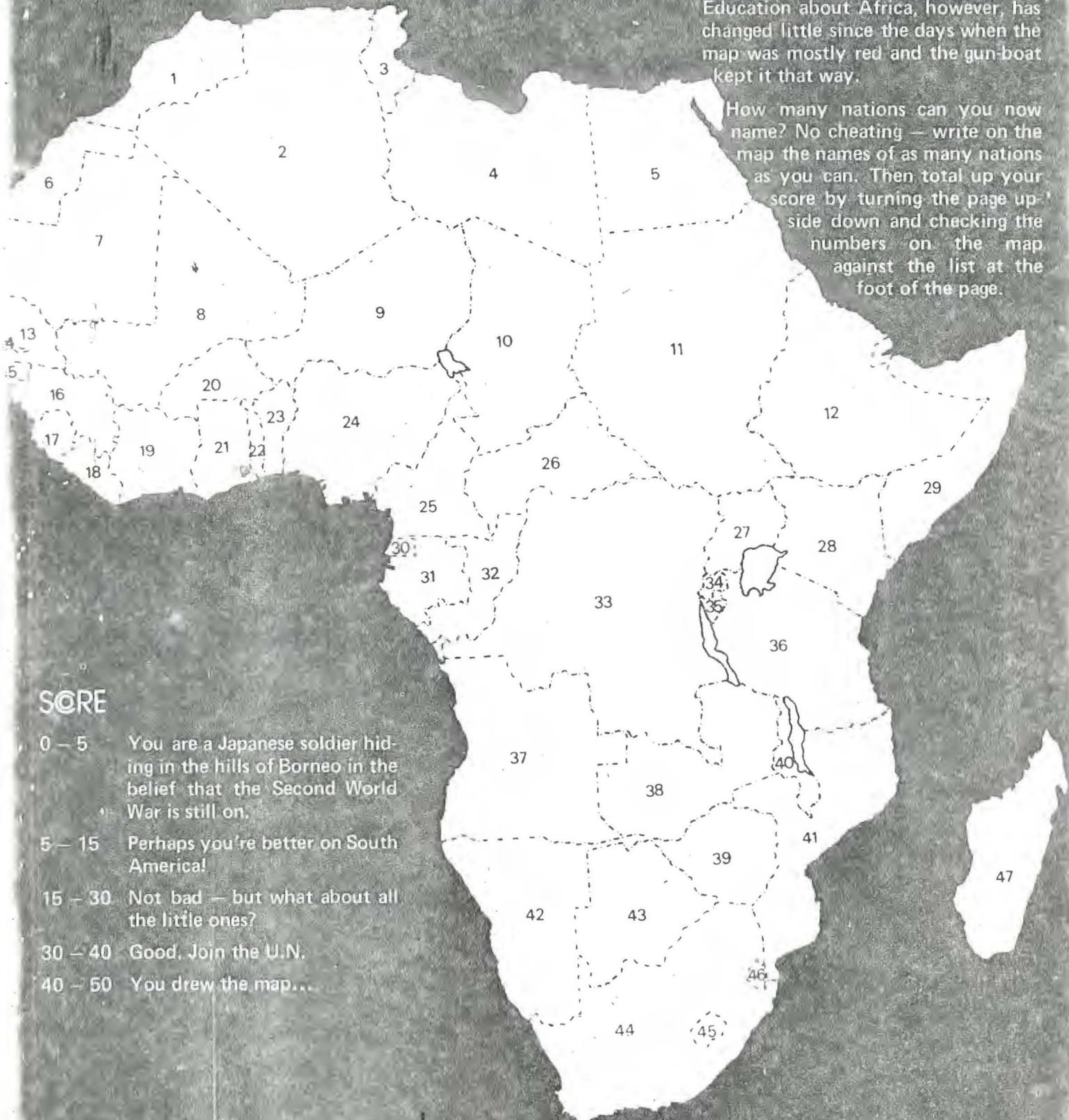
The real political weakness of the CPB's enterprise is its adherence to supporting the return of a Labour government so as to "open up the road to socialism". The Labourism of the CPB is reinforced by its dependence on Tony Chater's Morning Star. While CPB members are constitutionally bound to sell the Star, it will be independent of CPB control, just as it made itself independent of the CPGB. The MS describes itself as a "broad labour movement paper". Some critics of the CPB suggest that instead of the party having a paper, the paper will have a party !

# How Many Nations Can You Name?

The map of Africa has changed a lot since colonial times. There are now over 40 nation states, 33 of them less than fifteen years old — and many of them are moving out of the wings and onto the centre of the world stage.

Education about Africa, however, has changed little since the days when the map was mostly red and the gun-boat kept it that way.

How many nations can you now name? No cheating — write on the map the names of as many nations as you can. Then total up your score by turning the page up-side down and checking the numbers on the map against the list at the foot of the page.



## SCORE

- 0 — 5 You are a Japanese soldier hiding in the hills of Borneo in the belief that the Second World War is still on.
- 5 — 15 Perhaps you're better on South America!
- 15 — 30 Not bad — but what about all the little ones?
- 30 — 40 Good. Join the U.N.
- 40 — 50 You drew the map...

1 Morocco; 2 Algeria; 3 Tunisia; 4 Libya; 5 Egypt; 6 Spanish Sahara; 7 Mauritania; 8 Mali; 9 Niger; 10 Chad; 11 Sudan; 12 Ethiopia; 13 Senegal; 14 The Gambia; 15 Guinea-Bissau; 16 Guinea; 17 Sierra Leone; 18 Liberia; 19 Ivory Coast; 20 Upper Volta; 21 Ghana; 22 Togo; 23 Dahomey; 24 Nigeria; 25 Cameroon; 26 Central African Republic; 27 Uganda; 28 Kenya; 29 Somali Democratic Republic; 30 Equatorial Guinea; 31 Gabon; 32 Congo Brazzaville; 33 Zaire; 34 Rwanda; 35 Burundi; 36 Tanzania; 37 Angola; 38 Zambia; 39 Zimbabwe (Rhodesia); 40 Malawi; 41 Mozambique; 42 Namibia; 43 Botswana; 44 South Africa; 45 Lesotho; 46 Swaziland; 47 Malagasy.