

CONTEMPORARY REVISIONISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION .

There is a fable about man and the crocodile which has achieved popularity in some working-class circles in South Africa. According to this fable, the crocodile is a beast of leisure which is traditionally lazy and likes to lie basking in the sunshine; a man may stand right next to the crocodile and is in no fear of attack provided he keeps absolutely still. But should the man shake a leg he risks being the victim of a most vicious assault by the crocodile.

As a lesson in nature this fable is interesting enough; as a lesson in politics it is even more significant because it illustrates the relationship which at present exists between the majority of revolutionaries and a small group of 'political crocodiles' who are preventing the men and women of our country from drinking in the life-giving river of Marxism-Leninism.

The contradiction which exists between these two opposing forces in South Africa's working-class movement is presented in a variety of ways: as a conflict between those who are activists in close touch with the masses and those who conduct politics from the ease of their armchairs; or as a conflict between the 'working-class group' and a 'middle-class group'; or between those who are honest and those who are politically dishonest. The 'crocodiles' for their part present the conflict purely and simply as one between personalities. Any differences which have arisen, they assert, in no way result from any ideological divergence but because of a difference of opinion about which individuals should occupy the leading positions in various liberatory organisations. At the most, they say, tactical differences have arisen from time to time, for example as to when a particular boycott should start or begin etc. etc. They lay all the blame for the disputes, rivalries and splits which have today infected every branch of the liberatory movement, on 'factions, cliques and personalities' or on a 'spirit of defeatism'. In other words, the manifestation of the conflicts is pinpointed as being the root cause of these conflicts. And despite all the threats and resolutions about discipline, caucussing and the like, the conflict grows, becomes wider and deeper and more and more reveals two fundamentally hostile forces within the movement. Until this contradiction is resolved South Africa's working-class and liberatory movement will remain in the doldrums and serious damage will be done to the future of the whole movement. The working-class will be unable to assert its leadership in the struggle for socialism and in the whole democratic movement, until the issues are resolved.

In our view, none of the ways in which the conflict between these forces has been presented is an adequate description of its real nature. It is useless ~~to~~ to explain away the conflict either as being due to the malicious intent of one or other of the groups or as due to the personalities engaged in the conflict. It is essential to be able to distinguish behind the external, transient factors what exactly constitutes the objective basis of this conflict - a conflict which has not developed along straight lines or in a simple fashion, but which has given rise to many contradictory tendencies. It is a conflict, moreover, which has been veiled and suppressed by conditions of illegality and external attack by the class enemy, and as well by the extremely skilful way in which the 'political crocodiles' have maintained and entrenched their positions in South Africa.

What is the real nature of this conflict ?

We stand entirely on the basis of the theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin - a theory which has not only correctly interpreted the world, but has become a guide to action for millions of people. The revolutionary Marxist-Leninists in South Africa wish to march at the head of the masses, basing their activity on a sober analysis of the objective state of affairs, interpreting life correctly in order to help the masses in changing it. On the other hand, there is a small but at present dominant group who - in the name of Marx, Engels and Lenin and under the disguise of the Party of Lenin - have adopted a position fundamentally hostile to Marxism - Leninism. They have incorrectly assessed the situation in this country and have gone along the path of right-wing opportunism. That is, they are paralysing the fighting initiative of the workers, following a policy which reduces the working-class movement to a petty-bourgeois auxiliary of the capitalist system. Because they represent a tendency within the working-class movement which is hostile to Marxism-Leninism, and which nevertheless tries to sanctify itself under the names of the founders of the science of socialism and communism, they may be described as contemporary revisionists of Marxism-Leninism.

Lenin said : ' The teaching of Marx is all-powerful because it is true', and that ' the immediate task of this theory is to reveal all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in modern society, to trace their evolution, to prove their transitory nature, the inevitability of their transformation into another form, and in this way to serve the proletariat so that it may put an end to every kind of exploitation as quickly and as easily as possible.' (Lenin's italics).

Precisely because the views and deeds of the contemporary revisionists in South Africa are not true to real life, do not reveal the antagonism and exploitation in modern society, and fail to apply the methods of revolutionary dialectical materialism, we can justly say that they have distorted Marxism-Leninism. And above all, because they have failed to do what Lenin regarded as so crucial, namely ' to serve the proletariat so that it may put an end to every kind of exploitation as quickly and as easily as possible' they have done serious harm to our movement and have proved themselves incapable of leading it.

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II . WHAT IS REVISIONISM ?

