



THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT. (C.W.M.)

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In introducing this journal, the CWM aims to bring something new and fresh into the Left movement. Already in our book "Why Paul Foot Should Be a Socialist" we have tried to approach problems in a way which is hard-hitting and militant while also being conscientious and methodical, proceeding from the interests of the proletariat, seeking to establish an accurate, scientific analysis on the basis of the facts of a case.

In these pages we intend to carry forward this approach and unfold a lively, critical and self-critical discussion. Such a discussion must have a clear aim, and we do have one; it is the rebuilding of the Communist movement and particularly the Party.

By Communism we mean a revolutionary movement leading to the seizure of state power by the working people under the leadership of the proletariat; we mean a movement guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, where there is understanding about the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat and about the nature of the contemporary era, an era where imperialism, and today particularly the two superpowers, forms the main obstacle to progress.

We want to overthrow capitalism and imperialism, but this cannot be done unless we also, in the process, work systematically to overthrow bourgeois ideas within the working-class movement, ideas which exist because we are part of an imperialist society with its own imperialist culture.

The working-class movement must discover and rediscover its own authentic ideological strength in the course of protracted revolutionary practice. While we take part in pickets, demonstrations, tenants' movements, anti-fascist work etc. our practice must be linked closely with a great ideological debate and struggle.

Thus it is necessary not only to fight against obvious representatives of the imperialist system like ~~eager-smoking~~ capitalists, Tory MPs, the National Front etc., but also to wage struggle against those trends which represent the system in a less evident and more insidious way.

Such trends include social-democracy, represented particularly by the Labour party which at times administers the state machine and serves the bourgeoisie more efficiently than any other party; the ideology of the trade union bosses who sell out their members' interests to capital; the revisionists, who claim to be communists, but in fact kill Marxism-Leninism by robbing it of its revolutionary essence; the particularly vile brand of revisionists who promote the interests of the most dangerous superpower, the Soviet Union; and Trotskyism in all its many hues, which is in essence a hotch-potch of social-democracy and revisionism.

We must also struggle against the influence exerted by all of these trends within our own movement, the Marxist-Leninist movement.

For our part, we don't claim to have all the answers or to have ready-made solutions to offer. We do have an ideology which provides, as a means of changing the world, a convincing and comprehensive analysis of the contradictions characterising class society, particularly the contemporary world of imperialism and the proletarian revolution; this theory, Marxism-Leninism, has scored outstanding successes, for instance in the Russian Revolution, the setting-up of people's power in China, the struggle to avoid the restoration of capitalism in a socialist country; and the Chinese revolution's international line.

Such successes have proved the general validity of our ideology, whereas social-democracy, revisionism and Trotskyism have also shown something about themselves in the course of practice, that they are unable to bring about any revolutionary social change, and moreover that they serve the ruling class in maintaining the existing system.

The general validity of Marxism-Leninism is established, but it still needs to be integrated with the concrete conditions in this country.

We regard Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the only really Left ideology. However, we have respect for sincere people belonging to any "Left" trend inasmuch as they genuinely want to be socialists and Communists, and haven't yet been convinced by our example of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism. As Communists we are not afraid of exposing our ideas to criticism and debate. Above all, we must have a modest attitude in the face of the working people, and in the face of scientific truth. We must go deep among the working class, the poorest and most oppressed people, and thus gain direct experience of our society. Direct experience is of primary importance, but we must also carry out study and research which will give us indirect experience also, thus enriching our understanding, as a means to change the world.

Our aim is to make this a lively, scientific journal of the Left, a journal for struggle against bourgeois ideas particularly where these crop up under a "left" guise, a journal serving the cause of the overthrow of imperialism.

This is a theoretical journal, which does not mean that it's to be obscure or high-flown. For Marxist-Leninists, theory is for the workers. Our tradition is to build up a contingent of thinking revolutionaries who can analyse problems independently, size up a situation from all its aspects and map out a course of practical activity accordingly, consciously serve the international proletariat in all their work activities, explain the basic viewpoints of Marxism-Leninism and expose the fallacies of bourgeois propaganda, detect and struggle resolutely against wrong trends within the Communist movement itself. We want everyone in our movement to work towards becoming a person of this kind.

Workers, who have direct experience of the contradictions of capitalism, are the people most capable of grasping the truth of Marxism-Leninism. This is not the same as saying that workers "automatically" have an understanding of revolutionary socialist ideas, on the contrary study is essential. By coming to understand its historical destiny the proletariat changes from being a "class-in-itself" (not yet able to take the initiative) into a "class-for-itself", able to take the initiative in overturning the old society and creating a new one. This is why within our movement we place so much emphasis on education, on summing-up the perceptual knowledge gained through practice and raising it to the level of conceptual knowledge in order to enhance our practice: this is why we want to use this journal to initiate a big ideological debate and struggle which should by no means be confined to our own movement but which should develop on a very broad level.

The contents of this issue give some idea of the scope we intend to cover.

(I) The internal life of our movement.

Our movement moves forward in the heat of struggle: Primarily the class struggle we carry out in society, but also our internal struggles which themselves reflect society's contradictions. The struggle within our movement is a sign of its liveliness, and from time to time we will make public some of the more significant lessons we have drawn from such experience.

Recently, one of our branches resigned and wrote a letter which raises some important points. We reprint their letter in this issue (with a few inessential points deleted), together with the reply sent by our National Committee. This reply should help people get an idea of where we stand at present.

(2) Analysis of the world situation.

Like every other phenomenon in the world, international politics constantly changes and develops, impelled by the force of its own contradictions. We must above all rid ourselves of conservative tendencies, and not look at the world situation as though it were the same as in the early '50s when US imperialism was the main enemy of the world's people and the USSR was a progressive socialist state; nor yet as it was in the early '60s when the main error of the new revisionist Soviet leadership was capitulation in the face of US aggression; nor yet as it was in the late '60s when the Soviet Union was already an imperialist power but did not yet represent the main threat of world war in its contention for world domination with the USA. We should be up to the minute and definitely not be five years behind the times; still less ten or fifteen or twenty years....

The article "How Many Worlds" is a statement expressing our understanding of and support for the "Three Worlds" theory. It was adopted by the CWM some time ago, but there was no opportunity to publish it earlier.

In general, we try not to make "solemn statements" which go beyond the actual level of our understanding at the time (such statements would merely be empty and formalistic). Thus, rather than repeat what the Chinese comrades were saying we grappled with the problem of thinking things out in our own terms. This is why the article may appear in places hesitant, woolly and lacking in direction - but this was an indispensable stage we had to go through. That we were correct in approaching things independently and at our own level is shown by the fact that some groups which used to parrot unthinkingly what the Chinese said are now coming out with the most bizarre and reactionary ideas in opposition to China. Today we are able to handle the "Three Worlds" theory (which is an extremely precious analytical tool for understanding and hence changing the world) with relatively more assurance and precision. We also print in this issue the text of a very recent speech which we produced for a public meeting on the subject of the two superpowers as the main source of world war; held by the fraternal organisation, the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain.

In our struggle to change the world we advance from lack of knowledge to knowledge and from partial understanding to more complete understanding. Internally we encourage comrades to put forward for discussion their ideas even when these are incomplete and tentative. We will, where appropriate, make public some of these contributions from time to time. The paper "concerning the relations between the world situation and our tasks in Britain" is one such.

(3) The analysis of British society.

The most important of all our tasks in the field of theory is the working-out of a class analysis of our own society. Of course the basis for our theoretical work must be participation in the class struggle. Without a correct class analysis the Party we are working to build will not be able to determine a correct strategy and tactics for the class in its progress to the winning of state power.

In carrying out this great investigation on the class question we must at all costs seek truth from the facts, use Marxist-Leninist theory to illuminate the facts and reveal their inner connections and the tendency of their development; be careful to take facts and not theory as our starting point, be careful not to transpose concepts inappropriately from other times and other places.

The article "The C.P.B.(M.L.) - a new revisionism" is also part of our internal debate which we have decided to publish in order to stimulate the broadest possible interflow of ideas. When the CWM was founded - arising as it did out of a principled split away from the organisation known as the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) - we decided that it was essential to continue our criticism and get full value out of that outstanding teacher by negative example, Reg Birch's CPB(ML). One aspect which we must persistently criticise, in order to prevent any danger of our own movement turning revisionist, is the internal structure and organisation of the CPB(ML). Another aspect, which this article deals with, is the CPB(ML)'s absurd method of analysis, which predictably led to absurd conclusions.

(4) Conditions in socialist countries.

As Marxist-Leninists we regard socialist China as the bastion of world revolution. Apart from China's international line it is also important to study internal life in China. This helps us understand more comprehensively and tangibly the bright future opened up by socialist revolution. Moreover, in studying how an experienced Party deals with the complex problems existing in its own society we will enrich our understanding of the Marxist-Leninist method of analysing and resolving contradictions. In particular, it is important to understand the current struggle against the "Gang of Four", and the article "Why Marxist-Leninists support China" is a contribution in this direction.

The Chinese have consistently opposed the kind of Party which "parrots the words of others, copies foreign experience without analysis, runs hither and thither in response to the batons of certain persons abroad, and has become a hodgepodge of revisionism, dogmatism and everything but Marxist-Leninist principle"; They support the kind of Party "that can use its brains to think for itself and acquire an accurate knowledge of the trends of the different classes in its own country through serious investigation and study, and knows how to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and integrate it with the concrete practice of its own country" (see the Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement published by the Chinese in 1963).

