PEACE AND SOCIALISM PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

The issue of peace is one of the problematical concerns for revolutionary Marxism, alongside democracy and the development of the socialist society. Peace has been a concern for Marxists because it represents an alternative to imperialist war and the violent aspects of capitalist society. On the other hand the doctrine of peace seems to imply a passive acceptance of the present system and opposition to the perspective of revolutionary change. We believe that this tension has to be resolved. The argument of this article is that the aim of peace is compatible with the aspiration to change society and realise socialism. We also would contend that this development is what working people would support if they became adherents of socialism. However, it will be maintained by dogmatic supporters of Marxism that this approach glosses over the importance of the coercive character of the state and the necessity to apply force in the process of revolutionary change. We would accept the validity of this objection, but still suggest that a mass movement dedicated to the transformation of society can bring about the peaceful overthrow of capitalism. The point is that the level of class consciousness, which is expressed in resolute determination, can realise the demise of capitalism. It will then be argued that it is impossible to maintain peaceful relations between the remaining capitalist states and the emerging socialist regime. However, the aspiration of the people of all societies will be to uphold the principles of peace in this situation. Hence we would argue that it is possible to establish peaceful relations. This would not mean that the aim of world socialism has been undermined, but that instead we would be committed to the belief that this perspective could be realised in peaceful terms. Such a standpoint does not mean that the Stalinist approach of peaceful co-existence is revived, because this approach represented the acceptance of rival blocs, and the effective rejection of world revolution. Instead all the revolutionary objectives will be upheld, but they will be defined in terms of the determination to realise them in peaceful terms. In this context revolutionary violence, civil war, or wars between countries with different social systems, should no longer become an aspect of the process of change. The concept of peaceful change is what we are committed to achieving. This perspective is what we will attempt to establish, but without diluting any of our revolutionary goals.

We believe the principled basis for the above standpoint has already been established by Trotsky in his article: “War and the International”, which we analysed in a separate article. Furthermore, the process of revolutionary change in Russia was also realised in peaceful terms. The problem of violence was caused by the counterrevolutionary reaction to the revolution. This development generated the view that revolution itself was related to the role of violence. Principled proletarian revolution was conceived in these terms. The result of this situation has led to a contradiction. The forces of revolutionary Marxism are opposed to imperialist wars, and violent repressive regimes in the names of peace and justice, and yet are committed to the perspective of violent revolution. This contradiction has meant the validity of revolutionary force has been questioned, and Marxist opposition to militarism within capitalism has been considered an expression of hypocrisy. We believe that this aspect of contradiction within the programme of Marxism should be resolved. In order to begin to tackle this issue seriously, we will study Lenin's views on the peace issue, and then consider Marxist views of pacifism.

LENIN AND PEACE

Brian Pearce studies the issues of Lenin and Peace in his article of 1961 entailed: 'Lenin and Trotsky on Pacifism and Defeatism.'(1961)(1) Pearce outlines how Lenin argued that in the era of imperialism the standpoint of national defence was no longer appropriate for any major country. The alternative is not to attempt to establish peace, which can be to the advantage of a particular capitalist country at the expense of another. Instead only the abolition of war can end capitalism. Also the class struggle involves wars between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, whether this be civil wars, or wars between a socialist and capitalist country. Pearce contends that Lenin is making the point that: “Far from turning their backs on weapons and military knowledge, the workers must strive to obtain both, since only with their aid would the capitalist class, the source of war, be put down, nationally and internationally.”(2) The problem with Lenin's standpoint is that it is absolutist. He does not recognise that a peace established by the action of the working class could not only end the imperialist war, but it could also advance the interests of the international working class in terms of the aim of socialism. This was the point being made by Trotsky. It is true that the realisation of peace would not end the outbreak of imperialist wars in general, but the establishment of a progressive peace by collective mass action in relation to the First World War would undermine the military might of all the imperialist powers, and in that manner advance the contrasting interests of the working class. Thus the realisation of peace is not something that can only uphold the interests of imperialism, it is instead something that can undermine the very ability to conduct inter-imperialist war, and in this manner enhances the international strength of the working class to impose its will onto society. Thus a progressive peace influenced by the role of the working class does not represent a reactionary illusion that deflects from revolutionary objectives, but instead can promote the process of change and make advances towards socialism. In contrast, Lenin upholds the dogmatic view that only revolution can bring about peace. This standpoint may have some empirical truth, but it cannot motivate the working class in contrast to struggling for an immediate realisation of peace. It is this mass aspiration for peace that has greater appeal than striving for revolution in the immediate situation. Everyone can recognise the necessity for peace in the midst of inter-imperialist war, but not everyone has also become a supporter of revolutionary change. This is an aim that has little support between 1914 and 1916.

However, Lenin is right to suggest that the relationship of imperialism to war cannot be ultimately ended without international proletarian revolution. But peace could represent transitional movement towards this objective. Thus peace and revolution are not distinct and opposed objectives. Instead they can be connected. Trotsky is making this point. The realisation of a peace by the working class will increase its confidence and sense of strength, and so in this manner promote the ability of the proletariat to aspire to realise socialism. In contrast, Lenin's slogan of civil war instead of inter-imperialist war has little appeal. People do not aspire for what would be perpetual warfare. Instead the connection of peace with socialism has more popular appeal. Pearce contends that Lenin is concerned to reject any illusion that peace can be realised without socialism. But what this rigid view denies is that the realisation of peace by working class action is profoundly in their interests even if socialism is not directly advanced. If the working class brings about peace they are indicating to the ruling class that they reject the policy of imperialist war, and instead uphold internationalism instead of nationalism. The popular nationalism of 1914 will have been replaced by the workers of different countries acting together in order to advance the aim of peace. This development will indicate an advance in class consciousness and so cannot represent anything other than political progress in terms of creating increased support for the aim of socialism. In contrast, Lenin rejects any demand for peace which is not directly connected to support for revolution. He seems to deny the obvious fact that the aim of peace in its immediate character will not be related to the aspiration for revolution and socialism, and instead will be about the immediate cessation of the war. Trotsky indicates that the aim of the revolutionary forces should be to connect the aspiration for peace with progressive objectives, and so reject any ultimatism about the necessity of revolution. Indeed a progressive peace will be to the advantage of the interests of the working class. This point is not recognised by Lenin.