Stalin defined Marxism as 'the science of the laws governing the development of nature and society, the science of the revolution of the oppressed and exploited masses, the science of the victory of socialism in all countries, the science of building a communist society.' This science represents the sum total of the lessons learned by the working-class and its allies in the world-wide, century-long battle against the exploiting classes. 'The historical progress of a given labour movement' says the American Communist, William Z. Foster, 'is to be measured directly by the extent to which it has mastered and absorbed the principles of Marxism.' (History of the Three Internationals, (New York, 1955) p.53)

Foster (ibid.) clearly explains the foundation of revisionism:

'During the course of the class struggle the working-class on its way finally to acquiring a Marxist consciousness, either spontaneously generates or absorbs from hostile classes, many erroneous conceptions about its position in society and the way for it to emancipate itself. Thus originate many movements in labour's ranks, referred to by Marx as "sects", but now generally known in Marxist terminology as "right" and "left" deviations. Originally some of these sects, for example, the Utopian socialists, played a constructive role, but as the labour movement matured and expanded they became reactionary. Usually these "sects" or "deviations" have had a grain of truth in them. That is, they are based upon necessary working-class ideas, organisational forms or tactics, which by distortion, exaggeration and misapplication are twisted entirely out of their real significance. Frequently, the sects also build their own specific conceptions of how to do away with capitalism and to construct socialism. These sects, always helpful to the capitalists and injurious to the solidarity and struggle of the labour movement, in times of revolution can become counter-revolutionary, as the workers were to learn by bitter experience in the decades after Marx's death.'

Indeed, it is no wonder that the teaching of Marx, 'which directly serves the purposes of enlightening and organising the advanced class of modern society, which indicates the tasks of this class and proves the inevitable substitution of a new order for the present system ... had to take by storm every step in its life course.' (Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism (1908))

In the first half-century of its existence (about 1840 to 1890) Marxism struggled with a number of doctrines connected with the working-class movement and current among the proletariat. In the first half-century of the 1840s Marx and Engels settled accounts with the young Hegelians who maintained the standpoint of philosophic idealism, against which the founders of scientific socialism posed dialectical materialism. At the end of the 'forties the struggle in the field of economic doctrine began against Proudhonism, a petty-bourgeois philosophy which believed that consumers' co-operatives could liquidate the base of capitalism - a view which fathered modern anarchism (and which Fehher Brockway M.P. has been propagating as recently as 1959 in Ghana). By the 'fifties of the last century Proudhonism was in the main defeated although it made a brief but unsuccessful revival in the early 1870s. In the 1860s there was a fierce struggle of Marxism against Bakuninism, which rejected all political action other

than insurrection and which differed sharply from Marxism on the question of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat. By the 'nineties of the last century Marxism was already victorious over this and all other ideologies in the labour movement. But no sooner had Marxism ousted all the more or less consistent doctrines hostile to it, but the capitalist and petty-bourgeois tendencies expressed in these doctrines began to look for other channels. 'The form and occasions of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued,' says Lenin of this new period in the development of Marxism. From the end of the nineteenth century there arose within Marxism, and under the name of Marxism, a tendency which was hostile to Marxism. This tendency is known as revisionism.

In the period of the First International (1864-76) Marxism had to contend with a number of 'strong and impatient pseudo-revolutionary sects, the ultra-leftists who sought to push the workers into untimely life and death struggles with the capitalist class.' In the period of the Second International (1889-1914) Marxism was confronted with capitalist ideas among the working-class from the opposite political direction - from right opportunists, who eventually dominated and ruined the Second International.

This right opportunist tendency had two main sources. 'First and ~~foremost~~ most dangerous of all' says Foster, 'it was developed among the skilled workers and labour bureaucracy in the trade unions, whom through wage concessions the employers undertook to use against the great mass of the working class, by crippling its strikes, by keeping its unions small and divided, and by fighting against class consciousness and independent working-class political action. The second source of right opportunism was in the large number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals who sought to make careers by leading the political organisations of the workers' During the period of capitalist upswing and growing imperialism at the end of the last century right opportunism grew in the socialist parties of the chief capitalist countries. Of all the right opportunists at that time Eduard Bernstein, a formerly orthodox Marxist, came forward 'with the greatest noise, and with the most comprehensive formulation of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, with revisionism.' (Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism). Bernstein developed the general idea that capitalism, instead of becoming obsolete and reactionary, was gradually evolving into socialism and he sought to 'revise' (i.e. destroy) all the basic propositions of Marxism. The fight against Bernstein revisionism spread throughout the international socialist movement.

The Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (later the Communist Party) came forth as the leading Marxist, anti-revisionist force, because while in other capitalist countries the socialist revolution seemed far off, in Russia it was knocking at the door. The new revolutionary programme, developed chiefly by Lenin, was Bolshevism or as it came to be later known, Marxism-Leninism. This is Marxism 'in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.'. The Party in Tsarist Russia grew in struggle not only against the employers and reactionary landlords, but also against various alien political tendencies arising among the working-class and its allies. Narodism, economism, 'legal Marxism' and other forms of Russian 'revision' of Marxism, all fell before the invincible blows of Lenin. In the period around the 1905 revolution in Russia Leninism encountered and defeated the Menshevik revisionists on the basic question of the bourgeois and socialist revolutions - an ideological conflict with parallels for South Africa to which we shall refer later.

