

Interview with the RIM Committee

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Accelerating the Pace of World Proletarian Revolution

The following is an interview conducted with a member of the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in the early part of 2000.

AWTW: How does the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) see the current world situation?

CoRIM: We believe that the international situation is generally favourable for the advance of the revolutionary struggle.

While we are not yet experiencing the same kind of high tide of revolutionary struggle on a world scale that we have witnessed in the past and will surely see again, we can speak with confidence of an emerging new wave of the world proletarian revolution. It is true that some of the imperialist powers, notably US imperialism, have enjoyed some respite as a result of the partial re-division of the world that accompanied the collapse of Soviet social-imperialism and its bloc. But despite their talk, there has been no world-wide robust recovery, and new waves of crisis and dislocation have

appeared in areas such as East Asia that were trumpeted as the beneficiaries and motors of capitalist renewal.

There is no doubt that imperialism has not and cannot remove the material basis for proletarian revolution. Even today, when US imperialism is boasting of its successes, the conditions of huge sections of the masses of people in much of the world are sharply deteriorating. The new waves of imperialist penetration carried out under the signboard of globalisation have brought gadgets to sections of the middle classes, but basic necessities such as food, medical care and housing are more and more out of the reach of the basic masses. Even in the most advanced imperialist countries, hopelessness grows. Furthermore, today's situation can only worsen for the masses, and new waves of crisis will inevitably sweep the imperialist system.

AWTW: Mao taught that in every process one contradiction is principal; although all the contradictions are interrelated, the principal contradiction is that which most influences the development of all of the other major contradictions. Does RIM have a unified assessment of the principal contradiction in the world today?

CoRIM: Yes. The contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed peoples and nations is the principal contradiction in the world today. Revolutionary armed struggle under Marxist-Leninist-Maoist leadership is being waged in a number of the oppressed countries. Furthermore, in the last six years powerful mass upheavals have taken place in a number of countries such as Mexico, Korea, Indonesia and Zaire (today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo). While these upheavals could not go over to proletarian revolution for lack of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist leadership, they illustrate the sharpening of the principal contradiction. The storm centres of the world proletarian revolution remain the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, as our Movement has held since our formation.

AWTW: Does this mean that revolution is only possible in the oppressed countries?

CoRIM: No. The whole world is full of contradictions and volatility and all of the major contradictions in the world are sharpening. This includes the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie within the imperialist countries, which is expressed through various kinds of struggle, including rebellions such as Los Angeles in 1992. Significant mass movements directed against the ruling class and its reactionary institutions are developing in a number of imperialist countries. The eruption of full-scale warfare in the Balkans area of Europe, despite the reactionary character of those armed conflicts, shows that no region of the world, not even the imperialist countries themselves, is immune from violent upheaval and dislocation and the accompanying revolutionary possibilities.

AWTW: How does RIM see the two trends of revolution and world war in the present international context?

CoRIM: The danger of imperialist world war has temporarily receded in the past period as a result of changes in the world situation, and revolution is the main trend in the world today. However, only when proletarian revolution finally destroys imperialism will it be possible to definitively rid the world of the danger of world war.

AWTW: If the conditions are generally favourable, what, then, is holding back the further advance of the world revolutionary movement?

CoRIM: It is clear to all that we have not resolved the gap between the growing discontent and even revolt of the masses on the one hand, and on the other, the ability of the class-conscious forces, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, to lead this struggle forward as part of a revolutionary challenge to the existing regimes. Too often, in too many countries, the struggling masses are leaderless; they are fighting blindly, without the liberating ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). Our advances have been real and increasing, but they are still not commensurate with our declared ambitions of winning the world. In most countries, there is still no vanguard proletarian party nor any clear prospect of its emergence. Without a vanguard party based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the scientific ideology of the international proletariat, revolution will either fail or be hijacked by new exploiters. Holding high our red banner of MLM and building vanguard parties in the face of the imperialists, reactionaries and opportunists is key to transforming the potential of today's situation into real revolutionary advances. Today the existence of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is a major factor in making it possible to achieve these objectives more rapidly.

AWTW: How has RIM itself been developing in the past period?