However, Lenin is right to contend that peace will not end the possibility of civil wars and future wars between nations. But this possibility does not mean that peace in the immediate situation would be a sham. Instead the imposition of peace because of working class pressure can only be to the benefit of the interests of the international working class. Pearce muddies over this superiority of Trotsky's position by suggesting that he is attempting to conciliate the forces of centrism. Any disinterested reading of his article about peace would recognise that this was a distortion of his principled standpoint. However Lenin outlines in his article, 'Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism', how the former is reactionary and merely represents the division of the spoils between what had been rival nations (3) He also contends that the socialist pacifism of Kautsky is unprincipled because it is based on an appeal to the apparent generosity of the imperialist powers in order to realise a peace without annexations. Lenin maintains that this aim cannot be realised without the overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie. (4) The working class cannot realise national self-determination or a democratic peace without opposing its 'own' bourgeoisie. The problem with Kautsky and company is that they appeal to the bourgeoisie in order to realise peace, this is an illusion and opposed to the only methods that can realise peace which is class struggle! But this is the very approach of Trotsky, only he differs in that peace is a direct objective of immediate mass developments. In contrast, Lenin upholds the more abstract slogan of revolution in order to bring about peace. Trotsky recognises that there will be little support for this aim, which will be considered to be irrelevant in relation to ending the war. Instead what will be more immediately appropriate will be the working class struggling for peace. Only if this struggle is successful, will revolution come on the agenda.

Lenin comments that peace can only be realised if: “It can be waged only by telling the people the truth, by telling the people that in order to obtain a democratic and just peace the bourgeois governments of all the belligerent countries must be overthrown, and for this purpose advantage must be taken of fact that millions of workers are armed and that the high cost of living and the horrors of the imperialist war have aroused the anger of the masses.”(5) The beginning aspect of this comment is abstract in its ultimatist approach of revolution or nothing, but Lenin also mentions that the anger against war has developed within the working class. This latter aspect can be developed in order to suggest that the immediate aim should be the realisation of peace by working class action. Only in this manner will the possibility of revolution be advanced. The problem is that Lenin considers all formulations of peace that are not directly connected with socialism are bourgeois. Thus: “Neither the bourgeois pacifists nor the socialist pacifists realise that without the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois governments, peace now can only be an imperialist peace, a continuation of the imperialist war.”(6) But this generally accurate comment can be made untrue by the very mass action of the working class; it can act to bring about a genuinely democratic peace, a peace that will advance the possibility of socialism. Lenin contends that the alternative is not between a struggle for reforms in terms of realising peace or revolution. Instead he suggests that reform is an illusion and only revolution can realise peace. But there is an alternative to the choices that he has posed, which is that a peace established by the working class could be transitional to the realisation of socialism. In that manner this type of peace would be worth striving to realise.

Pearce thoughtfully outlines how Lenin came to reject his revolutionary defeatist approach, which implied that the defeat of the given imperialist nation should be considered to be part of the process of proletarian revolution. But this process of a change of position did not imply support for Trotsky's perspective that the working class could realise peace and so advance the aim of socialism. Instead Lenin shifted in the sense that his modified position implied that peace could be realised by the development of the power of the Soviets: “To achieve peace (and still more to achieve a really democratic, a really honourable peace), it is necessary that political power be in the hands of the workers and poorest peasants, not the landlords and capitalists.”(7) The reference to defeatism and civil war is now omitted, and instead the emphasis is on the process of peace realised by the actions of the working people. Pearce also mentions that the Bolsheviks during 1917 opposed the actions of reactionary generals to weaken the defences of the front in order to undermine the revolutionary process, and instead it was argued by Lenin that a revolutionary regime would attempt to improve defences in order to oppose any threats from imperialism.

One of the most comprehensive references to the importance of peace, both in the revolutionary process, and in relation to ending the imperialist war, was outlined in the following Bolshevik resolution on the war: “Therefore, while recognising that any concessions to “revolutionary defencism” are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism, the Conference declares that our party will preach abstention from violence as long as the Russian capitalists and their Provisional government confine themselves to threats of violence against the people.....as long as the capitalists have not started using violence against the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Labourers', and other deputies, which organise themselves freely and freely elect and dismiss all public officers. Our party will fight against the profound and fatal error of “revolutionary defencism” solely by means of comradely persuasion, bringing how the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust of the broad masses in the government of the capitalists, who are the worst enemies of peace and socialism, is, in present-day Russia the chief obstacle to a speedy termination of the war.”(8)

In this resolution, the aims of peace and socialism are closely linked, and it is implied that the Bolsheviks are prepared to commit themselves to the limitations of peace in their agitation for revolution. There is no mention of civil war, and instead the generation of war is linked intimately with capitalism and imperialism. It is implied that it is possible to undertake class struggle in a peaceful manner because of the political importance of the role of the Soviet. Hence revolutionary defeatism has been replaced by a version of the peace programme, and this means the promotion of a democratic non-coercive peace as the alternative to imperialist war.(9) The resolution cautiously suggests that only under certain circumstances would revolutionary war be considered as a suitable alternative to imperialist war. But the obvious preference is for peace in order to replace a situation of war. Hence it is not surprising that the policy of defeatism is diluted and becomes the call for fraternisation between belligerent troops, and the resolution ends with the claim that Soviet power would mean: 'a speedy termination of the war, of a really lasting, truly democratic peace among the nations, and at the same time the transition of all countries to socialism'.(10) The Bolsheviks have been converted not only to a version of Trotsky’s peace programme, but in a certain sense have also promised that they will limit their tactics to the peaceful attempt to realise socialism.

In other words the powerful revolutionary potential of the Soviets has dramatically modified the Bolsheviks conception of the process of the overthrow of capitalism and ending imperialist war. Instead of a call for civil war as the expression of revolution and bringing to an end imperialist war, the Bolsheviks are now committed during 1917 to a democratic peace and the necessity of class struggle without coercion. In a talk on 'War and Revolution', Lenin does not rule out the possibility of revolutionary wars in order to promote the possibility of socialism. He differentiates between progressive and reactionary wars. But this understanding does not mean that he is advocating this policy under all circumstances. Instead the more preferable approach is that socialism is realised in terms of the application of the role of peace. Lenin makes the point that it is the capitalists who want war and so only revolution can end it: “The capitalists are still continuing the war, and we say: Until there is a workers revolution in several countries the war cannot be stopped, because the people who want this war are still in power.”(11) In this comment, Lenin directly identifies capitalism with war and socialism with peace. Proletarian revolution will bring about peace. Only in exceptional circumstances could revolution mean the continuation of war because of the aggression of the imperialist forces. This perspective means that it would also be preferable if the process of revolution was also peaceful. The revolutionary Soviets will not initiate violence, which will be the responsibility of the reactionary forces. Lenin is making the point that it is the character of imperialism which is connected to war, and so the opposing class interests of the working class is for peace. This aspiration can only be realised by the act of revolution, and the modification of capitalism by means of the pressure of the Soviets is not sufficient in order to realise peace. Instead only the total power of the Soviets can realise a democratic peace. Hence International revolution is the most principled manner in which a democratic peace can be realised. But Lenin is adamant that a principled peace cannot be realised in terms of compromise agreements with the capitalists. They will only demand continued domination of the nations and the right to reparations. Instead only a democratic peace imposed by revolutionary regimes is acceptable.