It was Marxism-Leninism which triumphed in Russia in 1917, and the success of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, the victory of the anti-fascist war in which it played a leading part, and the rise of a number of socialist states in Europe and Asia testify that the proletariat can achieve world victory only with the aid of Marxism-Leninism.

Marxism-Leninism successfully crushed Trotsky, who came forth - under the name of Marx - with what he called the theory of 'permanent revolution' denying the possibility of constructing socialism in Russia alone.

In recent years the international Communist movement has resolutely fought contemporary shades of revisionism wherever they have arisen. The revisionists have done no little harm to a number of Communist Parties. By undermining the unity of the Parties and diverting their attention from work among the masses the revisionists have weakened the position of the Communists among the people in some countries. This was true of Hungary before the unsuccessful counter-revolution of 1956, and also of South Africa. The most concentrated and dangerous form of revisionism in the world today is that of the leading group of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. This group claims to adhere to socialist principles and calls itself 'Marxist', and yet it alleges that 'capitalism is ceasing to be capitalism', and it rejects the concept of monopoly capitalism. The Yugoslav revisionists say that 'capitalism is gradually evolving into socialism' thus denying the need for a socialist revolution, and holding that working-class struggle should be limited to obtaining 'leadership' within the capitalist system. This leads them to deny the need for a Communist Party to lead the working-class for the conquest of power - instead they have 'liquidated the Party into an amorphous people's front'. (Resolution of the Communist Information Bureau, June 1948). Having absorbed all the current revisionist theories, the Yugoslav theories aid the enemies of socialism.

Revisionism in South Africa differs in certain points from the views of the revisionists in other countries, and there is, indeed, a great variety in national conditions and the historical development of revisionism in different countries. But socialists can have no doubt that there is an essential similarity between revisionists all over the world.

Why is revisionism an inevitable phenomenon under capitalism? 'Because,' explains Lenin, 'side by side with the proletariat in every capitalist country, there are broad sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, of small masters. Capitalism was born and is constantly being born out of petty production. A whole number of "middle sections" are inevitably recreated by capitalism ... These new petty producers are equally and just as inevitably thrown into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that petty-bourgeois creeds again and again break through among the ranks of the broad labour parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and this will always be so right to the unfolding of the proletarian revolution ...' (Marxism and Revisionism).

In South Africa two other objective factors manure the soil in which revisionism grows. One is the 'bourgeoisification' of a white labour aristocracy, through the spreading of racialistic ideas. Petty-bourgeois ideas along colour rather than class lines are therefore a feature of the working-class movement. Secondly, the liberatory movement consists of representatives of a number of classes besides

the working-class, and the ideas of these other classes are naturally spread among the working-class, which itself spontaneously engenders many misconceptions.

These factors have and will in the future give rise to many deviations from Marxism-Leninism. Right-wing opportunism or revisionism remains the chief danger to the world Communist movement, and its South African variety is at present the main obstacle to the advances which are objectively possible to our working-class and liberation movement. It must never be forgotten, ~~never~~ however, that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences likewise engender left deviations and the very struggle against revisionism may tend to give rise to sectarianism or dogmatism, which hinders the Party from establishing closer contact with the masses. Both left and right deviations ignore important features of the revolution. An interesting point about South Africa's right opportunists is that at times they display dogmatism trying to bolster their tenuous arguments with wordy quotations from the classics, and that their actions show them to be grossly sectarian, in that they are hopelessly out of touch with reality.

The main enemy of Marxism-Leninism in South Africa at this time is revisionism, whose principal ideological errors we must now examine.

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III. THE MAIN FEATURES OF S.A. REVISIONISM

The correctness or otherwise of the views of the S.A. revisionists, who claim to be Marxists, is proved ultimately by their deeds and successes. And it is when it comes to their deeds and the repeated failures of their resolutions and pronouncements that they reveal their political bankruptcy. How can the revisionists explain the fact that they supported the dissolution of the C.P.S.A. in 1950, and that since then - a period of ten years - there has been no organisation in South Africa openly advocating socialism; that the Party has in effect been replaced by a so-called 'disciplined core' (itself split from top to bottom) within the Congress and trade union movement, and that this 'disciplined core' has lost its identity in an amorphous 'united front'? A working-class political party retains its identity precisely because it consistently strives for socialism; the present 'core', on the other hand, is no more than a duplication of the national movement, with its limited democratic aims. Can the revisionists excuse themselves for failing to engender a socialist movement, and can they explain why the socialists are not among the people proclaiming their policy? Have they an answer to the grave charge that they are not in fact leading the people to a better life, to socialism?

To these crucial questions the revisionists provide the following general justification of their position:

1. They assert that 'our aim' is to achieve 'national liberation' or 'freedom'. Whether this 'national liberation' is to be of a capitalist or socialist nature is not said, but it suggests at best the ending of racialism. The Freedom Charter with its demands for nationalisation

of monopoly industry and redistribution of the land - measures which would go a long way to ending racialism - has long since been buried by the revisionists, to be paraded in public when popular pressure insists on it. In effect, they believe that 'national liberation' means a democratic revolution of the old type, that is one which would instal the national bourgeoisie in power. This they believe would in time create the conditions for the working-class then to start agitating for socialism.

