

isolate imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism, and make it more and more difficult for it to unleash war.

Comrades concerned to know the point of view of the C.C.P. will obviously be better advised to read for themselves its June 14th letter and its subsequent articles commenting on the *Open*

Letter of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.

However, Comrade Klugmann's article raises a serious problem. Can such writing be presented to British comrades as Marxism, by the editor of the Party's discussion journal, without the fullest opportunity being given for analysis and discussion?

A Rejoinder

James Klugmann

COMRADES Davies and Crook seem to me to raise a number of isolated debating points and to leave untouched the central thesis on peaceful coexistence which I put forward in my article last October. This is a pity because the fight for peaceful coexistence is so serious an issue that it deserves serious discussion.

Nuclear Weapons

I wrote that "it does not help to gloss over the fact that the destructive power of nuclear weapons is something, in the Marxist sense, *qualitatively new*". Davies and Crook do not like this formulation. There are always "new" weapons, they write, the question is who starts using them.

They studiously refuse to face the question seriously, to face reality. The fact is that the destructiveness of nuclear weapons *is* something qualitatively new and raises qualitatively new problems.

The 81 Parties Statement of 1960 said:

"Monstrous means of mass annihilation and destruction have developed which, if used in a new war, can cause unheard of destruction to entire countries and reduce key centres of world industry and culture to ruins. Such a war would bring death and suffering to hundreds of millions of people, among them people in countries not involved in it. . . ."

Comrades Crook and Davies, writing from China, may find it hard to realise this, but a nuclear war could mean the physical extermination of Britain. John Gollan, at our 28th Party Congress, said "peaceful coexistence for us is not a subject of academic debate but a condition for our continued existence".

There *is* something *qualitatively new* about the danger of a third world war and to refuse to face this is madness, not Marxism.

Real dangers, real conditions, demand a con-

centration of effort by the progressive forces of the whole world to stop imperialism dragging us into a third world war. This means that the fight for peaceful coexistence is a burning, urgent, central issue. It is verbal quibbling to oppose, as Crook and Davies do, the fight for peaceful coexistence to "the problem of war or peace".

New Relation of Class Forces

If Comrades Crook and Davies avoid the issue of the destructive power of nuclear weapons, they also hide from the equally fundamental issue of the new relation of class forces in the world.

The essential case that I made in my October article was that not only is it essential to fight for peaceful coexistence, to *impose* peace by mass struggle on the imperialists driving to war, but that the new relation of class forces in the world, the growth of the forces of socialism and peace, makes such a perspective possible. There is both the *need and the possibility*.

Comrades Crook and Davies accuse me of distorting the position of the Chinese Communist Party on the contradictions in the world today. But, in fact, events since I wrote that article, have only confirmed what I wrote last October. The leaders of the Chinese Communist Party are trying to separate the national liberation struggle and the peoples of the colonial and newly independent countries from most of the countries of the socialist world and from the working class in the imperialist countries.

In fact it is not just that the Chinese comrades do not see the essential contradiction between the socialist world and imperialism. In their speeches and writings and publications, they are virtually "writing off" a great part of the socialist world. If you read attentively what is published on the U.S.S.R. in the daily *Hsinhua News* or in the main Chinese Party statements, you will find *nothing* of the magnificent socialist construction, of the

scientific and technical advances, of the progress of socialist democracy. There is *total* distortion of the economic situation of the Soviet Union and of its political role. It is the same by and large, with Chinese reporting on such countries as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic.

How can the Chinese Communist leaders be said to understand the essential contradiction of socialism and capitalism, when they are declaring that the U.S.S.R. is restoring capitalism and helping American imperialism? They are producing a completely false picture of the socialist world, writing off the greater part of it, and burying the contradiction between socialism and capitalism.

Working Class in the Capitalist Countries

In the same way the Chinese comrades are painting a totally false picture of the working class and revolutionary movement in the great capitalist countries, including Great Britain. Comrades Crook and Davies rush in to the defence of *Hsinhua News*. But what is reported in the Chinese press is a complete travesty of the real situation in the capitalist countries.

Even the most reactionary sections of the Western capitalist press have been forced to acknowledge the advance in recent months of the Communist Parties in Italy, France, and to a certain extent, in Britain. It is clear from the Italian, French and British capitalist press that they look upon the Communist Parties of their respective countries as their main enemies. The Communist Parties in Italy, France, and to an extent in Britain, are in the lead of the struggles on both economic and political issues, the struggles against imperialism and for socialism.

But from the columns of the Chinese press they have completely disappeared. The Communist success in the Italian elections was ignored, although it caused dismay in the Italian capitalist press.

The advances of the French Communist Party in the recent cantonal elections was ignored although they caused dismay in de Gaullist and monopolist circles. In a *Hsinhua* report of March 11th on the first ballot of the cantonal elections, the Communist Party is not even mentioned. Likewise *Hsinhua* English edition, ignored the striking vote of the London Communists in the recent Greater London Elections.