In our struggle to rebuild the revolutionary party of the working class in this country, we must above all fight against revisionism, which includes both empiricism (blind involvement in practice to the neglect of the guiding role of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary principles) and dogmatism (blind concern with abstract theory and neglect for concrete conditions).

There are not many quotations from Mao Tsetung in these pages, but we will not be happy unless every sentence of our journal breathes with the spirit of Mao Tsetung Thought. Our best homage to Mao will be to apply in our own country his glorious method of serving the revolutionary cause of the proletariat and furthering this cause step by step through the concrete analysis of real conditions.

(5) History of the revolutionary movement.

We must study and assess the whole history of the international Communist movement, particularly the movement in Britain, so that we can profit from an understanding of its strong and weak points. We should be able to inherit the good traditions of the Communist Party of Great Britain from the days when it really was a revolutionary Party, and once again create a lively, militant Party of the British working class. At the same time, we must go one better and thoroughly apply Marxist-Leninist principles of organisation, so as to root out the sources of degeneration and revisionism in our own movement.

We publish here the CPGB's Election Programme of 1929. This text was studied in our own organisation when we were in the process of drafting our own programme. Our own programme will be published for the New Year 1979, just 50 years later. We have tried to link ourselves up with the revolutionary British tradition and re-create the young movement's vigour and militancy. Our programme only represents an initial statement of our understanding. It will be tested in practice, corrected where it is wrong, and absorb conclusions generated by the experience of newly-arising problems.

There are many questions we intend to cover in future issues of the journal. Here we will just mention four: The question of Ireland; the development of the international Marxist-Leninist Communist movement today; work in trade unions; and anti-fascist work. In producing our journal we want to remain self reliant, and so we have brought out this first issue within our means, in a very simple form. We hope to be able to print it properly at a later stage. For this reason, but more important for broader political reasons, we want everyone who feels solidarity with our line to do their best to see this journal as widely distributed as possible.

This is a difficult and at the same time exciting stage. Our movement is still very small and not able to make much of a practical impact, and we are not yet able through the force of our practice to convince quite a number of people who sympathise with us to join us actively: but we have the capacity to grow. The "left" movement is in crisis, and we have the task of asserting the leadership of revolutionary socialist politics, of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought; of a concrete political line worked out by the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to our own conditions. The leading position of revolutionary socialist politics will have to be earned by our movement through the example of our practice (guided by correct theory) and by the force of our arguments.

With revolutionary greetings, THE EDITOR

Editor's note: below we publish a letter of resignation from one of our branches which we received in August 1978. The July Conference referred to was one held in 1977 at the initiative of the CWM, bringing together different Marxist-Leninist groups with a view to discussing the way forward. It should be noted that the Three Worlds Theory was actually put forward by Chairman Mao, though it has been developed creatively under Chairman Hua Kuo-feng's leadership. The letter is followed by the text of the reply sent by our National Committee.

Dear Comrades,

It is with mixed feelings that we must resign from the CWM, mixed, because we were members of the movement from its inception, and helped to establish it with promise and enthusiasm.

We know our decision will come as no surprise to some comrades. For some months now, we have failed to actively participate in the Movement. To criticise us for this is quite justified. Our inactivity has been a reflection of our own confusion.

Perhaps we should have fought out more our views openly within the CWM. Initially, we tried to do this, but we ourselves were uncertain. Subsequently, the new approach became established and institutionalised, and debate over the fundamental premises and our own position became more and more difficult. We were even accused of going over 'old ground'! But these events helped to clarify us. We cannot take the path you are taking nor defend it. We trust this letter will help to explain why.

GREAT STEP FORWARD

When the CWM was established, it was a great step forward for the British Marxist-Leninist Movement. At a time when the Movement was fragmented and weak; when the working-class lacked a revolutionary party and programme; when numerous groups existed, struggling in isolation from each other, each with positive and with negative qualities, each with considerable courage and spirit, yet each without a clear revolutionary perspective or programme for the class as a whole; each incapable of giving a practical and ideological leadership to the Marxist-Leninist Movement; each with self-delusions and struggles for self-preservation, characteristic of 'small-group' mentality each with its heroes and charismatic personalities...the CWM emerged as a breath of fresh air.

We, the CWM said:

- 1) The building of a revolutionary party is fundamental;
- 2) Unity is indivisible;
- 3) In the past people have struggled for unity on the basis of preservation of differences;
- 4) Common practice is the basis for unity, for synthesising theory and building the party. We need a common practice and practical struggle for theory which will reflect and advance that practice;
- 5) We must learn from each other. None of us has the answers, yet, within the Marxist-Leninist movement as a whole, the answers could be found.
- 6) The CWM was not another 'small group' with formed Marxist-Leninist line in struggle with others. Nor did it have a tight institutionalised structure, though by consent and practical need, we strove towards Communist democratic centralism in decision making and work.
- 7) We were prepared to merge with groups on the basis of common practice, the practical struggle for theory, and complete equality.

The July Conference (1977) was the first step in building the new unity. We were the only people at the time capable of bringing Marxist-Leninists together, and we did, in a small, amateurish, and hesitant way, but nonetheless, significant. True, it was not well organised, its aims unclear, and it lacked clarity and depth, but it was a beginning, a new potential for unity and party building, a new direction for the Marxist-Leninist Movement...And we saw the potential trust and the confidence of different Marxist-Leninists in the CWM and its style of work.

Reflect, Comrades, on what we were aiming for...We had in mind that conference, to be possibly followed by more, leading to the convening of a National Congress and the formation of a new Party, In the interim, we aimed for common intergroup practice. The timescale was not important, though we were naively optimistic enough in thinking initially of 6 months to a year!

ONE STEP FORWARD, - TWO STEPS BACKWARD

Even before the July Conference, some comrades in the CWM had altered their views, and, in the build-up to the conference, we began to hear about the need for consolidation of the CWM; of preserving the CWM at all costs in a new form; of using the conference as a recruiting ground for the CWM...

We in Birmingham never accepted these views, though we supported the need for consolidating and better organising our work, (which at the time of the July Conference was somewhat sloppy and undisciplined), so as to further our aims, NOT CHANGE THEM.

We believe it is a tragedy that the new views triumphed at the conference and subsequently. Over the past year, we have seen the CWM change completely. The very forces we set out to defeat, forces which were harming and holding back the development and progress of the Marxist-Leninist Movement, these forces have triumphed over us! The CWM has become another 'small Group' consolidating itself in isolation from others, the crisis of Marxism-Leninism, and the working-class movement. It has its own line, its struggle for self-preservation, dogmatism, and dubious discipline. It has developed all the limitations and handicaps of 'small groups'...its petty power struggles, its illusions of democratic centralism dominated by centralism, its witch hunts and deceptions, its self-delusions that it has the answers within itself, its inability to formulate a revolutionary practice, a mass line, a revolutionary programme; hence its jumps from one issue to the next, its decision making without thorough investigation, its concentration of resources on peripheral and secondary questions.

Gone is the potential trust and confidence which other Marxist-Leninists once revealed. It is now accepted as another 'group'. It is incapable of unifying the movement. It now moves along the only course open to it - further consolidation and possible matrimony with the most dogmatic and, in practice, the most able defender of 'small groupism' within the Marxist-Leninist Movement, the RCLB - an alliance of survivors!

Consolidation didn't improve our style of work, it changed it. It turned into its opposite. The great step forward was followed by two steps backwards!

We have never suggested that the way we were at the time of the July Conference was perfect. On the contrary, change was needed organisationally to improve our style of work, to better advance what we were fighting for. But what we have seen is a fundamental change in understanding and direction. We cannot go along with this,

CHINA

As far as China is concerned we remain dismayed not that comrades support the 3-world theory of Chairman Hua, but of the uncritical and unprepared manner in which this policy was adopted. In our own way, we may have contributed to this, but at the time, we ourselves were confused and trying to grapple with all the issues. Now we are able to voice our views more clearly.

We believe that taken by itself, the 3 worlds theory is incorrect and against the interests of workers and peasants throughout the world. On the contrary, it serves the interests of imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. This is not to negate the fundamental importance of Social-Imperialism as the main danger in the world today, and in this, we are critical of the Albanians, who underplay this reality.

We believe that fundamental changes are taking place in China, setting back the revolutionary advance of the Chinese people. These are becoming and will become increasingly apparent with time.

THE FUTURE

For these reasons, we cannot remain in the CWM. We know that some comrades will callus 'drifters', but we are not. From the start, we never intended

joining a formed organisation that was not a revolutionary party. We did not believe that a party could come out of such an organisation (as the present CWM) in the Britain of today, and we still don't. It will come out of something different, and we will go on trying to fight for it, and helping build it. We do not intend becoming a 'small group'. But we will go on fighting for a new unity based on mass work clearly defined, and a mass line, reflecting, developing and improving mass work, for organisation and discipline demanded by this work, for unity of study and theory made necessary by this work.

In resigning, we do not wish to sever all links with the CWM. Wherever possible, we would seek to work together and fight side-by-side. Equally important, the comradely and fraternal friendships previously established between us and comrades within the CWM, should not be severed.

We were in some difficulty whether to send this to the NC only for distribution, but in view of our fears of small groupism and questionable trust within the CWM. we are also sending this to branches and individual friends within the CWM, NOT so as to influence them, but only that we may be fairly judged should there be any discussion.