2. They assert that the 'Communists' are the 'most steadfast, disciplined, loyal and courageous' individuals in the 'national liberatory movement', i.e. the most consistent 'anti-racialists'.

3. They assert that the 'Communists' hold the leadership of the national liberatory movement, and today direct that movement.

Against these three assertions, the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists put forward the following propositions:

1. 'Our aim' (i.e. of the working-class) is to achieve socialism and communism, to end all exploitation. That in order to achieve this objective the working-class must ally itself with all oppressed classes and lead the people against imperialism and reactionary capitalism for the abolition of racialism and the establishment of a People's Democracy, in such a way that the conditions will be created for the immediate transition to socialism after the democratic revolution. Such conditions will be present if a State is set up which is in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat, while in form it is an alliance of the workers, peasants and national bourgeoisie.

2. To achieve these objectives the working-class needs its own independent political party, its own most advanced and organised detachment, the Communist Party, a Party based on Marxist-Leninist principles.

3. The so-called 'Communists' are in fact revisionists who have individual influence among the top leadership of the Congresses and among the top leadership of a very small section of the trade union movement (SACTU alone). These revisionists have not brought the other nationalist elements closer to the left, but they have in fact moved to the right, to the position of reactionary, non-socialist elements. This influence exerted by the 'back room boys' at the top does not mean that the 'Communists' have mass support at all levels - neither within the Congress movement itself, nor within the political and trade union movement as a whole, but in fact the Communists have been isolated from the masses.

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In order to illustrate that the conflict centres around these three points we shall now quote authoritative statements of the revisionists. These statements we shall match against the writings of the founders of Marxism ~~xx~~-Leninism. In this way we shall see who are the 'Marxist-Leninists' !

1. The Aims of the Movement.

Here the argument with the revisionists centres around the questions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism, the nature and aims of the class alliance, and the objective class analysis of South African society.

(a) The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Socialism .

In a series of lectures entitled 'The Working-Class Movement and National Liberation' issued by the 'South African Study group, North-West London, 1959' the revisionists reveal many of their errors* .

They say: ' If the working-class puts forward aims ... such as socialism ... then it is unfit to lead the movement. For such leadership will drive the middle-class and small bourgeois elements out ... it might well drive away peasants ... Working class policy must be to attract all classes among the oppressed people.' Further they say: 'The policy of the working-class cannot be a policy for immediate socialism and for the dictatorship of the ~~proletariat~~ proletariat for this would not be acceptable to the peasant and bourgeois elements in the united front.'

These statements reveal the confusion which exists in the minds of the revisionists between the principles of the working-class movement and the tactics which it employs to achieve its objectives. To unite with other classes is a well established feature of the strategy and tactics of the working-class. This it does on the basis of an immediate programme acceptable to other oppressed classes. The unfailing principle of the working-class is everywhere to propagate its belief in socialism as the solution to our problems - this it can never stop doing. 'If you must combine', Marx wrote to the Party leaders of his time, 'then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not haggle over principles, do not make "concessions in theory".' This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who strive - in his name - to belittle the significance of these principles ! The overriding principle said Lenin, is 'the organisation of the class struggle of the proletariat and the leadership of this struggle the final aim of which is the winning of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society.'

How clear is this statement of Lenin's compared with the vague ramblings of the revisionists that 'if the working-class puts forward aims ... such as socialism .. then it is unfit to lead the movement.' ! The revisionists have in fact erected a Chinese wall between the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, failing to see the interconnection between these two revolutions. Lenin indicated the link between these two revolutions during the struggle with the Mensheviks who like our revisionists confused sharply varying programmes of action with organisational questions. Said Lenin: ' From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and according to the degree of our strength, the strength of the class conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass over to the socialist revolution. We stand for continuous revolution. We shall not stop half way.'

The revisionists, failing to understand the significance of this formulation of the problem in a country which must pass through democratic and socialist revolutions, like South Africa. They say that the leadership in China, Korea and Vietnam instituted a people's democracy and that People's Democracy (note they do not speak of the working-class) ' is rapidly leading the people away from exploitation and capitalism and towards socialism.' Compare this loose talk with that of Mao Tse-tung who repeatedly enunciated the idea during the

* All quotations of revisionists statements in this section, unless otherwise indicated, are from this 'official' source.

first stage of the Chinese revolution : '... the revolutionary movement led by the [Chinese] Communist Party is, on the whole, a single movement encompassing both the democratic and socialist revolutions... Only by appreciating the difference between these revolutions and the link connecting them is it possible to provide correct leadership for the revolution in China.'

