

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

I N T E R N A T I O N A L D I G E S T
NOVEMBER 1993

MAO ZEDONG CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION

The Centre for Social Studies in Utrecht, Netherlands, and the Workers' Education Centre in Gelsenkirchen, Germany organised an international seminar on November 6/7 on the occasion of the 100th birthday of Chairman Mao.

About 800 attended the seminar and more than 1000 the public rally which saw the adoption of the **General Declaration on Mao Zedong Thought** [distributed in this summer for League study and discussion]. Leading Marxist-Leninists from across the world were present, *writes the League representative DM*, along with representatives from the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, China experts and non-party people. The structure of the seminars took the form of presentations and then contributions from the floor, with translations provided in English, French, Spanish and German.

Jose Maria Sisson opened the weekend with a comprehensive analysis of Mao's contributions and provided the theme of the weekend in his discussion of "New Democracy" and class struggle under socialism. The overall thrust of the weekend recognised Mao's contribution to revolutionary theory and practice, especially around the concept of "New Democracy" and a large majority of participants defended the Cultural Revolution.

There were differences expressed within that broad agreement such as heavy criticism of the Great Leap Forward. In a discussion on Mao's analysis of the world situation the leader of the PTB criticised from the floor, the characterisation of the Soviet Union as "social-fascist" and was heard in near silence when he described Mao as acting in a "bourgeois nationalist" manner. This prompted the Afghan participants to reply that such criticism could only be raised because the Afghan invasion did not occur in Europe. Their experience of Soviet occupation fully justified calling the Soviet Union "social-fascist". The weekend was part of a process for Marxist-Leninists to share experiences, exchange views and uphold Mao's contribution to Marxism.

Besides individual communists from Afghanistan, Austria, USA, organisations represented were: Revolutionary Communist Party of Argentina, Bangladesh Worker's Party, Labour Party of Belgium, Action Socialiste (Canada), Revolutionary Alternative Movement (Finland), Communist Organisation Marxist Leninist/Proletarian Way (France), Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, Erikos (Greece), Italian Marxist-Leninist Party, ERNK - Liberation Movement of People in Kurdistan, Communist Organisation of Luxemburg, Rode Morgen (Netherlands), Workers Communist Party (Norway), Communist Party of Peru/Red Fatherland, Communist Party of Philippines, Communist Union of Spain, Revolutionary Construction (Switzerland), Turkish Communist Party ML Hareketi, TKP/ML Bolsevik Partizan (Turkey), Communist Party of Uruguay, Revolutionary Communist Party of the USA, Union of Progressive Movement (Zaire).

A number of academics spoke including Prof. Pao-Yu Ching, Karam Khelia, Prof Hari Sharma, Prof Alice Guillermo, Karrim Essak, Prof Gary Leupp, Prof Carol Andreas, Prof Henry Park.

The Centre of Social Studies plans to publish papers presented at the International seminar in a two volume celebration of the 100th anniversary of Mao Zedong.

LIST OF MODERATORS, SPEAKERS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

I. Theory and Practice of New Democratic Revolution under Working Class Leadership

Moderator: Pal Steigan

Speakers:

1. Jose Maria Sison, Comprehensive Explication of the New Democratic Revolution in China
2. Karrim Essack, Theory and Strategic Line of People's War
3. Prof. Hari Sharma, Using Contradictions To Make New Democratic Revolution
4. Prof. Alice Guillermo, Mao On Culture, Art and Literature

Resource Persons: Klaus Arnecke, Prof. Pao-Yu Ching, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Otto Vargas

II. Mao's Theory and Practice of Socialist Revolution and Construction

Moderator: Jose Maria Sison

Speakers:

1. Prof. Pao-Yu Ching, Comprehensive Explication of the Socialist Revolution and Construction in China
2. Klaus Arnecke, Proletarian Dictatorship and Class Struggle in Socialist Society
3. Raymond Lotta, Mao's Last Great Battle
4. Prof. Carol Andreas, Role of Women in Socialist China

Resource Persons: Carlos Echague, Stefan Engel, Luis Jalandoni, Haider Akbar Khan Rano