Fraternal greetings,

REPLY OF THE C.W.M. NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO THE LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Dear Comrades,

Thanks for your letter, which deserves a serious reply. We will try not to be pompous or self-righteous, but we won't mince our words in making criticisms, and hope to make them convincing. Let's say straight away that we think your main error lies in striving to maintain intact the "purity" of your own ideas and methods of work, without exposing and tempering these in the heat of criticism and struggle.

Your statement about the original aims of the CWM shows how much confusion there was about these aims (particularly as far as you yourselves were concerned - a point such as "unity is indivisible" is inaccurate and doesn't convey any concrete meaning at all!). There is nothing wrong with such confusion in the early stages of a movement, to expect otherwise would be idealistic. But the next step must be one of ideological consolidation whereby we establish some coherence and order in this crude mass of ideas, and systematise the ideas we have arrived at in the course of our practice in order to push our cognition further forward as a means to changing the world.

In summing-up, criticising and consolidating our ideas, we must beware of the danger of imposing a new dogmatism. Such a danger does exist, but we wouldn't be Marxists if we were afraid of doing things because they entail dangers! So long as we are vigilant we won't turn into dogmatists.

The mood before the July Conference was a heady and optimistic one, which in itself is by no means a bad thing, but the stage we have now reached is one of taking a long, cool look, summing up experience (positive and negative) and plotting the course ahead. Your letter shows that you are nostalgic for the period of our movement's first infancy (a period when, in Mao's words, "all we had was a passion for revolution") and are resisting the need to scrutinise our ideas, to determine how far they stand up to the test of practice in the real world.

There is all the difference between revolutionary optimism and self-delusion. We are fully in agreement with the Chinese comrades when they say that to take a sober look at your weaknesses and shortcomings shows the fearlessness of a materialist.

You stress the importance of practice. In our opinion, the CWM's original emphasis on the role of practice was correct, and we should still affirm it. As Marxists we say that the point is not to understand the world but to change it; so we start from the need for a practical result (revolutionary social change), we recognise practice as the basis of theory and the test of the correctness of theory.

However, you tend to view practice in a one-sided way and neglect the need to sum it up, make generalisations, and progress to the level of theory. At the moment this process is of critical importance. It can really, in practice (!), best be carried out by each particular organisation; each must apply to the full democratic centralism, give full play to the dialectic of different ideas, and strive for unity of will on the basis of conviction. It is an illusion, and a dangerous one at that, to suppose that work can be co-ordinated and organised if we do not first co-ordinate and give systematic form to our ideas, to the insights which we gain from practice and which are enriched through practice.

There are a whole lot of things which call out, or seem to call out for our involvement and participation: worker's struggles carried out through the unions and/or against the union bureaucracies, struggles on a community level against the cutback in living standards, the women's movement, the struggle against the erosion of civil liberties, the movement against imperialist war, or against other aspects of imperialism such as racism, and the oppression of Ireland.

Thus, any serious attempt to do practical work confronts us with an ideological question and with an organisational question. We have to concentrate our forces in an ORGANISED and disciplined way if we are to make any impact. This is the first point. But in order for us to do this, even more important, we have to take decisions, we have to understand the real significance of all these concrete phenomena, the relationship between them. Then we can formulate priorities and map out our strategy and tactics of revolution - for without such strategy and tactics, simple dedication to revolution is empty of real significance. Moreover, the most essential part of our practice will be, on the basis of the analysis we have carried out, to put across loud and clear the Marxist Leninist point of view applied to concrete questions. It serves no purpose merely to "take part" in practical work unless we thereby make a contribution to raising the ideology of the proletariat to the level of consciousness of their historical role and winning the advanced elements to Marxism-Leninism and to the organised M-L movement.

Here we should make the point that the Party we are working to build, and also each of its individual branches, must be freed from having the character of a small circle of friends. The present Marxist-Leninist organisations must undoubtedly struggle right now against the "circle attitude". This does not mean that we're against friendships in the movement - they will exist on a firmer basis as a result of carrying out ideological struggle.

Your discussion of our weaknesses is conducted purely at a perceptual level. It is correct to describe the existence within our movement of petty power struggles, illusions of democratic centralism dominated by centralism, witchhunts and deceptions. But these faults have to be met head-on and fought against, not retreated away from. This is just what we are trying to do, and have in fact made some progress in doing, through ideological struggle and the struggle to generate a genuine democratic centralism. Thus in practice your remarks don't help us at all in overcoming the faults you mention.

We must challenge what you have to say about the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain. These are simply slanders, ~~in~~ the absence of any concrete argument we can't give you any concrete answers. We consider the RCLB to be overwhelmingly positive. Someone once asked George Bernard Shaw to marry her, giving the argument that their children would combine her good looks with his brains, and he replied that it would be better to avoid the risk of having children with his looks and her brains. An organisation which combined the shortcomings of both the CWM and the RCLB would certainly not be a great gift to the Marxist-Leninist movement! However, in using the image of matrimony you once again show your failure to grasp the importance of ideological struggle. There is no construction without destruction. The process of Marxist-Leninist unity is one of struggle against what is negative, in one's own organisation and in other organisations. It is precisely a common understanding of this fact which provides an important basis for the unity process linking the CWM and the RCLB.

Though you say that you can voice your views about China "more clearly", you do not in fact do this, so once again we can't answer you concretely. We will just say that the Three Worlds Theory shows how to unite all forces that can be united against the principal enemy. Today the two superpowers are the outstanding representatives of the imperialist system, and the USSR's ambitions represent the main danger of war. The aspiration of the hundreds of millions of working and oppressed people for a new life free from oppression can only be realised through the abolition of imperialism, and the Three Worlds Theory helps give these aspirations a concrete and practical form through which working people's demands can exert a real influence over world politics.

The Three Worlds Theory does at a global level what we Marxist-Leninists must strive to do within our own country, namely concentrate the scattered and unsystematic ideas arising through mass initiatives, raise practical experience to the level of theory, map out a strategic plan to guide our activities and help us select the correct tactics. Your inability to understand the significance of the Three Worlds Theory shares a common root with your inability to grasp the importance of theory, strategy and organisation in the British revolution.

Your views on the process of party-building lack clarity, and we feel that the "work" you describe would be quite directionless. Co-operation between organisations would not get far if each were not striving to work out an ideological and political line to guide its activity. This does not of course mean a dead and ossified line. The line will have to reflect the complexity of life in a dialectical way, be lively, many-sided and rich in concrete content.

You are comrades who have expressed a will to break with revisionism which is the main enemy of the working-class movement. Such people are very precious to the cause of the proletariat, and you owe it to that cause to do a good and consistent job in remoulding yourselves in the course of changing the objective world. We agreed and still agree on the need to serve the proletariat, the poorest and most oppressed people. But to fulfill this duty, we have to carry out the appropriate ideological and organisational work which is needed to forge a correct style of work within our own ranks and thus make progress towards building the Party.

For our part, we will make every effort to learn from your errors, and also from our own errors. We are sorry that this process can't now be carried out within the ranks of the CWM. We will certainly co-operate with you in concrete work when the occasion arises. Even more important we feel you must give full play to criticism and self-criticism and, on the basis of knowledge gained through experience, carry out ideological struggle both among yourselves and with different Marxist-Leninist groups. The aim is unity, the method is struggle. This is the only way to remain in the mainstream of the movement to build the Party, and thus effectively serve the cause of the proletariat.

With Communist greetings,

The National Committee of the CWM

HOW MANY WORLDS?

There is a school of thought among so-called Marxist-Leninists, reduced to its most simplistic by the revisionist Reg Birch, Chairman of the "Communist" Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), that there is only one major contradiction between states in the world, namely, that between the Socialist and Capitalist camps.

The slogan used to justify this essentially idealist position is that "the divisive force is class." In Marxist terms this is a truism. To attempt at this stage to present this as a new revelation is like a physicist trying to upstage Newton by declaring that apples fall. Any so-called Marxist who reaches that position without proceeding further, without taking other cogent factors into consideration, will be of no more practical use than the physicist mentioned above.

The world is divided in very real terms into nation states, and to declaim the common interests of the bourgeoisie of all capitalist, non-socialist states leaves large historical questions unanswered--such as "What was the First World War about?" Then, did not the whole, allegedly homogeneous, bourgeoisie of the world indulge in a suicidal orgy of blood-letting and destruction, which left them so enfeebled and racked with such social disorder that a newborn workers state, the Soviet Union, was allowed to struggle painfully to life.

Even more strangely, within the terms of this simplistic theory, did not a second such war ensue, in which the two biggest imperialist powers in the world allied themselves with that very socialist state in order to destroy a third upstart imperialist state, Germany, and later, a fourth, Japan.

Was this done from the Socialist, Democratic or anti-fascist motives of the USA and Britain? No! It was purely and simply to protect what they had already seized of the world from their late-come rivals.

"Workers of the World Unite!" is a fine, class conscious slogan—but it is a proletarian, class conscious slogan (Workers, oppressed peoples and nations of the world, unite! is more apposite at the moment.). Only the world proletariat has the economic and social basis for unity on the scale that is here ascribed to the bourgeoisie. The monopoly bourgeoisie thrives on competition, on economic warfare, and its necessary corollary—actual military warfare. The growth of "international" combines and companies, far from diminishing this aspect of national rivalry, actually exacerbates the situation by allowing the monopolies far more independence from, and hence control over, the capitalist nation state. The foreign affairs of states become more and more nakedly a question of bargaining for markets, raw materials, protection against overly successful competitors. Monopolies, after ruthlessly crushing their rivals in the home markets, then seek to do the same in other countries, indeed, in other continents. This is not a newly observed process—from Marx's "Capital" to Lenin's "Imperialism," this has been the motive force of capitalism. Thus, in the present epoch, the major monopolies of the USA are attempting to export vast amounts of capital in order to provide competition on the home ground of other states, while the newcomer—the ultimate in monopolies, the USSR, has begun to emulate it by the older method of military and political domination providing extortionate trade terms or investment returns. All historical experience indicates that the end of such intensified political and economic rivalry is actual military warfare. To paraphrase Clausewitz, war is the continuation of economic struggle by other means.