The revisionists claim that 'Communist' (i.e. revisionist) influence is dominant in the A.N.C. And yet this revisionist element submitted to the December 1959 ANC National Conference a resolution which states ' By 1960 ... more than half the peoples of Africa will have rid themselves of the yoke of imperialism.' This statement picks up the propaganda that 'political independence' means freedom and the 'lifting of the yoke of the imperialists', and it illustrates the lack of perspective of a democratic revolution which will evolve into a socialist revolution.

Our aim must be to create the conditions for the immediate transition to socialism from the democratic revolution. This means not that we must postpone our demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat (so remaining under a capitalist dictatorship) but that in the words of Liu Shao-chi (Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic) there must be 'the leadership of the proletariat in the democratic revolution, ensured through its Communist Party' which is 'the key to the complete victory of the democratic revolution and its development into the socialist revolution.' Liu Shao-chi makes it abundantly clear that 'the proletariat, in addition to fulfilling its leading role in the democratic revolution' in China 'firmly established its hegemony in the sphere of State power with the result that when the task of building socialism arose the question of winning power was no longer on the agenda. This was due to the fact that in the course of the democratic revolution the Party never lost sight of the ultimate goal - the socialist revolution, that in the course of the long revolutionary struggle it made every effort to consolidate the leadership of the proletariat.' Liu Shao-chi emphasises 'The People's Republic, proclaimed in 1949, is in effect, the dictatorship of the proletariat'. And yet the South African revisionists say our policy must not be 'for the dictatorship of the proletariat' but instead for 'national liberation'. The only conclusion to which one can come is that by 'national liberation' is meant the opposite of proletarian dictatorship, that is capitalist dictatorship in a new form. Here the revisionists reveal their true colours !

(b) The Nature and Aims of the Class Alliance.

The petty-bourgeois way in which the revisionists approach the dialectics of revolution is illustrated by their failure to understand the nature and aims of the 'class alliance'. They appreciate that the National Movement in this country is a 'class alliance' in which there are capitalists and workers, yet they vigorously propagate the view that there 'is no conflict between the Party (presumably of the working-class and socialism) and the national movement (of capitalists and workers).' While they see no conflict between socialism and a national alliance including reactionaries 'there are occasions' they say 'when the two organisations will differ, for example the precise tactics to be used in a particular campaign.' Difficult reality is explained by calling principles and policies tactics. This same trick was used by the original revisionists of the Second International. Discussion of the general programme during the 1890s, of the Second

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International, was put under the heading of tactics. Then the revisionists said: since it is only a question of tactics each Party could follow its own path - there was no need for a common line. Discussing tactics in this way the Zurich (1893) Congress of the Second International ignored the revolutionary aims of socialism. These similarities show why we call these people contemporary revisionists.

The Chinese Communist Party has shown us how to work in a national front against imperialism and reactionary capitalism. Says Liu Shao-chi: 'In view of the fact that a close worker-peasant alliance had already been forged we were in a position to solve the question of a united front with the national bourgeoisie.' Pausing here for a moment we can observe that the revisionists have shown by their omission to seriously tackle this question that they do not take into account the revolutionary demands and fighting spirit of the peasants. All they have been able to do is to reveal their treachery by preaching non-violence telling the peasants to lay down their arms, and failing to supply them with organisation and with working-class leadership and a working-class perspective.

Liu Shao-chi continues by showing how on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance the Party was able to distinguish the two sections of the bourgeoisie: the bureaucratic bourgeoisie which was an instrument of imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie with which co-operation was possible. However, 'this [National] bourgeoisie was weak and dual in character, it was both revolutionary and reactionary. It constantly vacillated and occupied an intermediate position. This fact necessitated, on the one hand, an alliance with it on definite terms and joint struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capital, and on the other combating its conciliatory tendencies. In pursuing this policy we built up the forces of the revolution, won over the intermediate sections, isolated the reactionaries and firmly maintained the proletarian leadership around which the masses were rallied.' (World Marxist Review, October, 1959 'The Triumph of Marxism Leninism in China').

Compare this brilliant understanding of the contradictions within a national movement, of the unity and struggle of opposites, with the simple black and white propositions of the South African revisionists who can see no conflict but only tactical divergences. Compare as well which Party has led the people of its country to People's Democracy and Socialism - the Chinese or the South African?

(c) An Objective Class Analysis of South African Society

The failure of the revisionists to make a dialectical materialist analysis of the revolutionary struggle is symptomatic of their failure to carry out an objective class analysis of South African society.

Journals such as New Age, Fighting Talk and Liberation utilised by the revisionists to put across their views are notorious for their description of 'white supremacy' as the main enemy of the people. This un-Marxist phrase shows how little attention the revisionists have given to understanding the development of the relations of production in South Africa. It is these relations of production which form the sub-structure on which the philosophy and practice of racialism, of 'white supremacy' have been built.