CoRIM: No one should underestimate the accomplishments of RIM in the sixteen years since its formation. It has established itself as the embryonic centre of the world's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces. Participating parties and organisations of RIM have made advances in the revolutionary struggle and this has propelled the whole Movement forward. Among these advances we want to call particular attention to the Communist Party of Peru and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which are leading people's wars that are illuminating the path for the oppressed all over the world. In Turkey, our comrades are pursuing armed struggle against the reactionary regime, and the further advances of the TKP(ML) in ever closer unity with RIM will surely help bring about a mighty revolutionary upsurge of people's war in Turkey. In Bangladesh, the Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) has, for three decades,

persisted in carrying out armed struggle in different forms in the face of tremendous difficulties and enemy repression. Today comrades in that country are debating how to develop the struggle to the stage of waging a sustained people's war.

In countries where there are participants or supporters of RIM, serious efforts are being made to build and strengthen Maoist vanguard parties and to prepare for the launching of people's war.

But no advances in the communist movement are ever a straight-line affair. Advances are hard fought and come about through struggle on all levels. RIM has been developing through twists and turns. Like all new things, it faces new problems.

AWTW: What is the situation with the People's War in Peru?

CoRIM: Our advanced detachment in Peru, the Communist Party of Peru, forged under the revolutionary line of Chairman Gonzalo, which has played such a crucial role throughout the whole history of our Movement, has written another glorious chapter in the world revolutionary struggle. In his masterful speech of 24th September 1992 from the prison of the enemy, Comrade Gonzalo pointed out that his capture was only a "bend in the road" and not the great defeat the enemy was claiming. With proletarian revolutionary optimism, sacrifice and hard struggle, the Party has confronted the difficult period following the capture of Chairman Gonzalo. It has defended and maintained the People's War and the Central Committee of the PCP has announced that the People's War is now coming out of the "bend in the road".

The PCP has also had to beat back the vicious attacks of a Right Opportunist Line which emerged from within the Party and which is arguing for peace accords to end the People's War. RIM has participated in the fight against the Right Opportunist Line, for example through issuing the Call "Rally to the Defence of Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" and the publication of a major article written at the request of CoRIM.¹

AWTW: How do you see the claim of the Fujimori regime and leaders of the Right Opportunist Line that Chairman Gonzalo himself has called for the peace accords?

CoRIM: It is true that the Fujimori regime and the supporters of the Right Opportunist Line make this claim. Our investigation and study has shown that there is no proof that Chairman Gonzalo was behind the call for peace accords to end the People's War. This remains the case today six years after the call for peace accords was first issued from within the Peruvian prisons. The PCP continues to denounce Fujimori's claims as a "hoax".

RIM's 1995 "Call to Defend Our Red Flag Flying in Peru" states clearly and correctly: "Chairman Gonzalo remains in extreme conditions of confinement at the hands of the reactionary regime, denied contact with lawyers, kept in isolation, refused the visits of five distinguished international delegations and placed upon what the regime boasts is an 'information diet'. The Fujimori regime is notorious for its murder, lies, manipulations and physical and psychological abuse of prisoners of war. Under these circumstances, one cannot accept indirect and unverifiable communications attributed to Chairman Gonzalo as representative of his thinking, and the fight must continue for an end to his isolation.

"It is clear that the negotiations line runs contrary to the basic line of the PCP which has led the People's War forward and which was forged under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalo. It is important to continue to try to determine Chairman Gonzalo's current views. The key question, however, is the line, not its author."

AWTW: What about those who claim that it is wrong to talk about "a two-line struggle" that emerged from within the PCP?

CoRIM: Again RIM's basic position is clear. It is reflected in an important article which appeared in AWTW [1996/22] entitled "On the Maoist Conception of the Two-line Struggle". Marxism-Leninism-Maoism teaches us that two-line struggle is an inevitable feature of all communist organisations and that this struggle will give rise to occasional fierce battles over the very line and colour of the party.

This does not mean that we are arguing for liberalism, for "allowing" a revisionist line or headquarters to remain in the party. To recognise and fight revisionism is by no means to grant it legitimacy.

AWTW: Some have suggested that CoRIM and the Central Committee of the PCP are at loggerheads over these points.