It is inevitable that all the developed, metropolitan countries will thus, at the same time, attempt to thwart and blight the growth of newer potential rivals in other countries, and prune and train the developing economies to the shape and interests of imperialism.

Thus, while there is a severe conflict of interests between the metropolitan countries and the third world states which has been demonstrated increasingly by the strong anti-imperialist stand taken by formerly cringingly comprador governments, there is also a contradiction among the metropolitan countries, between the strong and the weak, and this will be dealt with later..

THIRD WORLD RULING CLASSES AND THEIR ROLE

Do we say then that the national bourgeoisie of the Third World should be supported in their struggles against the power of imperialism?—Yes! Not because, for instance, the Shah of Iran is any way more acceptable or more "progressive" as the Soviets term their dupes, than the imperialists themselves. Indeed, with his Napoleonic visions it is apparent that his hearts desire is to be an imperialist in his own right. Rather, it is that by his efforts to independently industrialise he is weakening the imperialist powers, introducing further instability into the world economic system. In this context, his own moral credentials are not in order for discussion—what is in order is his historical role, the effect he and his regime have on world developments.

China recognizes this role in having diplomatic relations with, and justifiably supporting the regime vis-a-vis the imperialist powers, to sharpen the inter-imperialist contradictions. Failure to do so would help build up the very monolith of opposition that the idealists describe, and indeed their policy has such features of a self-fulfilling prophecy that we can almost say that they are advocating a united anti-socialist front!

Does this mean that we, or the Chinese comrades, condone the internal policy of reaction and class terror in countries such as Iran? Certainly not. Only the enemies of Marxism-Leninism who ignore clearly spelt out policies of the socialist states in order to look for hidden motives in order to blacken their names, can say such things.

In Iran, as in Chile, as in some other nations with which China has relations, there are communists who fight for the workers and peasants, who are executed, tortured and imprisoned for the revolution. China still gives material and ideological support to such revolutionaries, and indeed, would violate proletarian internationalism if she did not. We should no more impute support for the Shah's reactionary internal policies by his wife's trip to Peking than impute Lenin's support for the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, by the then Soviet policy of allowing training facilities to the German Wehrmacht that organized the deed a scant few years before.

Similarly, what would the results of the policies of the idealists have been if their line had been followed by Stalin in 1939 and 1941?

In the first case, the western allies would have passively or actively supported an attack on the Soviet Union, and in 1941 again, with the possible addition of the USA as an enemy. This purist attitude at the same time attempts to divide the capitalist states into good and bad, while denying the possibility of uniting on specific issues with any! All communists know that the only good capitalist is one who has been stripped of his wealth and power and submits to the dictatorship of the proletariat—and even then, we won't entirely trust him. What the idealists fail to realize is that politics, revolution, is about class power, not some Sunday School rating list of proximity to Salvation!

The very real factors of superpower, and to a lesser extent, Second World control of world commodity markets and their insatiable claims on the scarce resources of the world, make the possibility of a united Third World stand on many issues an objective reality.

The consequent exploitation and impoverishment of the Third World peoples also sharpens the contradictions within these countries, makes revolution not the AOB of the political agenda but the keynote of it. Revolutions, anti-imperialist struggles for national freedom, become class struggles for the liberation of humanity and both struggles in turn affect the imperialist countries—whether by the social strains of colonial war, or deprivation of assured raw materials and markets, or by the very scarcity of these, leading to increased competition—and war.

USING CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE REACTIONARIES

Class war continues until revolution—and after—and historical experience shows that it is in exactly conditions of inter-imperialist rivalry up to and including the point of war, that revolution will happen as the social fabric is strained past breaking point by the stress of war or slump, and that counter-revolution will be weakened by the internecine strife of the forces of reaction.

Even as we support the national bourgeoisie in its struggle for independence, as they wrest the Golden Apple of power from the hands of the imperialists, we know that they will hold it only a passing moment before the proletariat in turn seizes the trophy.

Not to use the contradictions between reactionaries, not to exploit the currents of history, is effectively to delay the day of the liberation of humanity, which is the proletariat's destiny.

What of the contradictions within the imperialist camp, among the already industrialized nations? Certainly they are not as sharp as those collectively with the Third World—but there is increasing potential. Obviously, the primary contradiction is that the economic, political and military power of the USSR and USA are of such an order of magnitude greater than any other state that there is in fact a qualitative as well as a quantitative difference between them and other states. This difference had become noticeable even with the parting shots of the Second World War, when, for instance, Manuilsky, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, was openly relegating Britain to a very poor third place in the world.

It was only when the relapse from socialism to a new form of capitalism in the USSR was complete, that the relationship could appear so starkly as in its present form. The USA inherited Britain's empire and at Suez showed that the pretensions to imperial grandeur for which Britain was bankrupting itself were totally illusory: it was demonstrated that British imperialism had only as much leeway as served US interests.

TWO SUPER-POWERS

Initially, US policy was, on the one hand, a policy of hostility towards the USSR and other socialist countries, while on the other hand, the US used anti-communism as an excuse to dominate the countries of the intermediate area. As the USSR changed its class character, the contradictions between it and the USA lost the character of a conflict between imperialism and socialism and took on the character of a clash between two imperialist powers. Old alliances (SEATO, CENTO) disintegrated until only NATO is left as nation after nation sought to come to their own accommodation with the super-powers. The relative strength of the US declined in comparison with the USSR, while the other metropolitan nations, e.g. Japan, rebuilt and then expanded their economies. France withdrew in part from the NATO alliance and Japan has begun to realize that the serious differences of interest between her and the USA make it unlikely that the US would defend to the death one of her most serious trade rivals. Similarly the West European nations banded together to defend their interests and to lend each other strength against super-power pressure. It is noteworthy that the EEC has, so far, resisted US, and, to some extent, British pressure to turn itself into the economic and political wing of NATO—under US domination, of course!

Such contradictions between the Second World and the two super-powers make it increasingly likely that the former will support Third World aspirations, if only in order to retain or expand supplies of raw materials, and markets for finished goods. The tentative support given to Egypt by some EEC countries when it was deserted by the USSR and held at arms' length by the USA, illustrate this. Thus there are objective political and economic factors for an alliance of Second and Third World nations against the overweening pretensions of the super-powers.

Does this mean that European Marxist-Leninists should defend and support the EEC? Inas much as the Community resists the encroachments of the super-powers, we can regard it as a harbinger of the coming dethronement of the super-powers, of the coming of age of European monopoly capitalism—the moribund stage. It is a positive factor to be taken strong notice of when planning our programme and strategy. However, just because all the evidence shows that world wars are favourable factors for revolution, does not mean that we, as communists, must foment world wars—on the contrary, if we are to be true to our internationalist heritage, we oppose by all means at our disposal the leaching of workers' blood for imperialism. Thus, the aspect in which the EEC appears to European workers and Communists is that of a coalition of exploiters for the more efficient suppression of workers. Once again, as internationalists, we look forward to a United Socialist Europe, indeed, to a United Socialist World! We must fight the EEC in its aspects as exploiter, while giving due encouragement to its positive features. We cannot oppose it on chauvinistic grounds. Our opposition must be geared to that of other European parties, of other working classes, but it must be opposition, not any slavish support of the European bourgeoisie. Our part in this may be to oppose and change the British Government's totally slavish post-war policy in

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relation to Washington, and thus help develop another counter to the super-powers. We should encourage and exacerbate the contradictions between the First and Second Worlds.

What then, of the super-powers, their relative danger, and the resulting deductions that have to be made about our policy? Without a doubt, both super-powers fall into the term the Soviets used in the late thirties to distinguish potential allies from definite enemies, that is, that they are "aggressor states" vis-a-vis the Second and Third Worlds, and of the two, without a doubt, the Soviets are the more aggressive, and hence the more dangerous. This superior militarism, and aggression has exactly the same economic and political causes as the aggression of the German and Japanese fascists. Since the retrogression of the USSR to a new form of capitalism, of imperialism, it must also follow the same historical processes, especially the law of uneven development. As a relative newcomer to imperialism, as were Japan and Germany, the USSR necessarily seeks to remedy the imbalance in terms of power and resources that results from the relative decline in American power. In its search for raw materials and new markets, its target area is especially the Third World, but there is a special problem for the USSR—the need for new technology and Western Europe is the most vulnerable source of this, along with Japan, besides which, both these areas are strategically of great importance to the USSR, and both areas of weakening US influence.

Soviet attempts to attain control over the Third World are also intended to facilitate their control over the European countries which are economically dependent on Third World resources.

It is no coincidence that Soviet forces are largely concentrated in Europe and are equipped for a European war.

