



BRITAIN IN THE WORLD

International statement from the Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist, 17th Congress, London, November 2015.

It is 38 years since our Party published *Britain in the World 1977*. We asserted, as Marxist-Leninists, that we live in one world divided by class, and not a world divided into first, second and third worlds. That is still true today but the balance of class forces in the world has changed significantly.

The threat of war is real. The Soviet Union has gone, as have the socialist economies of Eastern Europe. Today's Russia is not the Soviet Union and China is now the biggest capitalist economy in the world. Capitalism even seeks to destroy the concept of the sovereign nation state it originally championed, through agency of the EU and of Free Trade Agreements. Cuba survives as a nation in which the working class holds state power.

Our world is in flames, not just in the Middle East, but also in Africa, Asia, Europe and potentially, the Pacific. How do workers begin to comprehend the new dynamics and contradictions that are at work?

Who is for war?

We are constantly told that the existence of the EU has prevented war in Europe. This myth was destroyed by the fact that war broke out in Europe the minute the Soviet Union collapsed and continues to this day. It was the Soviet Union that kept the peace in Europe after World War 2, not the EU.

Today, the EU is inseparable from NATO as all applicants (perhaps supplicants is a better term) to the former must first join the latter. Together with the USA they are a force for war; the Soviet Union was a force for peace. Had the Soviet Union continued to exist, there would have been no invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, no bombing of Libya and the chaos that followed, no ISIS and no war against Syria.

The Soviet victory over German fascism saved not only Europe, but the whole world, while Soviet ideology and military hardware assisted liberation struggles that brought an end to most of colonialism. The EU and NATO were to be capitalism's bulwark against the Marxism of the Soviet Union.

Because Russia refuses to bend the knee to US world domination, we see the USA placing the most sophisticated military hardware on the Russian border ready for a repeat of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa, and in breach of promises designed to prevent just that. The US military has drawn up a new strategy, which clearly identifies what it calls "revisionist Russia" as its enemy, along with Iran and North Korea. Putin is described as "Hitler" and Russia compared with Nazi Germany.

So who are the allies of the US/NATO/EU war machine? Its proposed Free Trade Agreements are being built on and are reinforcing its military alliances across Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf despots, Asia and the Pacific. Its objective is to create, by economic means or war, a US empire across the whole world. But

they are clumsy, lack tactical nous and are very dangerous for workers. They funded and encouraged Islamists from around the world to fight Marxism in Afghanistan, those same Islamists who have now turned their suicide bombers on their original creators.

Their disastrous invasion of Iraq had the opposite end game to that proclaimed, by putting Iranian-allied Shia militia in power to fight the ISIS monster that the invaders had created. The bombing of Libya resulted in anarchy, rival Islamist militias including ISIS and a deliberately created mobilisation of migrants heading for the EU (witness Merkel's call for over one million migrants in the summer of 2015). This is in line with the EU/NATO strategy of destroying national borders and nation states, while making a tidy profit for the war-mongering Turkish government and associated gangsters en route.

Their support for Jihadi fighters in Syria has all but destroyed a secular nation that was the cradle of human civilisation, and has also created a new breed of young terrorists from our own cities, trained by ISIS in Syria. Whole Muslim families from Britain go to live in the "Islamic caliphate" just as Zionist Jews from the USA migrate to Israel. And our government increases its military attacks on Iraq and Syria in the name of fighting ISIS, when the obvious way forward is to support those in the region leading the fight against it, Syria and Iran.

And now they look to start a war with a nuclear-armed Russia.

Who is for peace?

Where are those for peace or those who will fight and resist this new empire? There is an area of the world that has resisted. Led by the Marxism of Cuba, and by Venezuela and Argentina, Latin America and the Caribbean destroyed the US attempt to impose the Free Trade Area of the Americas on their continent. As that continent built new alternative structures, they paid a price with US-backed and funded coups and attempted coups in Venezuela, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia and Ecuador.

But now those nations have constructed the Community of Caribbean and Latin American States (CELAC), which has declared itself a Peace Zone and established some important principles at its second summit in Havana. They declared that their relations will be based on international law, self-determination and sovereign equality; that every state has the right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural system as an essential condition to secure peaceful coexistence between nations; that all differences between nations should be resolved peacefully, through dialogue and negotiation and other ways consistent with international law.

They also agreed on the obligation not to interfere, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of any other state. It is worth noting that the USA and Canada plus the remaining colonial outposts on the continent were excluded from CELAC as their membership was seen as incompatible with these principles.

On the other hand, Communists can readily accept these principles and recognise that they have always been the principles that countries led by Marxists have adhered to. They are enshrined in the United Nations charter and perhaps represent the high watermark of the victory over fascism by the USSR. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was only a matter of time before these principles were first ignored and then dropped altogether.

They are also diametrically opposite to the principles of the British state in conducting its international relations. So when Argentina criticises Britain because it is drilling for oil around the Malvinas/Falklands without negotiating with Argentina, Britain responds by increasing its military presence on the islands. How foolish this must look to the other countries of that continent.