CoRIM: Our whole Movement is united with the comrades of the CC of the PCP in fighting the Right Opportunist Line, in pursuing the People's War in Peru and in struggling to defend the life of Chairman Gonzalo, including demanding an end to the isolation of Chairman Gonzalo and his live appearance before the Peruvian and international press. And linked to that, we are defending the life of Comrade Feliciano as well. We are united in defending the line that Chairman Gonzalo forged for making revolution in Peru. This unity is strong and will withstand any test. At the same time, there is no doubt that there are often differences of opinions among the Maoists internationally. And this question is no exception. Through the process of discussion and struggle among the Maoists differences are resolved and give rise to a higher and increasingly solid level of unity. Sixteen years of RIM's history prove this to be true. Enemies of the Movement have tried hard to speculate on differences, real or imagined, between the PCP and the Committee of RIM or other parties and organisations of RIM. The statement on the occasion of the new millennium, "For a Century of People's Wars, Forward towards the Victory of Socialism and Communism!", which the parties and organisations of RIM formally adopted, shows the futility of such speculation. An important principle is for differences to be discussed internally within RIM, that is, privately among the parties and organisations, and to avoid the public airing of internal disputes. The RIM Committee itself made some serious mistakes in this regard, including encouraging the publication of some articles in AWTW that addressed a number of questions that were really not appropriate for a public journal.²

CoRIM is determined to avoid any such mistakes in the future that strain the unity of the Movement. We are also confident that any others who may have made similar mistakes will also correct them and learn from them. In the recent period the whole Movement has reached a higher level of unity and is determined to safeguard this achievement and advance it to a higher level still.

AWTW: How does RIM look at the Peoples' War in Nepal?

CoRIM: One of the most significant developments in the last few years in the life of our Movement and indeed in the development of the world-wide revolutionary struggle more generally has been the outbreak of the People's War in Nepal in 1996. The tremendous outpouring of revolutionary energy unleashed by the courageous initiation of the People's War by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has been a source of great encouragement for the comrades in all the parties and organisations of our Movement.

Our whole Movement has, from its very foundation, benefited from its living links with our comrades in Nepal. Just as the comrades there had to fight to repudiate the rightist line of M.B. Singh, the leader of the Nepal Communist Party (Mashal), so too our whole Movement had to combat Singh, who was the only force in RIM who argued strenuously against the adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1993.

The CPN(M) has played an active role in our Movement, and an increasing one, despite the tremendous pressure and responsibility of leading the People's War forward. These

comrades had closely followed and studied the experience of the People's War in Peru to assimilate its lessons, while Singh always denigrated this experience. The CPN(M) actively took up the criticism of the Right Opportunist Line that emerged in the PCP and were able to apply the lessons to the struggle to initiate the People's War. This is an important illustration of the principle that participation in the international communist movement does not hinder but rather greatly helps the struggle to implement an MLM line in one's own country. The expulsion of the NCP (Mashal) from the Movement in 1998 for its opposition in theory and practice to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, following a long period of struggle with Mashal, was an important victory. It underscores again the interconnection between the struggle in any one country and the problems posed to the Movement as a whole.

In the course of this process the Committee has learned a great deal and deepened its grasp of the laws of people's war. The interaction between the Movement and the comrades in Nepal has meant that it has been possible for the whole Movement, through the efforts of CoRIM as well as by other means, to be part of this exciting process and assimilate the experience and the lessons that the comrades are acquiring. In this process, as well as by continuing to strive to assimilate the experience and lessons accumulated by the comrades in Peru in applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to waging people's war there, and also through our study of the positive and negative experience of others in waging revolutionary warfare, our overall understanding of the laws of people's war has been increasing.

AWTW: How does RIM understand the question of proletarian internationalism?

CoRIM: We have been emphasising Lenin's famous definition of proletarian internationalism:

"There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is - working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line in every country without exception." 3

Lenin's instruction is deep in meaning. It means we can never reduce proletarian internationalism to a kind of benign "solidarity" that leaves out the task of making revolution in "one's own country". We also call attention to the second part of Lenin's definition, the requirement to support a proletarian revolutionary orientation in every country and not settle for less.