But if the USSR is still economically backward compared to the USA and EEC, how can it pose such a threat? Just as the Nazis in Germany usurped some of the ideology of Kautsky's revisionism, and built a militarist state, a form of state directed by monopoly capitalism, so the Soviet rulers have perverted with modern Khrushchevite revisionism the centralised socialist state formations in order to build a completely state monopoly-capitalist system of oppression, which enables them to direct huge resources to military expenditure—to, coincidentally, the same level as Nazi Germany—over 20% of GNP. "Guns, not butter" was the slogan of the one—it is the fact of life in the other. Our Chinese comrades are not indulging in idle invective when they refer to the Hitlerite character of the social system and leadership of the USSR. Both justify repression of the workers with the rhetoric of Socialism, both use chauvinism and militarism to maintain their power—both stamp ruthlessly on the slightest manifestation of independent working class activity with the similar watchwords—"Ein Volk, Ein Reich"—or the "State of the Whole People."

In comparison to the ultimate in monopoly of the USSR—one sole monopoly—the USA is a battlefield of contending monopolies, all of whom have shown time and again that when patriotism is set against profits, it loses every time! An American astronaut was once asked what he thought about while waiting for blast-off. He replied that the thought uppermost in his mind was that the rocket on which his life depended had been built by thousands of contractors, every one of whom was the lowest bidder! And that sums up the relative positions of the political and military leadership of the USA with the multitude of contending interests, and that of the USSR with its unity of power.

What must be stressed, of course, is that both superpowers, but especially the USSR, do not exclude themselves from the mechanics of history simply by prating about classlessness. Class struggle not only exists in them—it is actually intensifying in response to the increased exploitation necessary, for instance, to fuel their war machines.

CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can we draw from this for our work in Britain? While holding firmly to the global, historical vision, we must first of all consider our own particular position in relation to it.

The problems that face a socialist state like China in a capitalist world, are different from those that face a communist party or organization not in power. The one is secured with concerned with defending workers' state power and supporting the just struggles of the peoples of all countries, while the others are, or should be, concerning themselves with seizing power. We should not arrogate to ourselves more power and influence than we actually have, nor should we treat ourselves as agents of Chinese foreign policy, when the Chinese dip-

omatic service does it so much more effectively, and when our Chinese comrades suffered so much from Soviet attempts to do just that! Thus, while recognizing the greater dangers from the Soviets, we should not overlook the fact that it is the USA which actually has troops in Britain and dominates our economy, that it will be NATO forces that will be suppressing any workers' uprising here.

By analogy, in Greece in 1944, the Nazis were the main enemy of the Greeks, as they were of the other peoples of the world. But as soon as they had left, and British troops had entered, then British imperialism became the main enemy of the Greek people, and it was failure to appreciate this that led to the defeat of the Greek Communists—who were acting as if they were not to move against the then allies of the Soviet Union—the British and US. On the contrary, in Albania, the eviction of the Nazis was followed in short order by the eviction of the British "aid" missions, with far more satisfactory results.

Therefore any talk of class collaboration between the workers of Britain and the bourgeoisie, any support for NATO by communists, is reminiscent of the grisly old custom of the hangman being tipped by his victim. At least the hangman used to ensure a quick and painless death in return. We know from experience that our rulers will accept the "tip"—and render us a quick, but far from painless execution.

Conversely, our experience in Czechoslovakia, in Angola, etc, should make us oppose absolutely any "liberation" of Europe by the Soviets. In the conditions of such a war, we should surely, as did Lenin, work for a civil war, for revolution, a people's war against all imperialism, against the super-powers. In such a war, we would very likely find ourselves as temporary allies of some of the bourgeoisie, of some elements of the state, but our aim will still be the establishment of socialism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a process, such an issue, is far more assured of success if we and our comrades in China and other countries maintain the strategic line they now hold, if contradictions are exploited and developed to their conclusion—if the second and third worlds are united against the two super-powers—and the world proletariat is clear on its mission—the liberation of humanity.

Socialism is inevitable, but the path to it is not always the straightest and simplest—that often leads into a marsh. We need maps of the country, details of weather conditions, flexibility, if we are to negotiate difficult, unknown country. Such a map has been provided by Mao Tse Tung and the Communist Party of China, but it is up to us to negotiate the route using our knowledge of local conditions and pitfalls.

The CWM endorses the Three Worlds Concept of Mao Tse Tung and the CPC, but not in any blindly dogmatic fashion, but in order to apply that strategic conception to the concrete problems facing us

Passed by the National Conference of the Communist Workers' Movement, February, 1978. (Subheadings ours—Editor).

THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, MAIN SOURCE OF WAR

Editor's note: The fraternal organisation the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain took the very good initiative of calling a series of public meetings to discuss the theory of the Three Worlds. At their invitation, speakers from the CWM are taking part. Following is the text of the CWM's contribution to the first of these meetings, held in October this year.

In deciding what is the main source of war we must look at the situation as it really is, doing away with prejudices and conservative ideas. We must, moreover, guard against taking a static view - we must examine how things are changing, the tendency of their development.

We will start by introducing some concrete facts:

First fact

The two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, have an arsenal of weapons which is of quite a different order to that possessed by any other country. Together, they account for the great majority of the world's expenditure on armaments. While trying to maintain their monopoly of nuclear arms (e.g. by using the test-ban and non-proliferation issues to prevent other countries' developing these weapons), they are at the same time busily piling up conventional arms stocks as well.

The tendency is for the USSR to increase its strength relative to the USA, both in quantity and now also increasingly in quality (for example they are increasingly introducing electronics into their most recent weapons systems.)

The superpowers cynically use the issue of disarmament - in the same way as it was used by the big imperialist powers before the First World War and in the 1930s - to vie with one another and jointly to preserve their monopoly. The two superpowers have replaced, in their pre-eminent position, the "great Powers" which brought about the two previous World Wars. It is evident firstly that today's two superpowers alone have the capacity for launching global war, and secondly that the USSR is the rising power whose ambitions threaten to precipitate such a war. The deployment of Soviet weaponry also makes it clear that they threaten in particular western Europe.

Second fact

The forces of the superpowers are deployed all over the globe. Both have bases or facilities in various parts of the world and troops stationed in many foreign countries. The USA's activities are of course well known, but the Soviet Union has not been backward in this respect:- in its use of sinister military "advisers" (e.g. in Egypt or Somalia, before they were thrown out, or in Ethiopia at present), in its military occupation of Czechoslovakia, in its dominant position in the armed forces (and hence also the state) in Angola. About ten years back the USSR took the initiative in the global contention between the superpowers by sending a fleet into the Indian ocean before the USA had one there. Though a country like Britain indeed occupies part of another country with its army (Ireland), it is beyond the capacity of any imperialist power except the superpowers to do this on a world scale.

What is especially significant is that at present the superpowers are particularly active in struggling for possession of areas which are vital for raw materials and/or communications (southern Africa, the Horn of Africa). This shows their preparations for war.

Third fact

Both claim a right to intervene in the affairs of other countries all around the globe. US statesmen like Dulles used to speak of their "interests" being involved everywhere, and of course the global aspirations of the United States are still present (one can see this, for instance, in Carter's hypocritical "human rights" campaign). But today the most militant interventionism is practised by the other superpower, in the name of supporting so-called "progressive" causes, which in essence means anything which conforms to Soviet imperialist interests (for example in the Horn of Africa the

USSR has changed its definition of "progressive more than once, according to which country at a particular time looked the best bet as a basis for Soviet influence in the area.

Fourth fact

So-called "detente" is in fact a symptom of the acute struggle between the two superpowers. They are horse-trading spheres of influence in different parts of the world, just as the imperialist Powers did before the First and Second World Wars. The USSR is trying to see how far it can push the other superpower. The old saying that war is a continuation of politics holds good. The diplomatic conflict characterised as "detente" is a move towards war. The Soviet Union is calling for a "restructuring of international relations" which in essence means a redistribution of the cards in its own favour, while the USA has a choice between backing down and fighting. Both these tendencies have their supporters among the US ruling class.

Backing down would lead to a major unjust war of aggression by Soviet social-imperialism against other countries, including especially those of Europe, while fighting would mean an inter-imperialist war fought out at the expense of people living in the areas which the superpowers covet. We should remark here that the threatened war will probably have a mixture of the characteristics of a war of aggression by Soviet social-imperialism and of an inter-imperialist war.

Fifth fact

Both superpowers have a machinery for spying, subversion, assassination, bribery and the grooming of puppets which again is qualitatively different from that possessed by any other power. There is nothing to compare with the KGB and CIA as instruments of aggression. Only recently the Soviet Union stirred up coups in Afghanistan and South Yemen. While the USA is thoroughly exposed, the USSR has greater capacity for attempting to undermine popular struggles from within. This shows the necessity for all peoples engaged in struggles against US or second-world imperialisms to rid themselves of any illusions concerning the nature of the Soviet state today.

Sixth fact

The superpowers are diehard reactionary forces. The Third World, in struggling for a new international economic order, is working to overthrow the old imperialist international economic relations, while the non-aligned movement (which has the Third World as its main force) stands in opposition to the old imperialist international political relations, particularly the contemporary tendency of the two superpowers to try and divide the world into spheres of influence. No wonder the superpowers bitterly hate such progressive movements. The USSR (using particularly Cuba as its instrument) is especially active in trying to undermine the Third-world movement so as to expand its sphere of influence in a bid for world hegemony.

These facts clearly show that the superpowers are qualitatively different from other imperialist powers, which is what we mean when we draw a distinction by calling them the First World and the other imperialist powers the Second World. The superpowers threaten all countries both with wars of aggression and with the consequences of inter-imperialist war.

These facts also show that the Third World is the main force opposing the reactionary political and economic line practised by the superpowers in preparation for war. The facts show that it is still completely true what Lenin said that "an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several Great Powers in the striving for hegemony" (see Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism).