III. Mao's Struggle against Modern Revisionism and the Theory and Practice of Continuing Revolution

Moderator: Otto Vargas

Speakers:

1. Dun Yuan Hsu and Pao-Yu Ching, Mao's Theory on Capitalist Restoration in Socialism
2. Henry Park, On Capitalist Restoration in China
3. Carlos Echague, Theory of continuing revolution and the Proletarian Dictatorship

Resource Persons: Dieter Klaudt, Emil de Villa, Prof. Hari Sharma

IV. The World Significance, Relevance and Influence of Mao Zedong Thought

Moderator: Klaus Arnecke

Speakers:

1. Otto Vargas, In Asia, Africa and Latin America
2. Stefan Engel, In Industrial Capitalist Countries
3. Prof. W.F. Wertheim, The Mao Model of Development for the Third World
4. Giovanni Scuderi (to be read by Dario Granito), Mao on Proletarian Internationalism

Resource Persons: Karrim Essack, Prof. Gary P. Leupp, Prof. Hari Sharma, Jose Maria Sison

PALESTINE: SELLOUT OR A STEP IN THE STRUGGLE ?

The agreements signed between the PLO and Israel in Washington in September have already made a big impact in the Middle East writes David Evans. In Israel, there has been a significant shift in favour of the deal among the public, forcing the main opposition party to consider changing its position in order not to risk a massive loss of support at the next elections. Jordan has pushed ahead with its own discussions with Israel. The Syrian regime was furious that the PLO had made a separate deal with Israel, feeling that this weakened its own prospects for an agreement that would give it back the Golan heights.

Among Palestinians, opinions about what has been agreed differ widely. The divisions among the political organisations are relatively clear. Fatah, the largest organisation within the PLO, has pretty decisively supported what has been agreed. A little more critically, so have the Palestinian People's Party [the former CP] and one wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. On the other hand, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the other wing of the DFLP, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and a coalition of smaller organisations with headquarters in Damascus have denounced what has been agreed as a betrayal.

Things are more complicated at the popular level. In the West Bank, and particularly in the Gaza Strip, between 60% and 70% of the people support the agreement. The intense struggles since the Intifada began in 1987 have put a great strain upon them. They have not only taken physical losses, but seen their economic situation worsen drastically [especially since the Gulf Crisis] and the erosion of their social cohesion. For them, something which seems to stand a good chance of taking the Israeli army off their streets looks inviting. Of course, the attitude of the Palestinians in the refugee camps in the Lebanon is very different. Even if a final settlement did result in a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where will that leave them? Many feel that the PLO is gradually dropping the demand for their return to their lost lands in favour of a handful to the projected state and abandoning the rest to "resettlement" in the Arab states.

The question posed in the article's title appears to set out the two alternative interpretations of the Washington Accords as seen from the solidarity movement, but does not allow for the complexity of the situation. The PLO has given up a lot: in "giving up terrorism", it has relinquished the armed struggle for Palestinian goals; it has also, in essence, conferred legitimacy upon the Israeli state by recognising its "right to exist" and agreeing to amend those parts of the Palestinian National Charter which deny that. The accords provides for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank town or region [still to be agreed which] of Jericho and from the Gaza Strip, but its troops will still be responsible for the security of Israeli settlements there, and reserve the right to pursue Palestinians who have attacked them elsewhere into those areas. In any case, Israel had found the Gaza Strip increasingly burdensome: a leading military commentator this summer argued that it had lost the battle for the Strip and now needed a face-saving way to get out - which it now has.

Many Palestinians fear that the interim agreement will become the final one, with the interim Palestinian administration remaining confined to running those internal affairs which Israel permits and policing the Palestinian people. The most difficult issues are only to be discussed in three years' time. These include the status of Jerusalem, the refugees [i.e. half the Palestinian

people), the Israeli settlements and the final status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

What have the Palestinian people gained? Israel has recognised the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinians. There will indeed be a military withdrawal by Israel from nearly all the Gaza Strip, Jericho and the major population centres of the West Bank in the very near future. Certain functions are to be handed over to the interim Palestinian authority, such as control over health and education. By July 13th 1994, internationally supervised elections are to be held. The PLO's contention that the current agreements will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state is denied by Israel, but if the elections take place as planned, it would be very difficult for Israel then to stop the resulting body using its representative status to push for independence. What the quality of that independence would be is another question, given the economic ties between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the political restrictions which Israel is seeking to maintain. Other gains in the near future will include the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners, and the beginning of a process of return to their homeland for people driven out in 1967 and later, although Israel intends that this should be slow and limited.