PACIFISM AND SOCIALISM

This connection of peace to socialism became obscured over the years because of the civil war in Russia and the repressive character of capitalism. Christopher Caudwell carried out a Marxist critique of pacifism in his article: 'Pacifism and Violence'.(12) He defines this standpoint as bourgeois and contends: “I call it a distinctively bourgeois doctrine, because I mean by pacifism, not the love of peace as a good to be secured by a definite form of action, but the belief that any form of social constraint of others or violent action is in itself wrong, and that violence such as war must be passively resisted because to use violence to end violence would be logically self-contradictory. I oppose pacifism in this sense to the Communist belief that the only way to secure peace is by revolutionary change in the social system, and that the ruling classes resist revolution violently and must therefore be overthrown by force.”(13) The problem with this definition of pacifism is that it effectively defines any expression of the role of peace as being effectively an example of bourgeois pacifism – the rejection of the role of violence – which means that the capitalist system is not being energetically opposed and is instead passively accepted because the alternative of revolutionary force is being rejected. But, as Caudwell mentions, there is a difference between the standpoint of peace and pacifism. The latter generally rejects any utilisation of violence because it is defined as morally reprehensible, but the aim of peace can involve many different forms of tactics in order to realise this condition. However, Marxists reject the role of imperialist war in order to realise peace because we know that this approach represents the realisation of the peace of the powerful countries over nations that are weaker. Furthermore, the peace of imperialism is likely to continually become a situation of war, because the problem of war is an inherent aspect of the capitalist system. Instead Marxists should aim to unite socialism with peace, because the system of socialism has no dynamic or motive force that creates the development of war. Under socialism there are no nations to dominate or conquer, and the world economy is not based on the militaristic role of imperialism. Instead people can reside harmoniously with each other under socialism. But if peace is an integral aspect of socialism, this should mean that it is also an integral tactic for its realisation. Marxists are in favour of class struggle, but there is no reason why this should not take the form of being peaceful. Thus, it is to be preferable that the process of establishing mass popular organisations like Soviets, or the general strike against capitalism, should take a peaceful form. The responsibility for violence will be the reaction of the ruling class to the development of the movements against capitalism. Consequently, the forces for revolution will have an armed militia in order to react to the coercive actions of the ruling class, but it is to be hoped that the polarisation involved in the class struggle does not result in violence and the necessity of revolutionary force.

In other words, Caudwell's perspective that revolution will involve violence is dogmatic and it is to be hoped that the successful overthrow of capitalism can occur without this development. In this sense, the revolutionary party will develop peaceful tactics that mean the possibility of military force will be minimised. It will be argued by the forces of capital that a revolution that challenges the elected power of Parliament can only be both violent and undemocratic. However, this situation will arise because the ruling party, because of a growing crisis of capitalism, introduces measures for which they have no democratic mandate. In this sense, the actual democratic will of the people becomes expressed in an extra-Parliamentary sense. But this situation does not mean that the prospect of violence is inevitable. Instead the increasingly popular character of the mass movement outside Parliament can express the possibility to realise peaceful change. The point is that if the working class has created organisations with an effective militant strength, the potential for violence in this situation could be neutralised. The forces in Parliament would become reluctant to apply coercion in this situation. But the prospect of peaceful revolutionary transition would ultimately depend on the level of class consciousness and determination of the mass movement.

In contrast, the ideology of non-violence rejects absolutely the utilisation, or even threat of force. This approach can be successful when the ruling class is prepared to recognise that concessions can be made to those that are practising non-violence, as in relation to the struggle for Indian independence and the American civil rights movement. But when the question of class power is involved, the utilisation of non-violence as a strict doctrine could become futile and counter-productive. The process of revolutionary change can only occur if its adherent are prepared to utilise force, but it is to be hoped that this threat will not be realised. Hence there is a difference between the tactics of peace and those of non-violence. The approach of the former can be successful when the ruling class has accepted the necessity of concessions, such as the independence of colonies or the civil rights of the oppressed. But this tactic is not likely to be successful in the class struggle when the question of power acquires a crucial character. In this instance, the revolutionary forces can still utilise the role of peace in order to undermine the threat of coercion by the ruling class. But the role of peace is a tactic, and so should not become a dogma to be applied under all circumstances. The character and significance of peace for the revolutionary process is that it is an important tactical expedient in order to avoid war, but it should not become the justification of an opportunist reluctance to seize power. Peace is a preferable option to civil war, but it should not become the reason for capitulation to the supremacy of the ruling class. Instead peace is the form in which the content, the revolution, is realised.

Contrary to Caudwell's view the tactic of non-violence is not inherently bourgeois. Instead it can be a deeply held religious belief, or considered as a useful tactic for bringing about social change and overcoming some obvious injustice within society. Thus it is not necessarily impractical for Marxists to support the tactic of non-violence such as in relation to the attempt to end an imperialist war. This support for the practice of non-violence does not mean that its theory and ideology should also be upheld. Instead non-violence is a tactic which could be superseded by other tactics in relation to the practice of the class struggle. In this manner the aim of peace should be differentiated from that of non-violence. Peace is an ontological condition which we aim to realise under socialism, or is an inherent aspect of what it means to be a socialist society. In contrast, non-violence is a limited tactic of mass struggle. The proponents of non-violence are ambivalent about socialism, and often are vague about the type of society they are advocating. Instead non-violence becomes a form of struggle that is defined as a means to an end, and the end is the means. In contrast, revolutionary struggle has a distinct and defined end which is to replace capitalism with socialism. The ambiguity of non-violence about socialism is rejected and instead socialism is considered the society that will realise peace. But despite the limitations of non-violence we can respect the sincerity of its adherents, and so it is a caricature to define non-violence as bourgeois pacifism. But non-violence has serious strategic limitations, and these can only be overcome by combining the aim of peace with socialism.

Caudwell suggest that the standpoint of the bourgeoisie can be both militaristic and pacifist. The former aspect is obviously true in terms of the empirical ability of capitalism to generate wars, and its individualist ideology promotes violence within society. But it is a caricature to suggest that there is a phenomenon called bourgeois pacifism. Instead as Lenin pointed out bourgeois pacifism is a deception that justifies an unprincipled peace treaty or the temporary end of war. In contrast, principled pacifists oppose all wars and vaguely advocate the development of society in these terms. They may be motivated by religious beliefs, or oppose war as morally wrong. This perspective brings them into opposition to the forces of capitalism, even if they do not have the standpoint that can articulate a viable alternative. Instead the argument is that humans can express peaceful activity, but have been distorted by the values of society and its nationalist ideology. Marxists may recognise this standpoint as sincere but which is lacking a definite perspective in relation to the question of alternatives to capitalism. This point is proved by the fact that pacifists are reluctant to outline what they would mean by a society based on their values. Instead they effectively advocate perpetual struggle against the violence within existing society. This approach is ultimately futile and limited. Marxism claims there is an alternative to violence within existing society, which is socialism. War need not be part of the human condition.

