

Dear Comrades,

Our written contribution to this Conference does not, unfortunately, fit neatly into the outlined agenda. We think it fits best under "Ideology" and there is also a section which should come under "Organization". The material also includes a critique of the Voice of the People paper and its associated organisations such as the "Communist Workers League of Britain", which, though not put forward for discussion at the Conference as such, we would like to draw to the attention of comrades, since it deals with what may yet prove to be a stumbling block on the path to the creation of a Communist Party.

A Communist Party will not be made in this country just because a few, or lots of, people wish it, but because it is part of an inevitable historical trend. Moreover, it will not be prevented from being made because a few, or lots of, people would rather it wasn't. That is equally inevitable. How can Communists in general, and this Conference in particular, assist history to arrive at its inevitable conclusion? We give our ideas in the hope that comrades will subject them to serious consideration and criticism, as we have seen from observation that they are rather different from certain other lines which have been put forward about the potential role of this Conference, and the way in which the struggle for a Party should progress.

One of the most interesting results of the calling of this Conference (which we regard as definitely having been called because of a genuine desire of the CWM for unity) has been the effect it has had on the so-called "groups" which have, up until now, tended to monopolise for themselves the name "Marxist-Leninist". This effect might be called "panic". "You can't do without us", "A Party cannot be built otherwise than by us" is the general cry from the "groups". Some have gone so far as to claim that only members of the "groups" should be "allowed" to participate in the Conference. Others, predictably enough, have proclaimed that they and they alone are capable of making any positive contribution whatsoever!

Many things are said to "justify"-with the "deepest regret" of course the existence of "groups". Some people even cite the example of Russia before the CPSU, or China before the CPC. Of course it is always implied that it is this or that particular "group" which is just about to play the role of Lenin, of Chairman Mao, and so on. What presumption!

Why did Chairman Mao write these words?: "The world rolls on, Time presses. Ten thousand years are too long, Seize the day, seize the hour." He wrote them to tell us that its no good going on in the same way, that the world, the time, and the people demand CHANGE! Yet some of these "groups" have existed for ten years and more, still "tolling the bell" the same faces, the same "principled debates", the same "struggle". Of course, every so often the "groups" might change their names, but that's about all. And all the time, "The world rolls on...." (For a discussion of a particularly pronounced feature of the "group" phenomenon, see our appendix, on the "Voice of the People" paper).

We cannot claim that what we are writing has any great originality-as a matter of fact, no-one in Britain has earned the right to the title "theorist"- but we do believe that it is in accordance with the experience of the world Communist movement, and not in contradiction with the line of the Communist Party of China. It is to that source that the British Communists must look for the most solid, scientific guidance, just as they looked to the Soviet Union in the twenties, thirtie, and forties. Surely anybody can understand that, and yet their are some persons who act as though NO problems in the international Communist movement had yet been solved, and the people of the whole world are waiting for them to solve them, and the People of Britain will put off forming their Communist Party until these same persons have proved just what great "theorists" they are!

Nor are our proposals based on the idea that the "groups" are "all bad" which would be as one-sided as the claim that "only the groups are any good". But, where good lines and individuals exist, whether inside the "groups" or outside, we should see them primarily as reflections of the deeper aspirations of the working class for REVOLUTION. Bold steps must be taken to unite them both with each other and with the class they represent, so that their knowledge and understanding can be deepened, their ranks broadened, and their ultimate goal achieved.

Our proposals are briefly that:

(1) Here and now Communists should take steps to hammer out, with the intention of achieving, IDEOLOGICAL UNITY.

(2) Such ORGANISATIONAL steps should be taken as are essential to safeguard and develop this unity, and on its basis to build a thoroughgoing POLITICAL unity in the struggle to end the exploitation of man by man.

We put forwards draft proposals. They are not conceived in the spirit "take it or leave it", though they are serious proposals which we feel could form the basis of what is needed. Of course, they are by no means complete, for only a serious, honest struggle by all concerned can ensure that, but we feel that such a process is not only necessary but inevitable, and must start soon, for "The world rolls on..."