The party in each country has the fundamental responsibility for developing the line for revolution there, including in resolving issues of two-line struggle in that party. But the struggle between Marxism and revisionism is never a "national" affair. Responsible communists cannot sit by idly as comrades in other countries debate life-and-death questions of revolution.

AWTW: Readers of this magazine often ask how they can play a role in helping RIM develop.

CoRIM: AWTW, which is regularly published in English, Spanish and Farsi, plays a crucial role in disseminating Marxism-Leninism-Maoism throughout the world but this needs to expand even further. It is particularly important to make the journal available in more languages, to increase its distribution and to spread it to new countries. We hope your readership will play an active part in helping to accomplish this. We are happy to learn that a Hindi edition will be appearing soon and that the Turkish edition will be appearing more regularly in the future.

We hope readers of AWTW will contact the participating parties and organisations of

RIM or candidate participants in countries where they exist. In countries where RIM does not yet have a presence we hope your readers will make contact directly with RIM.

AWTW: How does RIM see the question of forming a new Communist International? Will this involve Maoists outside of RIM?

CoRIM: From the very formation of RIM we have stressed the need for a new communist international. Clearly the struggle to form a new communist international will necessarily involve other Maoist forces outside RIM. This new communist international must be composed of the great bulk of genuine Maoist parties, and the understanding and experience acquired throughout the world in making revolution must become part of the synthesis that will be reflected in its line and programme.

We have repeatedly stressed the need for a new communist international. RIM, while an important step in the direction of a new communist international, cannot fulfil this role. This is true in both its quantitative and qualitative features. We are still not present in enough countries of the world, and there are some very important struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed led by genuine communist organisations outside RIM. It is also true that our level of collective unity and understanding, while a very great accomplishment and one that has advanced over the years, is still not adequate for a new communist international. In short, a new communist international will represent an advance, a leap, beyond the level of unity and understanding that we have achieved up to now.

AWTW: What is the main obstacle in the way of uniting the Maoist forces internationally?

CoRIM: The biggest is the still uneven and partially contradictory understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism among the forces that claim the Maoist banner. This is very much linked to the problem of establishing a general line and programme for a new communist international. Some of the key questions on which there are uneven or opposing understandings between RIM and other Maoist forces include: the universality of the path of people's war, the full appreciation of Mao's teachings concerning the continuation of the revolution under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the lessons of the struggle against modern revisionism. This is clearly expressed in different interpretations of the history of the international communist movement, particularly the coup in China, and the question of whether the international communist movement reached its high point during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as RIM has consistently held, or has been more or less in a state of decline since the time of Khrushchev's coup in the Soviet Union. This latter view not only fails to recognise Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism to a whole new and higher stage, it also ends up undermining the great struggle against Soviet-led modern revisionism.

In addition, some of the communists outside RIM do not accept, in principle, the need for a "centre" for the international communist movement. This also means that they have not yet been convinced of the need for a new communist international.

AWTW: What about other initiatives in the international communist movement?

CoRIM: RIM follows very closely the developments among all those forces who are claiming the Maoist banner. We are now present in debate and discussion within the broader international communist movement and will be increasingly so in the future. For example, our letter to the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations is one case in point. [This letter is reprinted elsewhere in this issue - AWTW.]

In the period ahead we must struggle hard, not out of any narrow organisational interests, but for a correct line to grow stronger, win out and serve as the basis of uniting the genuine MLM forces the world over.

AWTW: What has RIM summed up about the process of building new Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties?

CoRIM: We are happy to note that the Maoist Communist Party has just been formed in Italy and is a participating member of RIM. The recent publication by the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) of a draft programme for a vanguard communist party in Iran represents one of the final steps in the process of party formation in that country as well.

The formation of a genuine vanguard party will vary in different countries and according to the conditions prevalent during any one period in the revolutionary process in a given country. Nevertheless, it is possible to ascertain some of the key and universal features involved in party formation.

The MLM party must be based upon a correct line and programme. This means the universal principles of MLM must be applied to analysing the particularities of a given country and to developing the basic approach to waging revolution. In order to accomplish this it is necessary that, in the words of the Declaration, party building be linked to addressing "the pressing political questions which must be resolved in order for the revolutionary movement to advance". This implies consistent effort to apply the mass line to leading the masses forward while learning from them. And it presupposes efforts to develop at least the skeleton of an organisational structure capable of carrying forward revolutionary practice based on the party's correct line.