All in all, the accords represent a defeat for the Palestinian people. The PLO, in a highly undemocratic manner, has conceded a lot and gained little. There is serious risk of inter-Palestinian strife breaking out over this, although all the major factions are committed to seek to avoid violent conflict with each other. However, it has to be acknowledged that the PLO was in an extremely weak position, with no dependable international allies, with its funds running out because of the actions of the oil-rich states in cutting off support because of the PLO's position on the the Gulf War and the Intifada was weakening. What has to be done now is to carry on solidarity work with the Palestinians, showing the many people who think that the struggle is over that this is wrong. Given the likelihood that the coming years will be a time of serious difficulties among the Palestinians, and that there is the danger of the PLO being dragged into some rather sordid collaboration with Israel, the stress in solidarity work should be laid on support for the Palestinian people as a whole, and upon specific fields of work and demands which are common to all major nationalist factions, such as full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the right of return for all Palestinian exiles and the release of all Palestinian prisoners.

The Palestinian struggle is far from over, but it is proving extremely tortuous and protracted.

Further information available from:

Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Box BM PSA, London WC1N 3XX

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SENDERO LUMINOSO'S NEW PATH ?

In a televised message, the movement's ideological instigator Abimael Guzman called on the Communist Party of Peru (better known as the Shining Path) to back truce talks with the Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori.

On October 3, Guzman "analysing the concrete situation" argued that his followers should take the "great historical decision [to] fight for a peace accord". On October 9, he said government free market reforms had "achieved objective advances...laying the basis for the economic process and carrying out the reform of the state."

Since the capture in September 1992 of Abimael Guzman, the Shining Path, has been resilient in maintaining its armed struggle but has been hit hard by a military offensive that has seen 15 members of the 19-strong Central Committee arrested and an estimated half of its active militants either killed or detained - some 2400 in all - and the collapse of the Party's urban apparatus in the big coastal cities where the majority of Peruvians live. There has been some criticism of Guzman's insistence on developing an urban strategy at an early stage of the people's war by those party leaders who insist on the priority of developing "peasant support bases" in the Quechua-speaking highlands.

Guzman's televised appearance is seen as an attempt to salvage what he can after the smashing of the tight, centralised leadership he imposed prior to his arrest. The cellular structure of the Party militants meant it has retained its rural strength particularly in the Upper Huallaga valley, but even here it faces some 300,000 peasants organised in army-sponsored local militias and the counter-insurgency program has reduced the abuses which often drove peasants into the arms of Sendero.

Guzman's call for talks was described by Carlos Tapia, an expert on Sendero who knew Guzman in his early days as a provincial academic, as "an attempt to reimpose his authority by an audacious new initiative, in the hope that he can take the majority with him even if Sendero splits over the new policy".

CHINA: WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION UNDERMINES RULING PARTY

Official Chinese government sources report that ten per cent of crimes investigated this year were committed by a Communist Party or government official. "Embezzlement and bribery, covering huge sums of illicit money is now typical of crimes of the sort which involve chiefly people in powerful positions" said China's top investigating and prosecuting official, Mr Zhang Siqing. 5040 officials have been charged with corruption in the first nine months of 1993. Executions of corrupt officials has formed part of a nation-wide anti-corruption campaign launched in August.

Corruption is now so widespread that bribes are a common cost of doing business and with officials abusing their power, graft is the worst since the notoriously corrupt nationalists were ousted in 1949. Party and State officials have taken to heart the slogan "To Get Rich is Glorious". Anger at corruption was one of the issues behind the 1989 Tian Anmen Square protest crushed by the military.