All this should not be taken to mean that the superpowers are terribly strong. On the contrary the tendency to war is a sign of weakness of the imperialist ruling class in both superpowers in the face of their own peoples and the peoples in all countries threatened by their aggression. The isolation of the two imperialist ruling classes can be accentuated by developing the broadest possible united front against them.

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We must take a sober and objective view. Then on the one hand we can appreciate the dangers (which some people on the left are, surprisingly, unable to appreciate); on the other hand we will also appreciate the favourable factors (which some people on the left are also unable to perceive), principally the rising up of the Third World which draws with it into a common struggle against imperialism (represented principally by the superpowers) the countries of the Second World. In this struggle the main force is, of course, the workers, peasants and other working and oppressed people. Viewing things in this way we can appreciate the vast strength of the forces which can be mobilised under the guidance of a correct strategic analysis of the forces in world politics, which the Three Worlds Theory put forward by Mao Tsetung provides.

Once mobilised (and the mobilisation of the proletariat of second-world countries like Britain under the leadership of authentic Marxist-Leninist parties forms an integral part of this anti-imperialist movement), this force is capable of hitting back against the war preparations of the superpowers, thus preparing favourable conditions for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism, an overthrow which alone can completely eliminate the danger of war.

CONCERNING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE WORLD SITUATION AND OUR TASKS IN BRITAIN

(A paper for discussion)

"The next 50 to 100 years or so, beginning from now on, will be a great era of radical change in the social system throughout the world, an earth-shaking era without equal in any previous historical period. Living in such an era, we must be prepared to engage in great struggles which will have many features different in form from those of the past." - Mao Tsetung (1962)

In discussing the change in Britain's social system, i.e. the socialist revolution, we must recognise that internal causes are the basis of change and external causes are the condition of change.

The basis of change is the internal contradictions in our own society, the class contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie and the major contradictions of the capitalist system (between the social character of production and the private character of distribution, etc.) which form the basis of class struggle.

The conditions for change are provided by the class struggle in its international aspect. This is, in essence, a struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but in the era of imperialism this international class struggle takes on special forms (the contradiction between oppressed and oppressor nations, etc.)

The socialist revolution in Britain will be both a resolution of certain contradictions in our own society and also (the same thing seen from a different angle) an aspect of the world proletarian revolution. By correctly handling our tasks in Britain, we can make an important contribution to the international cause.

The preparation for a revolutionary situation in this country is likely to involve three stages: (1) (the present stage) a period where internal class struggle is primary, during which the proletariat gains in strength; (2) a period where international conflict is primary and where the proletariat gradually asserts its leading role in the struggle against superpower aggression; (3) a return to the primacy of class struggle in its internal aspect. These stages are interrelated, but must nevertheless be seen as distinct - if we didn't distinguish between them, we would not be able correctly to determine our priorities at each stage.

The internal struggles we carry out at present are dialectically related to the international class struggle. By building the united front against fascism (which is of course related to British imperialism in Ireland) we also resist the tendency to use military suppression internally, against the working class. This helps to make our resistance against superpower aggression more effective. In fighting racism, we also help to remove the obstacles to our unity with the Third World.

We concentrate on attacking fascism in its "left" form, represented by the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy's tendency to build a corporate state, and this is linked with our work to expose Soviet social-fascism, which represents the greatest international danger.

Just because we see the danger of international conflict in the fairly near future, this by no means implies that we should be half-hearted about waging internal class struggle at present. On the contrary, if we are to be really serious about smashing superpower aggression in the future we have to wage class struggle effectively in Britain at the current stage. The reason for this is that all our successes in the future will depend upon the strength and organisation of the proletariat.

Our conception of internal class struggle does not however signify burying our noses purely in economic issues or in domestic political issues. The question is one of strengthening the working class relative to the capitalist class, because when we come in the future to build a united front against superpower aggression, the success of that front will depend upon the relative strength and leading position of the proletariat within it. In speaking of strength, we do not simply mean economic strength. Obviously it is very important for the proletariat to defend itself economically, to maintain its living standard and reinforce its economic position relative to capital. But even more important is political and organisational strength.

Thus, in all our propaganda and agitation on day-to-day issues, we will put forward the need to do away with the parasitic imperialist state and replace it with the working class organised as ruling class. We must strive to arm the proletariat politically and ideologically with a consciousness of its historical role not just within the capitalist mode of production, but within the era of imperialism in which the British proletariat is part of an international movement leading to the world-wide defeat of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism.

To sum up: our main task at present is, to strengthen the working class in the struggle against capital; then the initiative will belong to us, no matter how complicated the situations which arise with the unfolding of the class struggle on a world level.

Since 1971, one of the distinctive features of the C.P.B.(M-L) has been its dogged insistence that there are only two classes in Britain. The question of how many classes there are, what they are, and their inter-relationship, is not an academic one, nor is it hair-splitting or intellectualist to insist on a fairly precise analysis of the various class forces in Britain, as some CPB(M-L) members insist. As Mao Tse-Tung pointed out, the question of "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?" is one of fundamental importance for revolutionaries. Communists must analyse the society within which they work, grasp the main contradiction, and find out which strata are capable of playing a revolutionary role, and to what extent they may do so; they need to work to isolate the main enemy, try to win over or neutralize its allies, and mobilize all those who can be united against the main enemy for the revolutionary struggle. The tasks of revolutionaries in oppressed and oppressor countries are different, of course, but one thing that holds good throughout the world is that the proletariat is the only consistently revolutionary class. It is from the standpoint of this class that communists must make their analyses. Although the CPB(M-L) is fond of proclaiming itself "the party of the British working class", it does not proceed in anything from the standpoint of that class, and their "two-class" line shows this.

The Marxist-Leninists differ from the Birchite revisionists not only in the actual analysis they make of British society, but firstly, in the method of analysis which they use. The Marxist-Leninist method uses dialectical materialism: the Birchite method is idealist through and through.

THE BIRCHITE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION

The Birch party has always shown a deep contempt for theory: the "two class" line is notable as the only question on which it has attempted to justify theoretically one of its stands in its publications--perhaps an indication of the importance it attaches to this and of the opposition it has encountered in putting its line on classes forward. This was done in "The Definitive Statement on the Internal Polemic-1972-74" (hereafter referred to as "The Definitive Statement"); other attempts to justify this line appear in various other publications of the CPB(M-L), mostly in passing, notably in "White Collar--A Myth Destroyed, A Class Made Stronger" and "Students Into Class Struggle".

In "The British Working Class And Its Party" (the programme adopted at the Second Congress in 1971), the CPB (M-L) states "in Britain there are only two (classes--CWM)-- those who sell their labour power and those who exploit the labour of others." This is referred to in "The Definitive Statement" as "a brief description of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie".

"The Definitive Statement" then goes on to 'justify' these words by carefully selected references from the "Communist Manifesto", and puts forward one argument after another in building up its case, without establishing that these arguments actually follow.

Having asserted that there are only two classes in Britain, "The Definitive Statement" says that "this is in line with what the Communist Manifesto has to say:-

"Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature; it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

Let the reader note that the "Manifesto" describes a process which was going on ("more and more splitting"), whereas the CPB(M-L) has declared that process concluded; yet it quotes the above passage to "prove" that Marx and Engels agreed with them that there are only two classes in Britain! (Incidentally the Manifesto was originally written for a German organization of course, and was not about Britain in particular-- a fact which the Birchite British chauvinists seem to have ignored). Such dishonest quoting is typical of the CPB(M-L); if Marx and Engels don't actually agree with Birch, they must be made to appear to do so.

To proceed: The "Definitive Statement" all the people who would fall into one or another of those middle class categories which were outlined above (the reference is to some figures from unnamed sources quoted in the text - P.L. Editor) Marx and Engels have this to say:-

"The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverend awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers." (Communist Manifesto).

From this the conclusion is drawn: "Nobody escapes the net of capitalism. The peasantry fell an early victim to the bourgeoisie, and the inevitable tendency was for all other strata to be proletarianized. No petit-bourgeoisie exists, with interests separate from that of the bourgeoisie, and so we are left with a simple two class division."

Here we have another break in the logic of this argument: there is a leap from the "inevitable tendency" (a trend) to "we are left with a simple two class division" (a process concluded).

In "White Collar - A Myth Destroyed, a Class made Stronger", a quotation from Marx is included which, referring to Britain in particular, mentions "the two great classes that constitute modern society." The document goes on to assert, "No new classes have emerged in Britain since that time."

And why does the CPB(ML) so strongly object to talk of other classes? It says (quoting from the "Definitive Statement"): "The ideology which says, for example, that teachers or doctors are middle class is an ideology which disarms teachers and doctors by telling them that they have nothing to fight for - (but also saying that they have status to preserve)."

This doesn't make any sense at all: why should saying teachers and doctors are "middle class" disarm them? This by no means implies that they have nothing to fight for - on the contrary, as opponents of the two-class line point out, it is in their interest to fight for socialism as allies of the working class, since the great majority of them are oppressed by the capitalist system and have no real future under it. The Birchites can't explain this argument away, so they ignore it.

Similar comments could be made about the following pearl of wisdom from "White Collar - A Myth Destroyed, A Class Made Stronger":- "This middle class is seen as a 'privileged' sector which has been detached from the working class - 'bribed', either with the crumbs of imperialism of (sic) with some other dispensation from capitalism. It includes white-collar and professional workers in general, teachers, students, 'intellectuals', union officials, foremen, etc, etc. Since this list is subjective in origin, it can be extended ad nauseam. All, being 'petit bourgeois,' are apparently more or less beyond redemption."