Attempts at economic analysis by the revisionists reflect many errors made by non-Marxist trade unionists and economists in the nineteenth century. In his booklet 'Apartheid - The Road to Poverty (An Analysis of the economics of segregation)' B. Bunting says that the cause of the recession is the 'failure of the market to expand as fast as productive capacity.' The people, he points out, are too poor to buy the goods they produce. The reason that he (and many revisionists before him) finds for this is that 'the bulk of our population is grossly underpaid and receive far less than their fair share of the national income.' This is 'because capitalists make profit by underpaying the workers' 'Even the highest paid worker does not get his fair share.' We conclude from this that an all-round increase in wages could cure the evils of capitalism, as was suggested in a resolution at the 1959 Annual Conference of SACTU stating that 'the raising of wages' will 'solve the unemployment problem'. To Bunting and the authors of this resolution we would say with Marx: 'Instead of the conservative motto "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work" they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword "Abolition of the wages system." (Marx's italics).

Bunting sees the 'long-term' solution in socialism, but he seems to leave this in a distant never-never land. 'To lift S.A. out of the depression' he says 'we should organise the masses of unorganised workers to fight for:

1. strong trade unions;
2. an end to industrial apartheid;
3. jobs for all;
4. £1 a day; etc. etc. . .'

What socialist would suggest that these reforms could 'lift South Africa out of a depression'? These are reforms which help the people, and are extremely valuable to them. But capitalist crises are caused by overproduction - an inherent feature of this decaying economic system - and working-class emancipation from capitalism will not be achieved by such partial demands. In the struggle for these demands the workers can gain class consciousness and organisation in preparation for the proletarian revolution, but they will not 'solve the unemployment problem.' !

Other ventures into economics by the revisionists are equally misleading. A document issued in 1958 by the revisionists described the Nationalists as 'feudalists' who are trying to hold up industrialisation and capitalist development in South Africa. Leaving aside the obvious inaccuracy of this description in a capitalist country which has never itself passed through the feudal stage of development, we can leave the answer to this assertion not to Marx or any of his followers, but to a leading American monopoly capitalist, Engelhard, who described the Nationalists as a 'most businesslike government'. The steady rise in the profits of the monopolies, and the formation of the S.A. Foundation to popularise the 'South African (i.e. monopoly capitalist) way of life' are an exact answer to this type of meaningless analysis by the revisionists. Their attitude on this question inevitably leads them to pin their faith on the 'progressive' capitalist groups and even U.S. imperialism to bring about the 'collapse' of the Nationalist Government.

The revisionist approach all over the world ignores all questions of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. At the December, 1959, A.N.C. National Conference a resolution was submitted by the so-called 'Communists' (i.e. revisionists), stating that '... the pass laws are at the root of the poverty, exploitation and oppression of the African people...'. Mark that this resolution did not emanate - as may be expected - from the national movement, but that it was drafted and submitted by 'Communists'. The real Communists welcome

wholeheartedly the statement of opposition to ~~kk~~ such an important aspect of racialism as the pass laws. But the duty of the 'Communists' is not to content themselves with a superficial approach to this feature of racialism, but rather to explain the true basis of racialism - imperialism and reactionary capitalism.

Similar misconceptions have existed regarding the nature and possibilities of the economic consumers' boycott of so-called 'Nationalist' products. The revisionists did nothing to dispel - and even encouraged - ideas that such a boycott locally and internationally could cripple the Nationalist Government, while all the time the mining and base industry monopoly capitalists remain intact, with their power undisturbed.

The inability of the revisionists to make a proper analysis of the class forces and economic sub-structure of the country results in the levelling down of all struggle to day to day 'anti-pass' campaigns, that is to anti-racialism. The main issue around which the South African revolution is being fought is racialism, and the role of socialists in this struggle is to explain the class roots of racialism and to show how it props up and aids the crumbling capitalist system. Socialists have the duty of spearheading the struggle against imperialism and reactionary capitalism, in whose interests racialism exists. But the revisionists, claiming to be socialists can do no more than prate about 'white supremacy'. They have been unable to understand that ours is a revolution of the popular masses under working-class leadership spearheaded against imperialism and reactionary capitalism.

The revisionists like to accuse their opponents of 'sectarianism'. Yet when one gets down to brass tacks, who are the sectarians? The revisionists state that 'so long as classes exist it (the Party) cannot represent the nation as a whole.' The result is they cannot advocate socialism now because they are part of a class alliance including capitalists whereas socialism, they believe, is the possession and property of the working-class alone. So far have these people moved from socialism that they have forgotten that the working-class sets itself the task of liberating not only itself, but all humanity - and that in fact the working-class can only liberate itself by ending all forms of exploitation and oppression. As William Z. Foster says (op.cit.p.184): 'Lenin's is a party of revolutionists... - a Party which in every respect: on the battlefields, in the workshops, on the farms, in the colleges, and in the legislative halls, truly stands at the head of the working-class and the whole nation.'

The examples can be multiplied. But these quotations show that South Africa's revisionists have distorted the Marxist-Leninist teaching of socialism, of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, that they have abandoned an objective Marxist analysis for subjective petty-bourgeois phrasemongering.