Caudwell outlines how capitalism is based on the role of coercion, in terms of the importance of the bourgeois state which upholds the domination of capital over labour in the form of the rights of private property. The laws of society act as forms of restraint, or the consolidation of the various restrictions that enable the exploitation of the proletariat by the capitalist to occur. The logic of this situation is that the importance of coercion in terms of social relations acquires a violent form: “The whole bourgeois dream explodes in practice, and the bourgeois state becomes a theatre of the violent and coercive subjection of man to man for the purposes of economic production.”(14) In other words nobody would voluntarily consent to the actuality of the relations of production of the domination of capital over labour, and so the economic system has to be maintained by a repressive political system that expresses the continual possibility of its violent continuation. The internal domination of the system becomes externally imposed in terms of imperialist domination by the major capitalist countries of other nations. The result of this situation is war. The repressive character of capitalist relations of production has resulted in a situation of perpetual violence. Competition and antagonism of the rival capitalist states has resulted in war. It would seem that this analysis implies that the only alternative to this economic and political situation is to establish the connection between socialism and peace. Capitalism has led to war because it is the ultimate logic of the character of the capitalist countries, the fact that it is not possible to limit competition to a peaceful form. Instead this relationship can only have an antagonistic and militaristic aspect. Hence the formation of the League of Nations in order to try and regulate inter-imperialist rivalry cannot be effective because some countries still benefit by opposing its attempts to establish world peace: “Thus the peaceful world federation of states, the League, becomes part of the bourgeois illusion, and the nations arm themselves still more heavily.”(15) He also outlines how this development of violence is utilised internally in order to oppose opposition to capitalism. This means people reject the limitations of bourgeois democracy, and the state becomes more repressive in order to oppose the aspiration for socialism: “There is a growing demand for socialism and the capitalist class where this grows pressing, resort to open violence. They use the revolt against ineffectual democracy in order to establish a dictatorship, and this dictatorship, which seizes power with the cry 'Down with Capitalism' in fact establishes capitalism more violently as in fascist Italy and Germany. The brutal oppression and cynical violence of Fascism is the summit of bourgeois decline. The violence at the heart of the bourgeois illusion emerges inside as well as outside the state.”(16)

This analysis, familiar in the mid 1930's, was utilised in order to deny the possibility that peaceful socialism could be realised. In external terms capitalism as imperialism was militaristic and any internal challenge to its rule would generate repressive and violent dictatorship. In relation to the present we can agree that imperialism is still expansionist and aggressive, and the threat of revolution may result in the imposition of a coercive regime. However these aspects of the present economic system do not make the aims of peace and socialism an illusion. Instead they make them more relevant. The answer to imperialist influenced wars is to strive for peace in progressive terms, and in that manner attempt to develop the strength of the working class within society. Whilst the threat of dictatorship means the working class should intensify its efforts to realise socialism as the only basis to end the role of violence within society. The point is that revolutionary force has rarely succeeded in defeating the repressive powers of the state. The state generally has the monopoly of the apparatus of violence, and so has an advantage over the people in terms of access to the weapons of coercion. In contrast, the people have a superior cause in terms of its popularity and the determination to realise it. This situation can only be enhanced if the working people attempt to realise socialism in a peaceful manner. The perspective of peace is likely to promote the hegemony of the working class in the most effective manner. In contrast, revolutionary violence is liable to degenerate into desperate guerrilla actions, which increasingly are without mass support. The revolutionary forces are likely to become demoralised under this situation. In contrast, a peaceful general strike would be far more effective in trying to realise the overthrow of an increasingly repressive system.

Furthermore, the ability to engage in imperialist war is connected to the ideological influence of nationalism. If this standpoint can be undermined by the development of internationalism and class consciousness, it is possible to provide a peaceful alternative to the wars created by imperialist expansion. The prospect of imperialist war is objectively established in terms of the economic imperatives of expansion and the domination of nations, but subjectively it occurs when the reasons given by the ruling class for conflict are popular with the people. Hence there was support for the plight of Belgium in the First World War, and during the Second World War imperialist objectives could be interpreted as being about opposition to fascism. In these situations the policy of war seemed to be more credible than peace. Indeed the policy of peace seemed to represent accommodation to German militarism or fascism. The point is that the working class movement was not influential enough in order to impose its own policy of either ending war, of opposing fascism in its own militant terms. Thus it is necessary to try and generate a mass movement which will discourage the ruling class from engaging in war against other nations. The success of this peace movement can be to promote the struggle for socialism if these two objectives are considered to be inter-connected. The problem has been that even when anti-war movements have emerged, the aim of ending wars has not been connected to the related perspective of socialism. Hence the problem with most anti-war movements is that they make a negative call for ending conflict, but do not provide an alternative to this situation of militarism in the form of the demand for socialism. Thus when the conflict subsides, the anti-war movement effectively has no more reason to continue. This is what happened to the anti-war movements in America concerning the Vietnam War, and the decline of the mass movement in the UK after the invasion of Iraq had occurred. Single issue campaigns for peace tend to be specific and limited to the immediate objective. They would actually be enhanced if the demand for an end to war was connected to the aspiration for a more just society, or socialism. This would mean the mass movement could continue after the immediate end of the specific war.

However, Caudwell would suggest that a peace movement is actually an exercise in futility because the very character of capitalism is based on imperialism and war. Furthermore, the system is based on coercion and so cannot be overthrown without the application of revolutionary violence. In reply to his point it is true that capitalism has an inherent tendency towards the generation of wars. This is why single issue campaigns about particular wars cannot achieve lasting success without the realisation of a global alternative in the form of socialism. However ending a particular war can increase the confidence of the anti-war movement and so generate possible support for more ambitious objectives such as socialism. Trotsky made the point that if the working class could unite internationally in order to bring about a progressive peace as an alternative to the conflict of the First World War this would encourage the struggle for socialism. He was suggesting that whilst people would not support revolution as an alternative to war, the demand for peace seemed to be both realisable and reasonable. If peace was achieved by the actions of the working class this would mean that support for more ambitious objectives such as revolution and socialism would be generated. In this manner what would seem to be a limited movement for peace could become the beginning of the struggle for a social alternative to the continuation of imperialism and war. If people would not support revolution as an alternative to war, Marxist should not make this demand and instead should make more modest aims such as an end to war and the development of a progressive peace. It is entirely possible that support for this aim will occur as an alternative to war, even if people are not yet ready to advocate socialism. The bringing about of peace by a mass movement will be the possible beginning of a process of change that could result in revolutionary developments. But to demand revolution as the alternative to war will only isolate the forces of Marxism from the working class. Support for revolution will grow if the working class is able to unite and organise against the war. This is what happened in the Russian revolution of 1917.