Now, that is a very fine example of the way in which the Birch party confuses issues in order to avoid dealing with them. The first thing to note about that passage as a whole is that it doesn't quote any particular source for the arguments which they claim are put forward for the existence of a middle class composed of the elements they refer to. Instead of following the method of Marx and Lenin - quoting the actual arguments used in particular instances (representative arguments of a particular trend), and then refuting these, the CPB(ML) quotes an argument which it has itself concocted and put in the mouths of its critics, and then challenges that - like the scientist who decides what conclusions he wants and then devises an experiment which will lead to them!

Secondly, the reference to the middle class being "'bribed' with the crumbs of imperialism" deliberately confuses the argument over a middle class with that over the labour aristocracy, which none other than Lenin said was a stratum bribed with the crumbs of imperialism (- genuine Marxist-Leninists have never claimed that there is a middle class which, as a whole, or in large part, has been bribed in this way).

A MARXIST-LENINIST PRESENTATION OF THE CLASS QUESTION

The works of Marx and Engels provide a certain amount of guidance on the question of class analysis; at least enough to upset the Birchites' claims. More important, they provide a means whereby we can establish the basis for a reliable class analysis; this is the philosophy of scientific socialism, dialectical and historical materialism, a philosophy on which all those taking the revisionist road turn their backs. The CPB(ML) never grasped it, and consequently was always working out its line in an idealist, metaphysical way.

Materialism insists that it is concrete reality, that it is matter, which is primary over ideas, over mind; the material world gives rise to ideas in the brain, which is the highest form of matter - the material world is not the creation of the mind.

This should not be taken to mean, as opponents of Marxism make out, that ideas cannot play a role in the formation of the material world - that they can be proved by material reality itself! The point is that people can only transform the world on the basis of their comprehension of it and in accordance with the laws of nature. Within certain limits, therefore, ideas can be used to transform the world - were it otherwise, the great Marxist-Leninist teachers would not have worked to build revolutionary parties.

Dialectics holds that everything is inter-connected and in the process of development, through their internal contradictions, and their interaction with external factors; thus it is impossible to correctly understand any phenomenon without examining it in the context of its surroundings, of its environment, and without trying to grasp its internal dynamics.

Historical materialism is dialectical materialism applied to the history of society.

Lenin applied the Marxist method in examining the classes in Russia. His definition of "classes" given in A Great Beginning is the most thorough by any of the great Marxist-Leninist teachers:-

"Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by the relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy."

Lenin makes several points in this quotation that need amplifying. Firstly, he notes that classes differ by "their relation ... to the means of production." Of course, the main factor involved here is ownership or non-ownership, but a secondary one (which is still important) is that of proximity to the means of production - whether a given group of people are involved directly in production (i.e. people who fulfill an essential role in production by supervision; etc., of the use of means of production), or are not related to the means of production directly, indirectly, or by ownership (e.g. teachers, doctors, administrative personnel, etc.)

Lenin also includes income and means of obtaining it in defining class status. This, as well as factors such as relation to means of production, must (and certainly does) influence the world outlook, the values, culture, and psychology of different social groups: these, in turn, must count for something in a class analysis.

All these factors taken together constitute the basis for a Marxist-Leninist class analysis. They are the criteria according to which the British Marxist-Leninists can make a thorough analysis of the society they live in, establish which elements can be won as firm allies of the proletariat (indeed, establish what the proletariat is in the first place); which elements can be neutralised, and which belong to the enemy camp - the camp of the bourgeoisie. Armed with this understanding, the Marxist-Leninists can work out a detailed strategy and tactics for the British revolution, constantly test these in struggle, and improve them. With this analysis, the Marxist-Leninists can work out tactics that take the differences between various classes and strata into account, and give us the best prospects for winning over all who can be united against the main enemy, thus also providing us with the best conditions for a successful revolution.

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ESSENCE OF THE BIRCH LINE

For a class analysis of Britain, it is not enough only to divide society into "those who sell their labour power and those who exploit the labour of others", as the Birch clique do; this "analysis" idealistically selects one single factor in class analysis, raising it to the level of the only factor. The conclusions at which the Birchites arrive are, like the basis on which they were reached, thoroughly anti-Marxist; they are completely counter-revolutionary.

The Birchites' analysis includes enemies of the working class and unreliable elements in the ranks of the proletariat. It counts anyone who does not exploit the labour of others as working class, and tries to make out that all these people in one way or another sell their labour power. Included in this is what Lenin called the "labour aristocracy".

As was pointed out earlier, it was the labour aristocracy who Lenin said were bribed with the crumbs of imperialism. The British imperialists gained super-profits from the exploitation of the colonial countries; they continue to obtain these, though to a diminishing extent, from the Third World countries. A section of these super-profits was used to buy over certain elements of the leadership of the working class, who provided the bourgeoisie with a social basis for spreading opportunism in the working class. This was how social democracy originated, which has weakened and divided the working class and helped the bourgeoisie maintain its rule largely by "democratic" methods. The labour aristocracy consists of people like Labour Party and trade union bureaucrats, who, in values, income, life-style and outlook are bourgeois. They are deadly enemies of the working class, yet the Birchites' analysis counts them as part of the working class.

* Apart from including among the working class outright enemies like the *
* labour aristocracy, the Birchite analysis also views as part of the proletar- *
* iat certain groups of people who should be seen as potential allies of the *
* working class, but not as part of it. The ideology and conditions of work of *
* such people are different from those of the proletariat. Only by seeing *
* these people as distinct from the working class and having a correct under- *
* standing of their specific characteristics can we make proper provision for *
* them and effectively struggle to win them over as allies. Thus Birchism *
* stands in the way of our struggle to build the united front against fascism *
* and to unite all forces which can be united in order to carry out the *
* socialist revolution. *

(This concludes the first part of the article. The second and final part which will be published in our next issue sets forth some ideas about the Marxist-Leninist alternative to the Birch line and quotes from some of the statements made by the founders of Marxism on the question of class).

WHY MARXIST-LENINISTS SUPPORT CHINA

Mao Tsetung Thought is the common property of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and oppressed masses in all countries. It is a milestone in the development of scientific socialism, a summing up of the concrete experience of the social change in China and in the world, repeatedly enriched and tested by practice. The basic viewpoints, principles and methods of Mao Tsetung Thought must always be applied creatively to the solution of new problems, and this is what the Chinese Communist Party has been doing successfully in the two years since Mao's death.

Our principle task is to apply Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought to bring about the British revolution; we mustn't of course bask in the glory of China's successes and do nothing here. We have to try to do as well in our own conditions as the Chinese comrades are doing in theirs.

However, it is very important for us to study what is happening in China. This allows us to understand concretely how socialist revolution - led by an authentic working-class party under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought - can bring about a fundamental change in society. On the whole, the working class and poor and oppressed people in all parts of the world do aspire to a juster social system in which those who work run society. It is crucial for the ruling classes to try and convince the people that these hopes are illusory, that no real change is possible. The example of the Soviet Union is often used by the ruling classes of other countries to 'prove' that socialism and 'communism' don't provide a solution.

China's example shows that socialism does not inevitably degenerate as it has done in Russia, that on the contrary (if the dangers of degeneration are taken seriously and steps taken to overcome them) the socialist system has immense capabilities for a triumphant development in all fields - political, economic, cultural.

This does not mean that we consider socialist China to be all perfect and harmonious. Quite the opposite, what interests us to a large extent, about China is precisely the contradictions which exist there and the way these contradictions can be handled - under the ideological and political leadership of the Marxist-Leninist Party - in such a way as to propell the cause of the proletariat forward. As Mao Tsetung put it: "Any kind of world, and of course class society in particular, teems with contradictions. Some say that there are contradictions to be found in socialist society, but I think this is a wrong way of putting it. The point is not that there are contradictions to be found, but that it teems with contradictions."

The main contradiction in China is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The existence of the bourgeoisie poses problems for the proletariat, and these problems will crop up in different forms at different times. The question in the mid 1970s was, whether the Party would be capable of correctly appreciating the specific form taken by class contradictions. At that time, as we now appreciate, the main danger to proletarian state power was posed by the problem connected with the 'gang of four'. A small clique in the highest ranks of the Communist Party itself had managed to build up an arbitrary administrative power which they could use to protect a group of obsequious hangers-on in various departments and localities.

Marxists have always considered that one of the most important characteristics of socialism is the right for working people to appoint, criticise and where necessary dismiss all officials according to whether or not they really serve the people's interests. But at that time it was very difficult for people in China to exercise this right. By taking action to do away with arbitrary power associated with the 'gang of four', the Party leadership and Comrade Hua Kuo-feng showed that they understood the point about class struggle against the bourgeoisie not just in a vague, abstract and general way, but in a concrete, specific and practical way.

Since the overthrow of the 'Gang of Four', and the tendencies which they represented, there have been important successes:

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(1) On the basis of increased production, a greater abundance exists and so it has been possible to move closer to the goal of distribution according to people's needs. For example, it has been possible to raise the lower grades of wages, thus narrowing wage differentials. It would be an error to think that increased production automatically guarantees progress towards communism; however, so long as class politics is placed in command, it must be recognised that increased production is an indispensable precondition for the progress to communism.

Economic development is not just a matter of increased production, but of changing the structure of the economy, according to objective economic laws, in such a way as to bring closer the future communist mode of production, and the social relations which characterise it. The historical period of socialism, which is a transition to Communism, has as its mission to resolve the contradictions between town and country and between mental and manual labour; unless these are resolved it will be impossible to put an end to the division of society into antagonistic classes.