When the USA offered to improve relations with Cuba if it changed its political system, Raul Castro simply read these principles off to Obama at the Summit of the Americas. The USA was forced by its growing isolation from Latin America and the Caribbean to seek diplomatic relations with Cuba, but the blockade of the island continues.

What of the working class?

But what of our working class and its response to the threat of war now being ramped up against Russia, or against China in the Pacific Ocean? Two million of us marched through London against the Iraq invasion in 2003. It did not stop the Iraq war but it did stop Cameron from bombing Syria in 2013.

But where were the protests against the bombing of Libya? Did we think that as it didn't work for Iraq, there was no point? Or did we fall for their lies about the 'evil' Gaddafi?

Invented concepts like the inappropriately named Arab Spring and the EU anti-austerity movements in countries like Greece and Spain were doomed to failure because of the absence of Marxist thought from their inception. They were not based on the working class, they didn't challenge capitalism, and in the case of the anti-austerity campaigns, they didn't even challenge the EU or the euro.

During the eurozone debt crisis, we saw EU leaders show their teeth, their vicious anti-working class rhetoric, and their arrogance, telling Greece that no country is allowed to leave the eurozone, unless of course they're forcibly expelled from it by the EU.

We also saw the cowardice and dishonesty of the Greek electorate reflected in the so-called "radical" Tsipras, who pretended that Greece could escape the consequences of euro membership while staying in the euro. As a result Greece became effectively a German protectorate, opened up to bailiffs and asset-strippers.

The Greek working class had the opportunity to back the call of the Greek Communist Party to leave the eurozone and the EU, but it failed to do so. It could not shed its love of the euro and seemed to prefer enslavement to a return to the drachma, which would have returned sovereignty to the Greek nation. The absence of Marxism in the 'anti-austerity' movement led to another Greek tragedy.

The ideological decline, the retreat from Marxism amongst workers across the world, began in earnest around the late 1970s and early 1980s and followed a confluence of events perhaps more connected than has been credited. Deng Xiaoping came to power in China in 1978, Thatcher in 1979 and Reagan in 1981. War was being waged against what was perceived to be "Marxism" across Africa and Latin America. Thatcher, Reagan and Deng were to launch ideological

attacks on their own populations and on the USSR.

By 1991, Marxism was declared "dead" after the collapse and break-up of the Soviet Union. Things went downhill from there as every form of collectivism was destroyed or attacked through privatisation and fragmentation. The ideological decline in Britain is obvious to us, but not to our working class. Hence, our task remains that which we set ourselves when we were established as a Party, namely, to change the ideology of our class.

The ideological decline is not confined to Britain and has occurred across the world. Why did the Soviet working class stand by and allow collapse there? Why would Greek workers vote no to austerity but love the EU? Ideology abhors a vacuum, and the collapse of Marxism created the space for a pre-feudal religion from a tribal society based on slavery becoming what some term the strongest ideology in the world; how has that happened?

We the British working class must always remember that our task is not only to march against war but to destroy the very beast that is making the war. War is inherent to that beast, capitalism, and it is impossible to have capitalism without war. But without a Marxist understanding of our situation, capitalism will not be destroyed.

If a tiny bourgeois state like Greece can set alarm bells ringing throughout the EU by the possibility of its leaving only the eurozone, think what would happen if Britain, the world's 5th biggest economy, were to leave the EU. The war machine would be seriously weakened, maybe even fatally. If Britain were to march out of NATO and send US bases, military personnel and hardware home, bringing all British military abroad home, that would be devastating for the war machine. It would produce qualitative change for the EU, and would derail capitalism's plans for its world order.

Since 1945 Britain has followed the orders of the USA, but Cuba, a founder member of CELAC, has shown us how to stand up to the Empire, as they rightly call the US. But there will be no advance against the beast without an organised working class leading that fight, led by the ideas of Marxism. In short, there will be no advance anywhere in the world without Marxism.

We as a Party, and the workers who constitute Britain's majority must take hold of the opportunity of a referendum on the EU. Leaving the EU opens the way to rebuild sovereign nation states. We can use that referendum weapon to drive a stake through the heart of the EU/NATO war alliance. If we do not, war will follow.

And as Britain – England, Wales and Scotland – must reassert its sovereignty as a nation by leaving the EU, we must reiterate our Party's call for the British state to cease its rule in Ireland.

China and Russia may be potential counterbalances for peace in a war-threatened, and war-ravaged world. The extraordinary histories of China and the Soviet Union cannot be discounted, for something of their achievements must remain, with some there remembering what was achieved. But it is precisely the departure from Marxism in those trail-blazing countries that has made the threat of war more real. The creation of capitalism in those countries has threatened the peace of the world.

The British people's internationalist duty lies in Britain. We effect change in the world through changing Britain, and that cannot be done unless our Marxist-Leninist Party grows and is successful in changing the ideology of our working class. A Communist is a Marxist who doesn't get lost, and the world's workers need the clarity of Marxism to light the way now as never before.