It is quite true that *Hsinhua* has written much on the recent Negro movement in the United States, and that is good. But *Hsinhua* and other Chinese Party publications, contain nothing but attacks and slanders against the Communist Party of the United States, which, in the most difficult

conditions, has pioneered the struggle against white chauvinism and for solidarity with the Negro people of the United States.

In short, the Chinese Communist leaders not only totally underestimate the struggle of the working-class movement within the imperialist countries, but they are "writing it off", slandering it, encouraging splits and factions within it, and making its conditions of struggle much more difficult.

National Liberation Struggle

Again and again on the pretext of supporting the national liberation movement, the Chinese Communist leaders are trying, in words and deeds, to separate that movement from the socialist countries and from the working class in the imperialist countries. In fact, this is not to help it but to weaken it. The role of the socialist countries, and especially of the U.S.S.R., has been one of consistent economic, political and at times military aid, to the national liberation movement and to the newly independent countries.

In recent months leaders of the national liberation movement like Ben Bella and Castro have made abundantly clear their gratitude for this aid. The Chinese leaders consistently slander the Soviet Union for "betraying" the national liberation struggle; who is right, Ben Bella, Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah, Castro, or the C.P.C.? Comrades should read on this question the article by Jack Woddis on the *International Communist Movement and National Liberation* (Comment Supplement, No. 6, May 30th, 1964).

Comrades Davies and Crook raise the issue of Cuba. You can split hairs or raise debating points, but one thing is clear—in the Cuban crisis an American imperialist invasion was averted, Cuban independence was preserved, and a world nuclear conflict prevented.

Four main forces contributed to this victory: (i) the heroism of the Cuban people; (ii) the solidarity of the socialist countries and in particular of the Soviet Union; (iii) the solidarity of the peoples of the newly independent countries and the national liberation movements, and (iv) the working class and peace movement inside the capitalist countries.

For a few days the position was critical. These were days when the greatest unity of *all* the forces of progress was required, yet it was precisely in these critical days (it is futile to argue whether Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday was most critical) the Chinese Party leaders started talking of "Munich". They turned their wrath, in fact, not against American imperialism, but against the U.S.S.R. American imperialism was defeated in

spite of them. Of course, the struggle to defend Cuba continues.

The Peace Movement

Lenin once wrote a book called *Left Wing Communism*. Part of it was directed against sectarian trends amongst British Marxists. There were certain old sectarians before and after the foundation of the Communist Party, who liked to shout "revolutionary" slogans, wanted "pure" revolution, "nothing but revolution", and looked upon partial struggles, immediate struggles within the framework of capitalism, united struggles with non-Marxists, as betrayal, opportunism, or as they used to put it "palliating capitalism".

Writing from a distance, Comrades Crook and Davies seem totally to ignore British working-class experience (and Lenin's advice to the British workers).

In Britain there are millions of trade unionists. Many of them still are not yet supporters of the Labour Party—most of them not yet Marxists. Many of them do not yet understand the role of imperialism and capitalism, but they *are* ready to fight against the *effects* of imperialism on issues like wages, hours of labour, democratic rights, specific issues of peace and disarmament.

Of course, Communists must continuously explain the nature of imperialism, the need for socialism, the need for the working class to win political power. Of course, Communists must continuously initiate campaigns and struggles *directly* against imperialism. But what should they do in relation to those who are not yet ready for this direct struggle?

Would it be more revolutionary to say—"You know nothing and understand nothing; unless you accept our full Marxist analysis we will not touch you with a barge-pole"? Should Communists say we cannot join the struggle on wages and hours unless these struggles also demand a seizure of political power? It might *sound* more "revolutionary"—in fact it would help reaction. Every employer would rejoice. It would not be the employers who would be isolated but the revolutionary workers.

It is the same in the peace movement. Comrades Crook and Davies call it "tailism" to develop a broad peace movement which brings into action many people who do not yet see clearly the role of imperialism as the essential cause of war. In order, as they say, "to isolate American imperialism", they want a movement in which virtually only those who accept a Marxist analysis can participate. In fact, if you followed the line of the Chinese Party leaders in the various international

organisations, or the line put forward by Comrades Crook and Davies, it would not be American imperialism that would be isolated, but the Communists. As I said in my article, thousands of people in Britain have come step by step through their participation in the broadest struggles on peace, to understand (with the help of Marxist explanation) the role of imperialism and the need to fight against it.

Comrades Crook and Davies want to start at the end of the process. If they do this, they will end at the beginning.

It is just the same with the issue of the Test Ban Treaty. I do not want to repeat here the argument ably put by W. Wainwright (*The Fight for Disarmament, Comment Supplement, No. 4, May 9th, 1964*), but again, on this issue, there is complete confusion between *partial struggles* and our *full aims*.