However Caudwell could reply and contend that the development of fascism means that the role of an anti-war movement calling for peace would be capitulationist and reactionary. This point has some truth and indicates the limits of the struggle for peace as an alternative to war. The Fascist powers were determined to engage in aggressive action in order to generate colonial control of Europe and the USSR. It could be argued that only the alliance of the USSR, USA and the UK could defeat fascism. This standpoint proved to be empirically true, but the Second World War took the form of the strengthening of one form of imperialism as against its rival. In order to generate a progressive alternative the working class of the nations of Europe would have had to establish their ability to develop a genuine anti-fascist war. In this context this would have meant that the armies of the Allied powers had been brought under the control of the working class. This development would have meant the bourgeois governments of the UK and the USA were replaced by workers governments. It could be argued that this perspective was unrealistic, and was abstract in the context of the practical necessities of the war. Thus there was no other alternative than to fight fascism under the existing political conditions. Revolutionary Marxism could not agree with this influential view because it could not compromise its politics in terms of the objectives of national defence. However, it still was able to understand the support within the working class for this approach. The tragedy was that the rise of fascism meant a defeat of the working class had occurred. This meant the international working class was not able to develop an alternative to a war between rival forms of imperialism. If the working class had been able to defeat fascism in the 1930's it would have meant it would have been stronger and possibly able to oppose the development of the Second World War in terms of the combined policies of peace and socialism.

Caudwell could make the point that the rise of fascism in order to defend capitalism from the prospect of revolution, meant the role of peace was irrelevant in this situation. It is true that the working class needed to be prepared to oppose the ascent to power of fascism by the use of armed power if necessary. The passive acceptance of Hitler's rise to power by the forces of Social Democracy and the Communist Party was a truly tragic development. But what was crucial in this situation was not a determination to use force, but instead the political task of uniting the diverse political forces of the working class. The formation of a united front in order to oppose fascism would have meant the confidence to utilise armed force in order to reject the threat of counterrevolution becomes immensely enhanced. In contrast disunity within the political forces of the working class promoted passivity and an acceptance of the rise to power of Fascism. It was not pacifism that was the problem but instead the divisions within the working class movement. If the working class had been united it could have raised the perspective of peace and socialism as an alternative to the possibility of counterrevolutionary repression. However, defeat in the class struggle meant that the revolutionary process could only become feasible in terms of promoting its objectives in terms of the aim of the coercive overthrow of fascism. Only in these terms would the perspective of peace and socialism become feasible. In relation to this analysis, Trotsky raised the necessity of the formation of an armed militia in order to effectively promote opposition to fascism. But the vital point is that this armed militia would only be useful if it was based on the realisation of the unity of the working class with a common purpose, which is to oppose fascism. The determination of workers to reject fascism was undermined by the fact that this energy is not organised into a common political will. Only the realisation of united organisation will mean that the ability to defeat fascism is being created. Of course, there is nothing inevitable in the outcome of the class struggle, but the realisation of the highest level of political activity can promote the possibility to defeat the resolute forces of fascism. Instead the dis-organisation and the lack of common purpose, meant fascism was more determined to defeat its opponents within the working class. In other words it was passivity and dis-unity which created problems in the struggle against fascism. The constitutional acceptance of bourgeois democracy meant that the necessity to develop extra-Parliamentary forms of mass struggle was undermined. In these circumstances, the forces of the working class lacked tactics and related organisation in order to defeat the forces of counterrevolution. The leaders of Social Democracy did uphold a form of opportunist pacifism which undermined the development of resolute struggle against fascism. Whilst the Communist Party was sectarian despite its determination to oppose fascism. The result of this dis-unity was terrible defeat.

Caudwell blames pacifism for this defeat, but this ignores the far more important political problems at the level of strategy and tactics which led to this outcome. It is true that the demand for peace was irrelevant in this context of the problem of counterrevolution; instead what was required was a resolute policy in order to try and defeat fascism. The required policy was never generated because of the political limitations of Social Democracy and the Communist Party. In this context the ideology of militarism upheld by fascism appeared to be more heroic and glamorous. Marxism seemed to imply passivity and submission whilst fascism upheld the traditions of nation and the glory of war. The only alternative to this influential ideology was the development of class struggle, but this did not occur because of the limitations of the political forces which could have upheld this perspective. Thus a disunited Marxism was on the defensive and the Fascists were on the offensive. What was crucial was the development of a strategy that could provide the working class with confidence that fascism would be opposed. But this strategy was only provided by the small forces of Trotskyism. The mass forces of Marxism seemed powerless, and passive. They accommodated to the rise of fascism, and implicitly accepted that it could not be opposed. Trotsky was a voice in the wilderness.

Caudwell outlines how the conception of just war or war of defence is the outcome of the character of capitalist expansion and its imperatives: “If one is attacked in one's liberty, one is therefore compelled to defend outraged morality and attack in turn. All bourgeois wars are therefore justified by both parties as wars of defence. Bourgeois liberty includes the right to exercise all bourgeois occupations – alienating, trading, and acquiring for profit – and since these involve establishing dominating relations over others, it is not surprising that the bourgeoisie often finds himself attacked in his liberty. It is impossible for the bourgeoisie to exercise his full liberty without infringing the liberty of another. It is impossible for the bourgeoisie to be thoroughly bourgeois and not give occasion for 'just' wars.”(17) This comment is a good summary of the dynamics of the development of war within the international relations of capitalism. Logically, the opposition would seem to suggest the necessity of peace and socialism. However, to some extent capitalism has modified this militaristic dynamic itself with the creation of the United Nations in order to arbitrate in relation to political disputes, and international trade can generate relations of goodwill, plus democratic societies are increasingly unwilling to support wars. But Caudwell has still outlined the dynamics concerning why capitalism is likely to engage in war because of tensions about rights of ownership of land and raw materials. It would seem that the conclusion to be reached is that the only alternative is peace and socialism. However, he does not do so because he contends that the ideology of pacifism is a bourgeois doctrine. He argues that this logical development is the outcome of the illusion that capitalism can be based on an absence of constraints and coercion, such as free trade between equal partners. There is a peaceful ideal of capitalism based on equality between individuals which rejects the militarism and domination of monopoly and imperialism. But this person is part of the capitalist economic system as a form of employer, and so he justifies the system that he also formally opposes in pacifist terms: “To-day as the bourgeois pacifist, he helps to generate the violence, war and Fascist and Imperialist brutality he hates. Insofar as he is a genuine pacifist and not merely a completely muddled man hesitating between the paths of revolution and non-cooperation, his thesis is this, 'I hate violence and war and social oppression, and all these things are due to social relations. I must therefore abstain from social relations. Belligerent and revolutionary alike are hateful to me.”(18)

There may be people who are dependent on the capitalist system and yet in a contradictory manner inconsistently rejects its values of just wars and militarism. However, this can only partially explain the people who develop pacifist views. Hence there must be people who dislike war in ideological terms. In this context they are not vacillating supporters of capitalism and instead prefer to remain ambiguous about what they consider to be the most appropriate form of society that would be able to overcome the problems of war and violence. Instead they concentrate upon the issues of how to end wars in the present, and advocate the tactic of non-violent resistance in order to realise this aim. Thus if we were to define this movement as being essentially bourgeois pacifist we would not recommend that Marxists provide it with support. However, Caudwell's analysis of the pacifist movement seems to be a caricature, and one that is not generally descriptive. Instead we could describe non-violent resistance as expressing the views of many concerned middle class people about wars, and in this sense it is perfectly principled for Marxists to form alliances with them. Whilst genuine bourgeois pacifists are few and far between because most people who consciously support capitalism generally also uphold its wars and the reasons for expansion and conflict, there is also often support for wars within the working class because of the influence of popular nationalism. Thus in order to undermine the support for war within society it is principled for Marxists to unite with the forces of non-violent resistance. This alliance could create a genuine mass movement of opposition to war. However, this does not mean that the politics of non-violent resistance and the Marxists has merged. Instead in a vague manner the nonviolent resistance is opposed to war for pacifist reasons, but Marxists oppose imperialist war in order to uphold the perspective of peace and socialism. This tactical alliance should come to a conclusion when the process of war has ended.