Moreover, a correct political and ideological line can only be forged in the course of fighting revisionist lines on both the national and international level. While it is necessary to combat both right and "left" errors, to struggle against both revisionism and dogmatism, the main danger is revisionism. The party must be built in the course of the class struggle, including the two-line struggle.

There have been misunderstandings associated with this process in the past. Sometimes there have been arbitrary quantitative goals established which, when not met, become arguments to unnecessarily postpone the formation of the party. While the formation of the party implies a certain basic "quality" as mentioned above, the quantitative expression of this same quality (number of cadre, influence among the masses and so forth) will vary considerably.

An important task of RIM is to aid in the building and strengthening of Maoist parties throughout the world. The existence of RIM means that this process can develop more quickly and successfully.

AWTW: How has RIM's understanding of people's war developed in recent years?

CoRIM: Our starting point is Chairman Mao's teaching that, "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of the revolution holds good universally, for China and for other countries."⁴

When the proletariat and the people do not have state power, it must be seized through people's war waged in accordance with the different conditions in different countries. It is thus completely normal that the work of the whole Movement and that of the Committee will necessarily be concerned with the thorny problems of preparing and initiating people's war and advancing it toward victory.

When our Movement adopted Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in 1993, an important discussion took place concerning the different ideological, political and organisational problems that make it difficult, even for parties and organisations of our Movement, to

initiate and maintain genuine revolutionary warfare of the masses. Since then important progress and breakthroughs have been made by parties and organisations of our Movement in preparing for and carrying out the central task of seizing political power through revolutionary warfare, most notably the initiation of the People's War in Nepal. Important experience and understanding has been accumulated and our understanding of some of the questions involved has grown stronger. We have also had the opportunity in the past period to study more of the positive and negative experiences of others who are waging revolutionary armed struggle, including those who are struggling to do so from a Maoist perspective.

AWTW: How is RIM's understanding of people's war different from the armed struggles waged by non-MLM forces?

CoRIM: Mao's theory of people's war was, and is, qualitatively different from those armed struggles waged by oppressed peoples that lacked the leadership of the proletariat and a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party. Only with the advent of the proletariat and only under the leadership of the MLM party does it become possible to actually build a society (through the necessary stages, of course) in which the misery of the masses can be finally eradicated and even exploitation itself and the very division of society into classes are targeted for destruction.

In today's world there are a number of non-Maoist forces waging revolutionary guerrilla wars, sometimes very powerful ones. The essential difference between the armed struggle waged by these non-proletarian forces and that waged under the leadership of a genuine MLM party has to do with the kind of society to be created through war and which class (or class alliance) will hold political power.

The goal of non-proletarian forces stops short of wiping out class exploitation and inevitably results in these kinds of forces seeking to be integrated into the exploiting classes, or at least into the ruling structures of essentially the same system. The goal of the people's war led by the MLM party is to put power into the hands of the proletariat and the masses, power that can be used to reshape and transform society in the interests of the people in the country and world-wide.

But it is not enough simply to proclaim such a goal; indeed, we have seen that revisionists and opportunists can sometimes try to confuse the people by adopting our slogans. The difference between the "war aims" of the genuine MLM forces and those of other classes is expressed not only in programmes and declarations, but also very much in the conduct of the fighting itself. It is absolutely necessary for the long-term aims of the proletariat to find their appropriate expression in the policies and methods used by the MLM forces to advance the war from one level to another.

AWTW: RIM has been emphasising the importance of base areas in waging people's war.

CoRIM: Yes, Mao's writings stress - and the experience of our own Movement bears out - that the development of base areas plays an essential role in waging protracted people's war. Advancing along the path of building base areas is key for increasingly incorporating the masses into the process of war, including developing the military strength of the revolutionary army. This Maoist path, with its reliance on the people, especially the poor peasantry, stands in sharp contrast to other strategies that would replace reliance on the masses with the aid and/or "sanctuary" of one or another reactionary state (for example, Kurdistan, where both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes have funded and armed different Kurdish guerrilla groups). Failing to rely on the masses of the oppressed inevitably interacts with the nature and aims of the war itself and brings with it the danger that the struggle of the people will be manipulated and/or betrayed by one or another reactionary power.