Our aim is total and general disarmament. But this cannot and will not be won in one fell swoop. It will be won as the result of a continuous struggle carried out by all sectors of the international socialist and peace movement, in the course of which partial victories will be won, partial advances made (and possibly at times partial retreats).

No Communist in our British Party, or in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or in any other Party, has ever said that the Test Ban Treaty was more than a partial advance, and one step in the long struggle for total disarmament.

It is equally absurd to be against it, because in certain forms at certain moments certain capitalist governments were for it. When Stalin was in the leadership of the C.P.S.U. it carried on a continuous struggle for *partial* and *general* disarmament. On several occasions, when proposals for total disarmament had been rejected, the Soviet delegates put forward partial proposals that had previously been moved by the Western capitalist powers. At those times the Western delegates departed from their own proposals. Why be sorry that they were not in a position to do so on this occasion?

Peaceful Coexistence and Socialism

The fight for peaceful coexistence is not, as I explained in my article, a policy of renouncing struggle. It is a policy of imposing peace on the imperialists driving to war, headed by U.S. imperialism.

It demands *more* class struggle, *more* national liberation struggle, *more* ideological struggle. Comrades Crook and Davies falsify completely the conception that we put forward of peaceful

coexistence and, like the Chinese Party leaders, try to separate the fight for peaceful coexistence and the fight for socialism.

Of course, the fight for peaceful coexistence must be a central part of the policy of any genuinely socialist organisation. But this does not mean renouncing the struggle for socialism, for socialist revolution. On the contrary, the fight for

peaceful coexistence is a fight for the best conditions in which to carry out the fight for advance to socialism.

The two struggles complement each other. World socialism will finally solve the problem of war; will banish war for ever. But in order to advance to world socialism, it is essential to fight to the utmost to prevent a third world war.

Art and Superstructure

Peter Pink

ERNST FISCHER rightly calls our attention to the dangers of dogmatic Marxism, and there is much in his *Art and Ideological Superstructure*¹ that is illuminating and helpful. But there is also much that is itself dogmatic in the article, and it seems to me that he is falling over backwards to establish one simple point—the impossibility of works of genius, masterpieces, at the issue of a directive. One can agree with this proposition, but it becomes difficult when it is supported by ideas that cannot be so easily accepted. It is a pity that one who says that we should not try to create an impossibly “good” image of the Communist, one who is not prepared to accept such a division between us who are Communists and all other people, is prepared to create such a division between the artist and all other people.

Qualities of the Artist

The artist is depicted as one who is particularly fitted to understand things which others are not. In particular, it appears, the “Party Secretary” cannot understand these things. The artist, existing in a declassified world of his own, with his sensibility, his intense reaction to new situations and realities, his greater perceptions and fantasy, is contrasted to this poor fellow, the Party Secretary, who lives in a world of cadre reports, statistics, leading articles and resolutions.

What does this picture add up to? The artist has qualities which are peculiarly his own. The rest of us are not permitted these qualities. Can this be said with such dogmatic certainty? Is it true that one who can express himself artistically is necessarily more perceptive than one who cannot express himself artistically? Is it not conceivable that people with as much perception, etc., exist, but are not

artists? Is it a necessary quality of the Party Secretary that he should be a person deprived of all that the artist is endowed with? Is it not conceivable that a Party Secretary might exist with perception etc., but not be able to express this artistically. After all, great art speaks to us from every age, but so do other perceptions from previous ages. It is not only the artist who can see ahead, it is not only the artist who can bequeath to following generations worthwhile works.

Because of this separation of the artist, this emphasis on his apparent freedom under capitalism (which he shares with the proletariat), Ernst Fischer falls into the trap of asking for the artist things that he should ask for all of us. Of course the artist cannot be ordered to produce his work by bureaucratic decree, but neither can the Party Secretary. Not only must the Party recognise the artist as adult, as a person who takes his *métier* seriously, it must recognise all the members of the Party in the same way. Surely socialism will give to everybody that feeling of freedom that is called for for the artist. One gets the feeling in the latter part of the article that the conditions demanded for the artist are because the artist needs them and we (the non-artists) don't. We can be nothing more than the mouthpieces of a Central Committee. I am not an artist but I have never accepted the passive role of mouthpiece, and it is surely no Central Committee's intention that I should become one.

Artist as Party Secretary

Surely the artist and all the rest of us live in the same world, and all our perceptions, ideas and evaluations are of that same world. If his perception of the material world around us is expressed in artistic form, is this any reason to mark him off with a special brand? Is it not conceivable that Ernst Fischer's argument could lead him to the idea that the artist's social mission comes from a different

¹ *Marxism Today*, February, 1964.