It is also essential to remember that, at any stage in struggle, it is only possible to say so much with certainty, before one goes off into the realms of subjectivism and assertion. What should we do then? One-sidedly elevate matters on which unity cannot be achieved, because knowledge has not been attained, and ignore all those questions on which we can unite and over which, united, our efforts will have a hundred times more effect, patiently waiting till we have accumulated the understanding to solve those other questions? Well, some people do put forwards such a line, saying, for example, that the Conference should deal only with "points of difference between the groups", or that we cannot unite until we have solved and agree on every question down to the last detail. Unfortunately, such a line is flying in the face of the teachings of Lenin, who made it quite clear that only a certain kind of organisation, democratic-centralist, armed with Marxist-Leninist theory and engaged in revolutionary struggle of national scope, can answer ALL questions and lead the working class to victory. The point is, can we allow our "great heroes", our "theorists", another ten years to prove this undoubted fact?

Thus, in speaking of the programme adopted at the founding conference of the Party of Labour of Albania, the 'History of the PLA' says:

"This programme was far from complete, and the tasks had not been worked out in detail, for such a thing required a far greater experience of the revolutionary work and the struggle of the Party and of the masses, but this programme was built on Marxist-Leninist scientific principles".

Communists in Britain- and throughout the world- recognise the leading role played in the international movement by China. In fact this recognition is a test, a dividing line between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. Therefore we don't think it a weakness, or something to be ashamed of, that our proposals are largely drawn, in some cases word for word, from Chinese publications. Of course, China plays its leading role differently from the Soviet Union in the thirties, but that doesn't in the least the fact that the well-known "Little Lenins" of the "British Marxist-Leninist Movement" are objectively playing the same splittist role as that played by trotskyism in those days and before.

Take the question of class analysis for example. Class analysis, the scientific tool of Marxism which divides all social facts into the contradictions which make them up, and their essential nature can be understood, is distorted by some people and reduced to a sterile and vulgar squabble over whether there are "two classes", "three classes" "four classes" and so on. Moreover, these same people say that unity can only be achieved after this question has been resolved, without ever saying anything serious as far as HOW it is to be resolved is concerned.

Noticing that Chairman Mao's "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society" is the first item in his Collected Works, these people obviously look forwards to the day when "Analysis of the Classes in British Society" is the first item in their "Collected Works", rashly ignoring the fact Chairman Mao's article was the result of six years' struggle of the Chinese Communist Party, six years of INTENSE CLASS STRUGGLE, of learning from mistakes and it must be said, of successes. Of course we all have our own ideas on this, and many other questions. But the only way to transform all these ideas, characterised by Chairman Mao as being the "first leap in cognition", into KNOWLEDGE, is to build for ourselves and for the working class, a democratic-centralist organisation uniting All honest revolutionaries in the struggle to know Britain, that is, the struggle to CHANGE Britain, for we have no other aim in knowing it but to change it. Of course there will be some dishonest ones too- but we'll find out all about them in the course of struggle.

Once again, look at the quote from the "History of the PLA".

Our organisational proposals are also draft in nature. But we think all comrades should seriously consider the meaning of Lenin's injunction to "Raise organisation to the level of politics", so that as we consider the problems involved in hammering out ideological unity, we can also take steps to replace loyalty and service to this or that particular street, town, factory, group, town or whatever, with loyalty and service to the working class as a whole and, ultimately, to a Bolshevik Party right here in Britain.

Draft Proposal for a Statement of the Ideological Bases for Unity for Communists in Britain.

1) Workers of all countries, unite! Workers of the world, unite with the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations! Oppose imperialism and reaction in all countries! Strive for world peace, national liberation, people's democracy and socialism! Oppose superpower hegemonism! Bring the proletarian world revolution step by step to complete victory, and establish a new world without imperialism, without capitalism, and without the exploitation of man by man!

2) Imperialism is the highest, last stage of capitalism, and Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Leninism is the theoretical basis guiding the thought of all Communists in the world today.