Without a policy of working toward and building up base areas step by step, it will be

impossible for the party to carry out the kinds of transformations, even if limited and partial, that can unleash revolutionary energy among the people and serve as a spotlight on the more thorough transformations to be carried out upon the seizure of power country-wide. If this basic path is not followed, there is the danger that the armed forces of the people will degenerate into "roving rebel bands" divorced from the peasant masses. This would mean that the people's armed forces are not only weak militarily, but are no longer able to play their role as the main form of organisation of the masses.

Of course, the realities of fighting a stronger and well-armed enemy make the establishment of base areas no easy matter. In most cases, the MLM-led forces will begin with a relatively low level of guerrilla warfare, which can open the way for a later development into base areas. Here we can learn from what Chairman Gonzalo told comrades at the very beginning of the People's War in Peru: "We carry political power in our knapsacks." In other words, even when the revolutionary struggle is still at an early stage and the level of military activity is still low, through their ideology and the expression of this ideology in concrete policies, through their ever-increasing integration with the masses of the people, the communist-led fighters embody the future rule of the workers and peasants. Viewed in this way, guerrilla warfare does not lead to "guerrilla-ism", and the establishment of guerrilla zones does not become an end in itself but rather paves the way for base areas and the deepening participation of the masses in the struggle.

AWTW: Some comrades outside RIM have argued that the realities of the world today make the establishment of base areas impossible, except under highly exceptional circumstances.

CoRIM: The difficulty in creating "relatively stable base areas" has sometimes been used to unnecessarily prolong the period of guerrilla zones and delay the stage of building base areas. It is true that with modern methods of fighting and especially the enemy's ability to rely on helicopters and other means for the quick transportation of troops, there is no area of any country that is completely impenetrable to the enemy's forces. (Of course, in China the base areas were only relatively stable, and Mao had to abandon Yenan at one point. Nevertheless, it seems that in today's world, base areas, even in large countries, will be even less stable than those in China.)

However, this expresses only part of the truth. It is still the case that even if the enemy is able to invade or attack base areas, it does not have the strength to permanently occupy and control the vast countryside of the oppressed countries. When confronted with the development of people's war, the enemy can be forced to "hole up" in strong points and people's power can take on concrete expression in gradually expanding areas where new laws, practices, culture and even some new production relations can begin to be established. In particular, the policy of "land to the tiller" can become more than just a slogan but rather a living reality and a clarion call to the whole society.

AWTW: So is RIM's understanding the same thing as calling for establishing "dual power" in the countryside?

CoRIM: No. The concept of "dual power" can imply that the power of the masses and that of the reactionary state will be "intertwined" and "coexist" in the same geographical area of the country.

Lenin, of course, used the term "dual power", but in a different way, to describe an inherently unstable and temporary situation in which neither the reactionary state nor the forces of the people were able to exercise country-wide power. In our opinion, this idea does not best describe the dialectical development of people's war.

In contrast, the comrades of the Communist Party of Peru often correctly refer to people's war as being a process of "restoration and counter-restoration". In other words,

areas under the control of the people can be seized back by the armed might of the enemy and then the people's forces should seek to recover them once again. (Of course, not necessarily in a linear way - a war of encirclement and counter-encirclement will always involve "making feints to the east to attack in the west" and giving up one area temporarily while concentrating on others.)

The reality is that it is impossible to defeat the enemy at a single stroke, but it is possible and necessary to begin to build up the political power of the people based upon revolutionary armed strength. The "dual-power" model, as well as our understanding, are both attempts to develop a line to respond to this reality. But there is a fundamental difference between them.

In the former ("dual power") model, the proletariat and the people do not seek to exercise complete power. The extent of the political power they exercise is self-limited and the power of the reactionary state is only partially challenged even in areas of the people's strength. The idea of "restoration and counter-restoration", however, implies that the struggle should aim to suppress the enemy, to exercise dictatorship, whilst recognising that the other side will inevitably attack and seek to violently re-impose its rule and that this is sure to be a protracted back-and-forth process. People's war means seizing power bit by bit.