However, Caudwell contend that even this alliance is problematical because the pacifists do not consider the proletariat as allies: “If the big bourgeoisie of his own country decide to go to war and mobilise the coercive forces, physical and moral of the state, he can do nothing real, for the only real answer is co-operation with the proletariat to resist the coercive action of the big bourgeoisie and oust them from power. If fascism develops, he cannot supress it in the bud before it has built up an army to intimidate the proletariat, for he believes in 'free speech'. He can only watch the workers being bludgeoned and beheaded by the forces he allowed to develop.”(19) This is an eloquent reason for rejecting an alliance between non-violent resistance supporters with the working class and Marxism. Caudwell contends that such an alliance would be unworkable and would be undermined by different and contradictory objectives. This point is perfectly reasonable. Pacifists are not opposed to the imperialist wars of capitalism, and instead oppose wars in general. This means that they will reject any transformation of the struggle against war into the development of the possibility of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Pacifism will also be ineffective in relation to the tasks of opposing fascism. But if we take these differences into account, it still might be possible to create an alliance against imperialist war. The pacifists will not be won to the banner of peace and socialism, but this difference will not necessarily preclude the prospect of developing a united and mass anti-war movement. In contrast, Caudwell seems to suggest that class antagonisms between the forces of bourgeois pacifism and Marxism will mean that any alliance is unrealistic and would actually be unprincipled. Marxism would be undermined by an alliance, and so would not be able to promote its aims of socialism in a principled manner. Also, he implies that the pacifists would not want an alliance with Marxism, which represents different class interests. This analysis has proved to be dogmatic in empirical terms. There have been many examples of fruitful alliances between pacifists and Marxists. These alliances have been mutually beneficial and have led to the potential growth of the popularity of Marxism.

However what has been possible in practice does not resolve the question of the limitations of pacifism in theory, which is the emphasis of the analysis of Caudwell. The essential argument of Caudwell is that the doctrine of pacifism which denies the revolutionary and violent character of the class struggle can only be opposed to Marxism. The principled character of Marxism means that it is an intransigent doctrine that is prepared to advocate the most ruthless application of force in order to undermine and overcome the tendency of capitalism to uphold the role of war and militarism. Thus pacifism must be bourgeois because it can only uphold the system as it already exists, and cannot contemplate the utilisation of any revolutionary methods in order to overthrow it and establish a new society: “The only real alternative to bourgeois economy is proletarian economy, i.e., socialism, and therefore one either participates passively in bourgeois economy or is a proletarian revolutionary. The fact that one participates passively in bourgeois economy, that one does not oneself wield the bludgeon or cannon, so far from being a defence only makes one's position more disgusting....One lets others do the dirty work, and merely participates in the benefit....He sits on the head of the worker, and while the big bourgeoisie kicks him, advises him to be quiet.”(20) Thus the approach of the pacifist is defined by Caudwell as an expression of the defence of capitalism because it is based on the passive acceptance of the system, and opposition to any working class attempt to overthrow it. The pacifist is bourgeois because his priority is to preach accommodation to capitalism in terms of pious resignation and acceptance of its actuality, which is combined with rejection of any ruthless attempt to promote the revolutionary transformation of capitalism. This standpoint is justified in terms of religious morality and an absolute opposition to the utilisation of violence, but what this also means is that in a selfish manner the pacifist is concerned about the integrity of his soul rather than the how to overcome the limitations of society: “It is a belief that the interests of society – God's purpose – are best served by not performing any action, however beneficial to others, if it would imperil one's soul.”(21)

The problem with this criticism of pacifism is that it is a caricature. It may describe some forms of individual pacifist belief, but the majority of politically motivated pacifism is based on the militant doctrine of non-violent action. This standpoint does not passively accept the existing limitations of capitalism but is based on a practical orientation of trying to improve society in terms of ending wars, or realising civil rights. The non-violence of Ghandi or Martin Luther King is motivated by a strong sense of social justice, and an understanding that capitalist society has many problems. King effectively became a socialist and was committed to overcoming the various problems of capitalism such as poverty and exploitation. Thus it would be wrong to define this militant pacifism as bourgeois, or based on a fatalistic acceptance of the existing system. Indeed it could be argued that Caudwell was unfairly describing the pacifism of his own time, which was often anti-war and which influenced the politics of the Independent Labour party.

Caudwell briefly describes the limitations of pacifism in the following terms: “Thus pacifism, as an effort of avoiding the moral guilt of violence, is selfish.”(22) This may explain the individualism of some narrow forms of pacifism, but the majority of its trends are sympathetic to socialism, but reject the revolutionary doctrines of Marxism. Hence they are progressive, but limited by their dogmatic rejection of the possible application of coercion and violence under any circumstances. In the last analysis, they are limited by a dogmatic attachment to non-violence which means that revolutionary insurrection must be rejected as an invalid tactic. But this does not mean that we should criticise the integrity of the views of pacifists. Instead we should recognise that their doubts about Marxism are widely shared within society. Marxism is considered a doubtful doctrine because it apparently rejects the aim of peace. We consider that this is a misconception and it is necessary to connect the aim of peace with that of socialism. Pacifists and Marxists may differ over some of their methods of struggle, but they are often united in terms of attempting to realise the aims of social justice. It is possible for Marxists and pacifists to work together in many circumstances, because they are opposed to the wars and violence generated by capitalism.