3) There are four major contradictions in the world today: the contradiction between the oppressed nations on the one hand and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other; the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist and revisionist countries; the contradiction between imperialist and social-imperialist countries and among the imperialist countries; and the contradiction between the socialist countries on the one hand and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other. The existence and development of these contradictions are bound to give rise to revolution.

4) The national democratic revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and the international socialist revolutionary movement are the two great historical currents of our time. The national democratic revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, is an important component of the contemporary world revolution.

5) There are therefore three fronts of the revolutionary struggle of the world's people:

(a) The front of the oppressed people and nations struggling against imperialism, which includes the majority of humanity. On this front the objective of the first revolutionary stage is complete national liberation and establishing popular democratic dictatorship. The broad masses of workers and peasants, under the leadership of the proletariat, defeat

imperialism and win national independence. After liberation, they work to build the national economy and the foundations for the transition to the socialist stage under the leadership of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

On this front the armed struggle is generally against foreign armies or puppet armies hired by the imperialist powers and therefore the strategy is one of protracted people's war.

(b) The front of the popular masses in the industrially developed countries dominated by the imperialist and social-imperialist bourgeoisies. On this front the objective of the first revolutionary stage is the establishing of the dictatorship of the proletariat for the immediate task of building socialism.

Generally the kind of strategy to be applied here is that of insurrectionary struggle prepared by educating the masses politically and by organising the insurrectionary forces, the painstaking accumulation of revolutionary strength.

(c) The front where the working class is in power. On this front, which already includes one quarter of humanity, the people struggle to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat from counter-revolutionary attacks, from the internal and external agents of capitalism who are doing all in their power to penetrate proletarian power and seize the Communist fortress from within.

One example of the strategy here is the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

6) Britain belongs to the second front. Our first objective is establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, our revolutionary strategy is that of armed insurrection to smash the bourgeois state power.

7) In Britain, finance capital has gained the upper hand over industrial capital. This has brought about the oligarchic rule of a small minority of monopolists, who, as well as oppressing the large majority, also oppress other nations. Of particular significance is the oppression of Ireland.

Communists will always struggle to prevent the proletariat being dragged into war on behalf of the bourgeoisie, by forging solidarity with the victims of aggression, boycotting the war, and waging a hard struggle against the regime in their own country, in order to overthrow it and win peace, which is only possible through socialism.

8) Bourgeois democracy has become an empty formula to mask the dictatorship of the most reactionary section, minority, of society. The only way to achieve progress is through the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

9) Bourgeois democracy breeds fascism. As Lenin said, the politics of imperialism is "Reaction all along the line". Therefore Communists should not have illusions about the scope of legal struggle, and prepare for illegal struggle side by side with the development of their legal struggle.

10) However, bourgeois democracy offers better conditions for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat than fascism, and therefore Communists will always struggle to defend democratic rights, and to prevent bourgeois democracy degenerating into fascism.

11) The British proletariat must at all times wage a protracted struggle against the two superpowers who contend and collude together for world hegemony, and constantly pose the threat of a new world war. The British proletariat must therefore prepare itself against the threat of war and lead a united front of all sections of society against the superpowers and the threat of war, and for peace. But there can only be one lasting guarantee of world peace, and that is the victory of the revolutionary struggle of the people of the world.

12) The British monopoly capitalist class seeks to make the labouring people bear the burden of the inevitable crisis of the capitalist system. As well as waging a protracted struggle against this, the proletariat

... long united front of all sections of society who can be united in opposition to the monopoly capitalist dictatorship.

13) While actively leading immediate struggles, Communists should link them with the struggle for long-range and general interests, educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, and ceaselessly raise their political consciousness to undertake the historical task of the proletariat. If they fail to do so, if they regard the immediate movement as everything, determine their conduct from case to case, adapt themselves to the events of the day, and sacrifice the basic interests of the proletariat, then that is social democracy.

14) Social democracy is a bourgeois ideological trend. Communists must at all times draw a clear line of demarcation between themselves and social democracy on the basic question of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and liquidate the influence of social democracy in the working class. We must win over the masses under the influence of social democracy, and whenever it furthers the revolutionary struggle, be prepared to unite with "left" social democrats, all the time safeguarding our own ideological, political, and organisational unity.