AWTW: What about the goal of nation-wide victory of people's war?

CoRIM: We need to master the dialectic between continually directing the movement toward the final goal of the struggle that we represent (both in the sense of fighting for country-wide victory and also advancing toward socialism and communism), while also recognising that the concrete measures we take at any point will inevitably be limited by objective constraints. We cannot set our goals and policies subjectively, based solely on our own desires, but we must also always be straining against the limits of the objective situation and be seeking to transform it in accordance with our MLM understanding of the future of the struggle. We must preserve our ranks, but we can never make self-preservation the highest goal. The course of the war and the circumstances of its final victory are impossible to predict and also depend on developments in the region and internationally. But Mao pointed out that communists must "hasten and await" favourable developments on a world scale, and our most powerful form of "hastening" is carrying forward the revolutionary war itself.

AWTW: Have changes in the world in the last several decades modified the possibilities for waging people's war in the oppressed countries?

CoRIM: It has been correct to argue, as RIM has, that the further growth of bureaucrat capitalism does not negate the semi-feudal nature of these societies or the basic road charted by Mao Tsetung in these countries. Still, this basic understanding will need to be applied to the study of concrete realities, which in many countries have undergone significant changes in the past 20 or 30 years, including, for example, the growth of "mega-cities" in a number of Third World countries, further penetration and new forms of imperialist domination, etc. Here also the challenge will be to hold firmly to the basic principles of our MLM science and ideology, whilst not failing to investigate and understand new phenomena.

AWTW: What has RIM been summing up about how to prepare to launch people's war?

CoRIM: It is possible to identify two common errors. One error, and the biggest danger historically, has been to construct a whole stage of accumulating strength by carrying out various forms of mass struggle. This line imagines that people's war will grow spontaneously out of leading this kind of struggle and downgrades the necessity

for active and specific preparation for a qualitatively different and higher form of struggle. It would amount to making a whole separate stage of "preparations", which would never lead to the actual initiation of people's war.

On the other hand, we have also seen the error of trying to build the party in seclusion, divorced from class struggle and revolutionary practice. We should guard against the tendency to be drowned in the day-to-day and partial struggles, with the temptation of growing fast on an incorrect foundation. At the same time, we should guard against the line of building our forces in a "hot-house" because of the fear of catching a disease. In the first case the party will lose the purpose of preparatory work, and in the second case the forces of the party will shrink or become demoralised and the party itself will become irrelevant. In neither case will the party be built as a Maoist party with tested revolutionary leadership and cadre capable of initiating people's war as soon as possible.

AWTW: Would you like to make any concluding remarks?

CoRIM: Our Movement has accomplished a great deal in the 16 years of its existence. But given the magnitude of the tasks before us, we can never rest content with a few successes.

The participating parties and organisations of RIM are determined to increase our Movement's capacity to respond to the many pressing tasks and promising situations in the world as a whole today, despite the ever-increasing burden of leading revolution in their respective countries. Any momentary difficulties caused by taking up these internationalist tasks are more than compensated by the heightened enthusiasm of the masses for revolution, in their revolutionary optimism about the eventual triumph of our cause and in their confidence that the struggle they are waging in a particular country has the support of revolutionary masses all over the world.

We very much hope that, in addition to the participating parties and organisations of RIM and the candidate participants, other parties, organisations, circles and even individuals from countries all around the world will join in the effort to develop RIM and advance together towards a new Communist International.

By grasping ever more deeply our scientific proletarian ideology, by advancing forward along the lines indicated in the Declaration of RIM and Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!, RIM will make new and bigger contributions toward accelerating the pace and the ultimate victory of the world proletarian revolution.

Footnotes

1 "It's Right to Rebel" by the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) *AWTW* 1995/21.

2 This was especially the case of the article, "A Hard Look at the Dangers and the Opportunities in the Two-line Struggle in Peru", in *AWTW* 1996/22.

3 V.I. Lenin, "Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22.

4 Mao Tsetung, "Problems of War and Strategy", *Selected Works*, Vol. II.