However, Caudwell questions the integrity of non-violent action. He comments: “Some pacifists however make a different defence. They are not concerned with their own souls. They are only thinking of others. Pacifism is the only way to stop violence and oppression. Violence breeds violence, oppression breeds oppression. How far is this argument well-grounded and not merely a rationalisation of the bourgeois illusion?”(23) But his answer is in the negative and contends that non-violent action cannot end repression, instead it can only promote a passive acceptance of the domination of the oppressor. He argues that the logic of non-violence implies: “Thus if A does everything B asks of him, it will not be necessary for B to use violence. But a dominating relation of this kind is in essence violent, although violence is not overtly shown.”(24) But this view is a caricature of non-violent protest. The utilisation of non-violence if effective is used in order to change the power relation and to obtain the consent of the coercive force for the aims of the non-violent protestor. However, if the power relation is not changed, the tactic of non-violence will have failed in its objectives. The last thing that a non-violent protestor will want is to passively accept the power relation. Hence within limits, the Marxist can accept the application of non-violent tactics, and that they have valid use in trying to modify the unequal power relations. Certainly a disciplined utilisation of non-violent tactics is preferable to the unorganised and undisciplined demonstration that can only demoralise its participants. However, we do not have to support all aspects of non-violent ideology, as Caudwell quite rightly comments it is questionable whether the defenceless character of a protestor will result in the sympathy of the oppressor. This is an illusion which can result in naivety about state power. But Caudwell is being dogmatic when he contends that: “Can anyone in good faith advance the proposition that non-resistance defeats violence?”(25) In actuality there have been many victories of non-violent struggle, and its limited practicality cannot be doubted. But as an ideology it has no commitment to strive for socialism, and in this regard Marxism is the most principled and intransigent theory of the aim of realising a society more advanced than capitalism. Caudwell is right to suggest that only Marxism attempts to provide a perspective that seriously attempts to overcome the violence of capitalism. This is why it is based on the method of revolutionary class struggle as the most effective basis to overcome the present system of war and militarism. In contrast, pacifism is ultimately a utopian and unreal doctrine because its limited methods of struggle will not end the role of the bourgeois coercive state and the generation of imperialism and war. Thus Caudwell is right to suggest that only the development of revolutionary action will bring about the demise of capitalism and its promotion of violence. Pacifism can realise important victories, but they are limited and restricted within the existing system. This is because pacifism rejects the strategy of class struggle, which is the only effective manner in which the exploitation and oppression of capitalism can be overcome.

However, there is a twist to this argument. Many people reject Marxism because they consider it to be an extreme and violent doctrine. People argue that they may agree with the objectives of Marxism, but reject its methods. This objection can only be overcome if we relate the aims of Marxism to the principles of peace. We should argue in the most adamant manner that it is not against the sentiment of peace to be a Marxist. Instead we are committed to peace because we are revolutionary. In this manner our aim should be for the process of revolution to be carried out in a peaceful manner. This would be the most effective and smooth manner in which the transfer of social power could occur. Caudwell assumes that violence will be integral to the process of revolutionary change. This may have been a reasonable standpoint to have in the turbulent 1930's, but it seems to be problematical in the present day when people yearn for peace alongside the striving for greater social justice. Hence Marxists should be committed to peace, but this commitment cannot be absolute. We know that counterrevolutionary coercion is a real problem that could undermine the process of change. Therefore we have to be ready for defensive struggle of a violent character. But we know that this will be an act that is morally questionable, and so should only be restored to in emergency situations. The preferred strategy is to unite the process of change in terms of the combined aims of peace and socialism.

Caudwell makes the following criticism of pacifism: “By abstaining from action the pacifist enrols himself under this banner, the banner of things as they are and getting worse, the banner of the increasing violence and coercion exerted by the haves on the have nots. He calls increasingly into being the violence of poverty and, deprivation, artificial slumps, artistic and scientific decay, fascism and war.”(26) This is an unfair criticism. The different politics of the pacifist does not make him/her a supporter of capitalism. The pacifist is not generally a supporter of the status quo. Instead the pacifist is uncertain about what will replace the existing situation of the promotion of violence by capitalism. However Caudwell is right to suggest that only socialism can end the problem of violence – but not the repressive state of Stalinism! However the strategy that Caudwell advocates is problematical. He argues in favour of violent revolution: “Since a Dispossessed class will fight to the last ditch, while there is hope, how can the transition be affected other than violently, substituting the dictatorship of the proletariat and its necessary forms for the former dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and its characteristic forms?”(27) It is of course possible that the revolution will unfortunately assume violent aspects. But the aim of Marxists should be that the process of change should be as peaceful as possible. This orientation should not mean that the objectives of revolution are diluted or compromised. Instead the popular character of the mass movement for socialism, and the intransigence of its leadership, should be able to facilitate change in a manner that is both peaceful and effective. It is also necessary to recognise that the working class will aspire to realise change in a manner that does not involve violence, and so the more peaceful the revolution is the more likely it is to be both popular and supported by the mass institutions established in order to promote the transformation of society. It is also necessary to establish that peaceful change does not in any sense mean that the revolutionary forces are in any sense weak and vacillating. On the contrary their determination is indicated in the fact that their social power is orientated in order to ensure that a process of peaceful transition to socialism occurs.

In this context the experience of the Russian Revolution is helpful. When this event became violent in the form of the civil war, it meant that the objective conditions for socialism were undermined by the resulting dislocation of the economy, and the necessity to provide resources for the troops. The development of the war economy, and its strict centralisation, meant the end of workers control, and the effectiveness of Soviet democracy was undermined. Hence the generation of civil war in Russia contributed to the creation of a strict party regime and the popular character of the revolutionary process was ended. This situation could be repeated even in a developed capitalist country. The economic upheaval caused by civil war would seriously undermine the possibility to establish a society in transition to socialism. Instead the necessity to develop the organs of coercion could create a repressive society. The only effective manner in which this prospect can be avoided is if the process of revolutionary transformation is both popular and peaceful. The prospect of developing democratic forms of organisation of society are connected to the ability to ensure that change is peaceful, and the threat of counterrevolution is overcome by the determination of the people to ensure that the overthrow of capitalism occurs in the most smooth manner. It is necessary to emphasise that violence can only uphold the interests of the capitalist class, which will be reluctant to accept the fact of revolutionary change. A peaceful process of change will also be the logical expression of the popular and democratic character of the revolutionary process. In contrast an attempt of an elite vanguard to bring about the end of capitalism is far more likely to involve violence. The working class is likely to be a passive mass in this situation in which a coup is being attempted.

It will be argued that any form of change that is not limited to the role of Parliament involves coercion and force. This is true, but the mass pressure of the masses is not necessarily violent. Instead the democratic and popular character of the institutions of the working class will provide the possibility to bring about peaceful change. This process will involve a form of force in that the determination of working people will be intent on realising a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. However, the more effective this mass force is, the less necessary will be the role of violence. Instead the situation of dual power that has been established within society will be able to be resolved in terms of the establishment of the domination of a previously subordinated class without the role of violence. This is because of the effectiveness of the popular character of the mass institutions of the working class. Such a development actually occurred in October 1917 in Russia, but it became obscured by the violent character of the civil war and the rationalisation of these events by the Comintern. The conception of a violent revolution seemed to be the principled character of the role of the Bolsheviks. However, this was an unfortunate misreading of the actual events. Instead it was more accurate to suggest that a process of peaceful proletarian revolution had occurred. It is this perspective to which we are committed to support.

PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

The doctrine of peaceful co-existence advocated by the Stalinists is criticised by Trotskyists because it represents the undermining of the perspective of world revolution in the name of establishing diplomatic relations with capitalist countries like the USA. However, whilst this perspective should be rejected in the name of promoting the international class struggle this does not mean that revolutionary Marxists should oppose the importance of peace as an integral aspect of the process of bringing about change in global terms. This point can be put in a direct manner: how can the interests of developing socialism be served if the countries which have had revolutions are engaged and involved in perpetual wars? Surely it is to the advantage of the interests of world revolution that its possible progress can occur in a situation of peace, and that the problems associated with civil war, or war between states, is avoided? This point is even more important given that we are in an era of the role of nuclear weapons. It can only be to the interests of the world working class that the class struggle is conducted as peacefully as possible, and without resort to wars which could result in terrible developments. Hence in this age where countries have immense armaments it would be foolish and adventurist to consider that it could be possible to conduct revolutionary war in order to expand the success of the forces of world revolution. Instead it is in the interests of a proletarian regime that it is upholds a peace policy, and contrasts that with the promotion of militarism and wars by the various imperialist powers. The example of a peace policy will provide immense encouragement and an incentive for the workers of the world to try and emulate the success of the revolutionary regime.

In other words the consistent promotion of a peace policy by a revolutionary regime will indicate to the workers of the world that it is possible to realise the aims of peace and socialism. This understanding will encourage their struggles to end capitalism because the alternative is the inferior situation of war and capitalism. However, if a revolutionary state is upholding the aim of peace this will inherently mean that treaties with imperialist powers are both necessary and unavoidable. What would be unprincipled is the acceptance of the rejection of the aim of world revolution in order to obtain the treaty. Instead the workers state should insist that the major aim of global socialism is not to be compromised in order for the treaty to be signed. But it is principled for a revolutionary state to also promise that it will pursue this aim in a peaceful manner. It is committed to the perspective of peaceful world revolution. Any development of violence will be the responsibility of the forces of capitalism and imperialism. It will be argued by the defenders of capitalism that peaceful world revolution is a contradiction in terms; it is not a realistic possibility. In answer we can contend that socialism has no incentive for war, a socialist country is not interested in war in order to obtain territory for profit, and it has no motive to dominate the proletariat of other countries. Instead the aim of world socialism can be advanced in the most principled and effective manner if it is connected to the strengthening of international peace. The role of peace is itself a mobilising force that promotes the interests of world socialism. Hence unless the tragedy of world war was to develop because of the counterrevolutionary interests of the major capitalist countries, the socialist regimes would reject the tactic of international revolutionary war in the name of peace. It is unprincipled and oppressive to try and militarily expand the forces of socialism. This point was shown in 1920 when the workers of Poland opposed the invasion of their country by the Soviet Red Army. It was Stalinism which used world war two in order to establish their military domination of Eastern Europe. Such militaristic practices should not be part of the methods of a genuine workers state. Instead it will attempt to promote world revolution by supporting the class struggle in other countries, and by promoting the re-formation of the Communist International. The success of this strategy will increase the number of countries dedicated to the aims of peace and socialism. This peaceful process is the only principled basis by which the world revolution can be realised. Mass support for socialism will increase in these terms.

Under Stalinism the USSR was committed to betraying emerging proletarian revolutions as in Spain, whilst also secretly upholding a perspective of military expansion. The doctrine of socialism in one country became the political basis to justify the domination of Eastern Europe in the interests of the party elite. Any genuine emergence of proletarian revolution was suppressed. But simultaneously, the USSR could temporarily co-operate with the USA in order to uphold their common hegemony in Europe. The role of diplomacy replaced any adherence to the aim of international proletarian revolution. In the future, the process of world revolution cannot become distorted in the interests of a national bureaucratic elite. Avoiding this possibility means that a national revolutionary regime is committed to peace, and so does not define the development of world socialism in terms of its own national expansion. Instead the commitment to peace is comparable with a genuine rejection of any attempt to define socialism in terms of the expansion of the nation state. Instead the aim of peace ensures that the revolutionary process is truly international and not based on any accommodation to national chauvinism. Only the peaceful character of international class struggle can ensure the success of world revolution. Any resort to violence introduces distortions into this process of revolutionary change. These distortions could undermine the success of the advance of world socialism. Thus it is a duty and responsibility of the revolutionary forces to try and maintain adherence to the combined aims of peace and socialism. This does not mean that we should be satisfied with 'socialism in one country'. Instead the very commitment to peace means that we should be serious about establishing world socialism and so ending the militaristic condition of capitalism.

Such a standpoint is not unrealistic. Instead if Marxists are committed to peace we overcome one of the major objections to revolution which is its alleged violent character. Instead the aim of peace proves that the forces of proletarian revolution are different to the inherent tendency of capitalism to go to war. The militaristic character of capitalism cannot be modified because of its emphasis on profit making and exploitation. Kant believed that a perpetual peace could be established if countries became republican and democratic and engaged in free trade. His prognosis has proved to have been falsified despite the increasing number of countries that are bourgeois democracies and involved in free trade. The point is that this situation takes the contradictory form of imperialism which means that wars between countries still occur. There are also regimes in the Third World which are involved in repression. The only answer to this situation is not the illusions of Kant, but instead the realisation of the perspective of world revolution. War is partly a product of the fact that the working class is often influenced by nationalism and not class conscious enough to end military conflict. The development of genuine internationalism means becoming committed to the aims of peace and world socialism. Ending military conflict in the world is not as a result of supporting the diplomacy of powerful regimes, because this approach is distorted by great power rivalry and the very inability of imperialist powers to realise peace in a given area. Only the struggle for socialism can advance the realisation of peace because only the international working class is the force that can bring about these aims. The United Nations cannot realise peace because its diplomatic efforts are often ignored by the great powers. Indeed it is the contradictory and competitive interests within world capitalism which are the major cause of war. This is why only the genuine alternative of world socialism can bring about peace. Hence it is the fact that few people presently support the aim of socialism which means that war is a constant feature of global society. Build the mass movement in favour of socialism and the movement for peace will increase and become more powerful. The establishment of socialism will indicate that war is not an inherent part of the human condition and is instead generated by exploitative regimes. Without a system based on exploitation and domination the reasons for war will have been overcome.

FOOTNOTES:

(1)Brian Pearce: Lenin and Trotsky on Pacifism and Defeatism, In Marxist Internet Archive

(2) ibid p4

(3)Lenin: Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism, in Volume 23, Moscow Progress Publishers p177-193

(4) ibid p183

(5) ibid p190

(6) ibid p192

(7)Lenin: Letters from Afar, Volume 23 p337

(8)Lenin, Petrograd City Conference, Volume 24 p163

(9) ibid p164

(10) ibid p166

(11)Lenin: War and Revolution, volume 24 p420

(12)Christopher Caudwell: Pacifism and Violence, Marxist Internet Archive

(13) ibid p1

(14) ibid p4

(15) ibid p7

(16) ibid p8

(17) ibid p9

(18) ibid p10

(19) ibid p10

(20Ibid p11

(21) ibid p12

(22) ibid p13

(23) ibid p13

(24) ibid p13

(25) ibid p14

(26) ibid p17

(27) ibid p18