15) We stand for the Mass Line. Every Communist must love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses; he must identify with the masses wherever he goes, and, instead of standing above them, immerse himself among them; according to their present level he must awaken them or raise their political consciousness. The organisation as a whole must be a reflection of this on a mighty scale, and in all its work among the masses it must work according to this principle.

16) Internally, we stand for active ideological struggle, the combination of democracy with centralism, and the scientific method of class analysis. It is inevitable that there should be two lines on every question, and the way to resolve the contradiction is through struggle. The grave errors of dogmatism and empiricism must be avoided since they will prevent a correct struggle taking place. We must develop a lively and active school of criticism and self-criticism.

17) Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory!

Draft proposals for Organisational measures to be taken to strengthen and develop ideological and political unity.

All Communists who find themselves in agreement with a basic ideological programme such as that given above, should dissolve their present organisational links in order to bring into existence a new, democratic-centralist organisation. This organisation will set itself, first and foremost the task of overcoming the present fragmented state of the movement, uniting serious Communists around their programme, and through the course of the struggle to place that programme before the popular masses in as widespread a movement as possible, laying the basis for the solution of the tactical questions and problems which will inevitably arise, this is not by any means to suggest that the work will proceed on a spontaneous level, for by conducting its work in this way, the organisation will also accrue to itself the theoretical strength to develop its programme to such a degree that, in the inevitable event of a revolutionary situation arising, it will encompass all the sentiments of the masses which are against the bourgeois dictatorship and for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The basic unit of the organisation would be the branch or cell, which would initially be set up on a geographical basis, though in the course of development and growth they would be set up on the basis of factory, neighbourhood, school, and so on. These would elect their own officers and also, delegates to regional committees and the general Congress,

It would be the supreme policy-making body of the organisation. The Congress would elect a central committee to carry on its work between its meetings. Anybody could join a branch who agreed with the programme and constitution of the organisation, supported it financially, and was prepared to play an active and honest part in its work. The main job of the branches would be, in practice, to carry the programme of the organisation to the toiling masses with the utmost DRIVE and CREATIVITY.

At a founding Congress, the organisation would inaugurate itself and, elect a central committee (provisional) to carry out the work necessary to place itself on a sound organisational footing. In the initial period after its inaugural Congress, the organisation and its provisional central committee would be faced with the following immediate tasks:

- 1) Producing its programme in a form easily available to the working people.

- 2) Producing a newspaper, to the guidelines given by Lenin in "What is to Be Done?", capable of acting as both a scaffolding and a blueprint for the revolutionary movement in Britain. The paper, as well as popularising the organisation's line, and M-L politics in general, would also be the vehicle for analysing the situation, laying it bare to the people, exposing it, winning people over to the scientific, truthful view of society, counteracting the bourgeois ideological onslaught.

- 3) Preparing a unified and realistic study programme for members of the organisation, raising their level of consciousness. Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.

- 4) Overcoming the sectarian and splittist tendencies shown by many Communists today, waging a determined all out fight against any such tendencies which manifested themselves in its own ranks.

- 5) Conducting serious frank and vigorous discussions with Communists who had not joined it as yet, whether in or out of organisations, in an effort to remove the barriers which are keeping us apart.

- 6) Solving (as far as possible) the question of finance.

- 7) Producing realistic, creative solutions to the whole question of professional revolutionary work upon which Lenin placed such key importance in "What Is to be Done?"

- 8) Solving the major Theoretical questions so far as possible, which the organisation identified as being holding up the further development and strengthening of its programme. Two major errors would have to be avoided: a) Picking up issues simply because they were "in the public eye", not fundamental to the development of the organisation's programme and practice. b) dealing with questions which appeal to the Petit-bourgeois intellectuals taste as "Interesting topics of study" but are likewise of marginal, or no, significance.

There are no doubt many other immediate tasks which a serious, revolutionary, democratic-centralist Party-building organisation would set itself at its inaugural Congress. We put forward this as being a basic, but by no means complete, list. Hasten the day.