(2) Concerning the contradiction between mental and manual labour: under the period when the 'gang of four' line was influential the educational system was seriously harmed. This meant in practice that children of the intelligentsia, who could pick up basic knowledge from their parents, were in a privileged position. Now, an important drive is being launched to enable workers and peasants to raise their understanding of social science, natural science and the arts, and for the children of workers and peasants to receive education of the highest possible standard, as is their right under socialism. In this way working people will increase their ability to control in real earnest the political and cultural superstructure of society.

(3) Concerning the contradiction between town and country: a big effort is being made to reduce the difference in living standards between the two, and in particular to narrow the price differential between the products of agriculture and industry. Thus in selling their agricultural produce to the state, peasants will be able to afford an ever increasing amount of goods produced by light industry (consumer goods) and heavy industry (agricultural machinery, etc.). This has the effect of consolidating the worker-peasant alliance, which is a pillar of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It means that China's industrialisation will be of an entirely different kind to the industrial revolution which took place in the capitalist countries, and that China will avoid the mistakes which were made in the Soviet Union by exploiting the peasantry to achieve industrialisation.

(4) Full play is being given to the development of democracy. Lenin often spoke of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is a fundamental teaching of scientific socialism and a touchstone distinguishing Marxism from revisionism. He emphasised the dialectical character of this concept: it means the broad masses of working people exercising their rule over a small handful of representatives of the old exploiting classes and those who would attempt to set up some new form of exploiting-class rule. The exercise of the broadest and fullest democracy among the vast majority is protected by the dictatorship of the proletariat, and is at the same time essential to the effective dictatorship of the proletariat.

The "gang of four" promoted a so called "all-round dictatorship" which was a complete negation of democracy, and in fact turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into its opposite - a dictatorship against the proletariat. Now Chinese working people have their rights protected by a constitution which is carefully observed. Even more important, workers and peasants are increasingly actively involved in taking all decisions which affect their lives. The situation at present confirms Lenin's prediction that socialist society would be thousands of times more democratic than bourgeois democracy.

(5) A campaign is unfolding against bureaucracy and corruption in official circles, and many pointed, public criticisms have been made. The Chinese revolution in its early period of the Autumn Harvest Uprising and the Long March was an epic without parallel in history. One of the key aspects of Mao's thought was to keep up the Communist spirit of fearlessness and dedication of the early fighters,

to prevent decadence and corruption setting in after the initial victory of the revolution. On the whole the Party was successful in this, but in the mid 1970s there was in existence a negative trend, represented particularly by the "gang of four" themselves, for certain Party cadres to live a luxurious life and use arbitrary power against workers who criticised them.

Today, in order to hit back against this dangerous trend, the Party is insisting that the masses should demand of cadres, and cadres should demand of themselves, the very highest standards. The glorious tradition of selfless service to the people characteristic of the Chinese Communist Party (and which all genuine Communist Parties must strive to emulate) is being reasserted. It is important to understand this point, because the campaign of returning to the source, to the spirit of the revolutionary wars, is dialectically linked with the campaign for modernisation. If we were to see only the drive for modernisation and not also the drive against bureaucracy and corruption, we would have a false picture of the way things are going in China.

(6) A new style of literature and art, including journalism, is developing, which reflects life in an all-sided and lively way, and a clean break is being made with the sterile dogmatic style and approach which Mao himself so often criticised without much effect during his lifetime.

(7) People are speaking their ideas freely and there is a lively debate on all questions concerning the building of the new society. As Mao Tsetung said, correct ideas cannot possibly develop in a hothouse atmosphere, but only in struggle against what is incorrect. There is no such thing as some omniscient leader or leadership who can instantly see what is correct and what is not, so a debate is needed, followed by a summing-up according to the method of democratic centralism. In direct contravention to Mao's teachings, the "gang of four" tended to restrict and smother any expression of ideas which went counter to a narrowly defined line. Thus on the one hand they protected their own reactionary ideas and suppressed many correct initiatives, while on the other hand those aspects of the Party's line which were correct were deprived of the possibility of growing strong in the heat of struggle. This threatened to do grave damage to the ideological positions of the proletariat in China.

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Contradiction is the motive force of development. The struggle against the dangerous tendencies represented by the "gang of four" is at present the main concrete expression of the class contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie, which is the principal contradiction determining the forward drive of China's society. There are also secondary aspects of this class struggle which will in time become the main ones. It is possible that certain ideas being put forward in the course of the struggle to criticise the "gang of four" may themselves in time become the basis of a new wrong trend. Since the "gang of four"'s line was "left" in form and right in essence, there is obviously a danger that a new Right tendency will surface. But dangers do not put off proletarian revolutionaries. The important thing is to be brave, scientific, and above all to have confidence in the masses. These are precisely the qualities the Party leadership headed by Comrade Hua Kuo-feng have been showing in going full steam ahead with the present political campaign in a thoroughgoing and democratic way. The Chinese masses, thanks to their schooling in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, are showing great political maturity and breadth of vision.

Socialism is certainly not plain sailing, it is a period of hard and complicated struggles aimed at clearing the decks of all the rubbish left by thousands of years of class exploitation and building a new world. The current phase of the Chinese revolution shows, as the British revolution will also show, that the proletariat and other labouring people fully measure up to this historic task.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

In the following pages we reprint the 1929 General Election programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain. We consider it overwhelmingly positive, for these reasons:

The Programme takes class struggle as the "key link". It shows that the revolutionary working class party is the headquarters of the proletariat in the class war. It shows that Parliament is only one aspect, and indeed not the most important one, of the existing bourgeois state, thus majestically refuting the revisionist fallacy, which was later to become dominant in the CPGB, that socialism could be attained by winning a majority in Parliament. The programme justly points out that the capitalist system itself bears the entire responsibility for all current economic and social troubles. The Programme correctly directs the fire of its criticism against "Mondism", which "signifies the co-operation of all the forces of finance capital with the trade union and labour forces in the restoration of British capitalist industry..." (our emphasis). It gives an appropriate description of the world-historical significance of the revolt in the colonies.

In retreating from and abandoning all these correct positions the CPGB has long ago irretrievably sunk into the gloomy depths of revisionism. In working to regenerate and rebuild the Communist movement we must today absorb the strengths of the early days, while also learning from the weaknesses. Study of the Programme in its historical context will reveal negative aspects, most of which probably arise from the fact that certain questions had not yet been posed by history in a sufficiently concrete way.

We are not yet at a stage where we can propose a detailed critique of the past experience of the CPGB, and our point in publishing the Programme is precisely to help broaden and deepen the pool of ideas from which such a critique can be derived. We must nevertheless make the following points:

Firstly, on the international question, the Programme is entirely right to say that ours is an international movement. On the other hand, it is not necessary, today, to have an international organisation. The Communist International (Comintern) which existed at that time did very much good work (of which today's Communists should make a concrete and scientific appraisal), but also did damage by imposing a line on some parties from outside, and not encouraging them to think for themselves and integrate Marxism-Leninism with their own conditions.

The slogan of a "world federation of socialist republics", or of federation with an existing socialist country, is inappropriate as an immediate aim. It is now clear that the stage of the abolition of the state will only come about after a stage during which state sovereignty is maintained and indeed - in the case of countries which have suffered from imperialist aggression - reinforced (e.g. Kampuchea). Lack of clarity on this question has helped the Soviet social-imperialists - headed by the vicious renegade Brezhnev with his "doctrine" of "limited sovereignty" - in turning the socialist community into a Soviet-dominated sphere of influence.

Secondly, there is the question of building socialism. Only twelve years after the first ever socialist regime was set up, there was bound to be confusion and ambiguity, and these are reflected in the Programme. We now know, on the basis of experience of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the avoidance of this in China, that the dictatorship of the proletariat (i.e. the working class organised to exert its rule over the bourgeoisie) is not just a stage "preliminary to the building of socialism and the abolition of classes", but must continue throughout the historical epoch of socialism, during which classes and class struggle continue to exist.

The idea of the path ahead being "clear as daylight" is also inappropriate, for if "the future is bright, the road is tortuous". The building of socialism will uncover and solve a series of new and complex contradictions.

The Programme overstresses the importance of state ownership (many of the major industries have by now already been nationalised by the bourgeoisie). What is important under socialism is the democratic process of decision-making by the producers themselves, the battle to oppose bureaucracy both at a managerial level and at a central state level, to maintain the proletarian character of the state power and prevent the coming to power of a new bureaucratic state-monopoly bourgeois class.

Thirdly, on the question of the British revolution, the Programme seems to imply, for instance in its treatment of the General Strike, that a revolutionary situation will somehow emerge or come about fairly speedily. It should be pointed out that a fairly protracted and complex struggle will have to be carried out before the socialist revolution can be brought about and as a means to bringing it about. This fact only serves to emphasise the crucial importance of the Party as the proletariat's leading core, a Party combining confidence in final victory with a sober understanding of the difficulties to be encountered on the way to that victory, combining firm strategic principle with tactical flexibility. A study of Mao Tse-tung's rich treasury of writings about the problems of strategy and tactics in the course of a protracted and tortuous revolutionary struggle will help us a lot, if we can manage to integrate the general truths contained in his works with our own conditions.

Class Against Class

General Election Programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1929

Omitted from this scan. It can be found at

<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/britain/pamphlets/1929/class-against-class.htm>