(2) The Need for an Independent Communist Party

Because they do not regard socialism as the aim of the working-class movement, and because they do not believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revisionists have no need for a political party of the working-class which has as its main objective the establishment and building of socialism. Such a party is different in all essentials from other parties and also other groupings in the national movement. The aim of the working-class is social

ism, and precisely because of this it is the only class fitted to lead the whole movement to the complete, absolute and final victory of the democratic revolution. The workers are the foremost representatives of all the oppressed people, and for that reason they are the natural leaders of the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism. The revisionists see the workers only as those who 'suffer most' under the present system and who can most determinedly take up the struggle against racialism. This line compels the workers to follow in the wake of the capitalists and petty-bourgeoisie. It explains why, although many statements and speeches are made no serious efforts are made to organise a mass trade union movement, and why in effect this movement has become an appendage of the petty-bourgeoisie. Once the revisionist view is corrected not only does the need for a strong trade union movement become apparent as an urgent question, but it also becomes obvious that the working-class can achieve its aims only with its own independent political party.

Lenin said again and again: 'The main thing in the teaching of Marx is the elucidation of the world-wide historical role of the proletariat as the builder of a socialist society.' This is the fundamental of working-class policy - a fact which revisionists try to forget. Already in the Communist Manifesto (1848) Marx and Engels began to outline the special type of Party necessary for the working-class to win finally over the capitalist class: 'The Communists ... are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties in every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of ~~proletarians~~ the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.'

In some Arab countries in recent years attempts have been made to persuade the Communists to dissolve their independent organisations and lose their identity in the national movement. However, this view has not prevailed in those countries, although the liquidationist trend has prevailed in South Africa since 1950. The very revisionists who now cloak themselves as the inheritors of the C.P.S.A., were those same liquidators who in 1949 proposed the dissolution of the Party (and were heavily defeated) so that its members could go into the national movement, and who, in 1950, without consulting rank and file Communists and workers, dissolved the C.P.S.A. .

The revisionists go so far in denying an independent role for the Party that they say it is wrong to engage in 'open political battle' on the merits of socialism for that 'would ruin' the class alliance in the national movement. The question of who leads the national movement, they say, must not be decided by open political struggle. But surely, if a worker preaches socialism in public he precipitates an 'open political struggle'.? Precisely says Mr. Revisionism, the worker must not advocate socialism in public - he must follow me and when the time comes I will tell him what to do. The revisionists correctly point out that the working-class must prove its fitness to lead by its own deeds. Excellent! We proceed to organise socialist - led trade unions, socialist-led peasant groups, a socialist Party. But we find ourselves heavily criticised by the revisionists. 'If the working-class puts forward aims such as socialism ... it is unfit to lead the movement.' The 'first and foremost duty of the working-class is to safeguard the class alliance'. 'The main thing' says Lenin '... is the role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society.' !

What are the deeds to which the revisionists refer ? They refer to the activity of individuals, to the clarity and correctness of the tactics of individuals, the steadfastness and loyalty with which individuals carry out decisions of the class alliance, to the courage and understanding of individuals. In short, 'leadership will be won by those individuals best fitted for it as these individuals show by their individual deeds and their individual loyalty' to the class alliance of workers and capitalists.

Is there a need for a fighting revolutionary party, a strong vanguard party, which will lead the triumphant march of the working people to socialism ? The revisionists do not say. Do they have in mind a properly independent Communist Party, as conceived and forged by great Lenin as the most highly developed type of political organisation ever produced by mankind, an indispensibility for achieving socialism ?

All the South African revisionists say is that 'the national movement [class alliance of workers and capitalists] needs the Communist Party.' ! Are not the Communists organised in a Party to fight for Communism ? Is this what the alliance of workers and capitalists needs ? Of course not ! So, the revisionists say the national movement needs 'a highly centralised, disciplined and united organisation.' The 'Communist Party' has therefore come to mean not the highly developed and advanced political organisation of the most advanced class in modern South Africa to lead all the people to Communism, but instead a disciplined 'volunteer corps' within the 'national movement'.

All this adds up. For ten years there has been no independent workers' party openly advocating socialism. By words and essentially by deeds, the revisionists have rejected and sabotaged the independent political policy of the working-class.

(3) Present Day 'Working-class' Leadership .

The isolation of the revisionists from the masses, and their petty-bourgeois subjectivism are exposed by their claim that there is 'working-class leadership' in the national movement. In fact, as was pointed out earlier, as individuals they have moved to the right wing positions of some of the national elements, have deserted Marxism-Leninism, and are exercising a stultifying effect on the whole movement.

In any event, does 'working-class leadership' mean the 'leadership' of a few individuals at the top or does it mean the recognition of their leadership by the broad masses in the day-to-day struggle? Comrade Leon Bohr writing in World Marxist Review (October, 1959, p.49) says that Communist 'leadership will be recognised by the masses not because Marxist-Leninist theory substantiates the need for this, but only when experience convinces [the masses] that the Communists are in the van, that they are the best leaders. There are many parties in the political arena, each trying to win over the masses and gain their support. The policy of broad class alliance means that the Communists have no fear of competing with any party and feel certain that sooner or later the masses will find out who is right. This, however, is no passive wait-and-see process, it is a policy of action.' The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Japan, a Party of hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals, gives the S.A. revisionists an example of sober Communist modesty and objectivity. The Japanese Party pointed out in a recent statement that although the Party exerts a considerable influence on the country's

political life, it has 'not yet achieved a leading position in the working-class movement. Although active in organising the struggle under a nation-wide plan for united action, it has not made the necessary efforts to develop unity of action at the plants and factories and in the regions, in accordance with the Party's independent policy in those cases ~~where~~ where there was no plan for united action.'

'Political education is inseparable from action' says Comrade Bohr in the above article and 'the Communist Parties can win the leading role in the working-class movement only if they prove to be a party of action, give the people a clear perspective, organise and carry out the struggle to achieve tangible results. Unless this is done the Party's claim to the leading role will be futile.'

Can the 'Communists' in South Africa, who are but a tiny handful of the population, claim that they are carrying out 'political education' of the masses on a wide scale? Are they a party of action, giving a clear perspective to the masses? Can they show tangible results? Has the party itself developed any action at all in factories, plants and farms, let alone unity of action? Are the workers in the trade unions being taught socialist principles on any scale? Is there a socialist group in every major factory - are there any factory groups at all? Can the revisionists claim to have socialist groups in every location where they are 'in the leadership'? The answer to all these questions is emphatically NO!

The fact is that the masses, deserted for ten years by the Party, hardly know the Communists at all. Where they do know them, it is only as individual members of a national movement, some better and some worse than the average activist. The result is that Communism has been buried in South Africa by the revisionists. It is the duty of every self-respecting Communist to help resurrect it. 'To free the workers is the task of the proletarian revolution, but this must be accomplished not by a few conspirators', says Foster, 'but by the main body of workers in action.' The ability to lead these workers in action depends on the unity and political consciousness of the Communists and their close links with life.

IV. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

Enough has been said to establish definitely that:

1. The South African revisionists have departed from the fundamental Marxist-Leninist teaching on the aims of socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the strategy and tactics of the working-class in the national movement, and the need for an independent working-class political party.
2. This desertion of Marxist-Leninist principles has occurred under the guise of Marxism and in its name. This fact characterises these people as revisionists, and renders them a grave danger to the whole movement.
3. This revisionism is holding back and paralysing every branch of the movement, and must therefore be fought and relentlessly eradicated in the working-class movement.

One of the great weaknesses of the Marxist-Leninist forces in the struggle against revisionism in South Africa has been their failure to date to recognise the basic ideological differences between Marxism and South African revisionism. The conflict that exists has not been caused by a mere clash of personalities seeking top positions; it has ^{not} arisen because - as some say - activists at the lower levels do not report accurately to 'leaders' who formulate policy; it has also not arisen purely because of personal dishonesty on the part of some people. It has arisen from class foundations it is an expression of deep-going conflicts between the working-class and bourgeois elements. Another weakness of the Marxist-Leninists has been the fact that some people tend to make a fetish of Party unity, not realising that unity within a single party with the revisionists has long since to be anything more than formal unity, and that this is - in the long run - a source of weakness rather than strength. The revisionists have split away from Marxism-Leninism and must be fought - in the correct manner ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ - to the bitter end.

The working-class movement of South Africa will without fail have to go through a period in which all questions of the proletarian revolution will be sharpened, and in which enemies will have to be separated from friends 'to throw out' as Lenin put it 'the bad allies for the purpose of dealing decisive blows at the enemy.'

Engels correctly predicted that in the course of the theoretical struggle against alien philosophies the German ~~work~~ working-class would acquire socialism. This it in fact did, and ~~it~~ as a result it emerged victoriously from the ~~the~~ severe trials imposed by an anti-socialist law in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Lenin, in turn, described how 'Russia ... attained Marxism, the only revolutionary theory, by dint of fifty years of the most painful travail and sacrifice, of the greatest revolutionary heroism of the incredible energy and devotion in seeking and educating, and of practical experience, disappointment, checking and comparison with European experience.' This long and tortuous period was rewarded by the fact that the Russian proletariat was placed in the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat, achieving the Great October Socialist Revolution and building socialism and communism.

The South African working-class is fortunate to be able to draw ^{strength from} these pioneering experiences, and ^{from} the world-wide shift in the balance of forces in favour of socialism. The ideological struggle of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism against revisionism in South Africa, is in its turn, but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles in which the South African working-class is destined to march at the ^{head} of the peoples of Africa to the victory of the democratic revolution and for the ~~est~~ establishment of socialism and communism.

Forward under the banner of Marxism-Leninism !

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