London Workers Committee
Notes for a critical history of the CPGB

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Historical Background

Marx and Engels throughout their political lives were a minority in the Socialist and working class movement they had founded. As Engels said in argument with the German Social Democratic leadership in the 1880's "This never did us any harm".
Marx and Engels were in fact the first anti-revisionists, but after Marx's death Engels was fighting a losing battle, and after his own death the cause of anti-revisionism was led by one of the worst "anti-revisionists" of all time , Karl Kautsky, a lesson for us that an anti-revisionist is not necessarily a Marxist, that is, a revolutionary.

At his death in 1895 Engels had little choice. There was no leading Marxist to whom he could hand over with more confidence than to Kautsky.
Right up to the disaster of August 1914 Lenin with the Bolshevik Party was alone in fighting unreservedly the predominant social democratic policy of pacifism, alone in putting forward the uncompromising revolutionary line in the struggle against the looming international war already foretold by Engels. Here again is a lesson for us.

If Luxemburg, Mehring, Karl Liebknecht had seen the need to break with revisionism and to form a genuine revolutionary Marxist Party before the cataclysm instead of continuing to waver in the hope of maintaining "party unity", the German revolution of 1918 to 1919 would almost certainly have put the working class in power and altered the century's course of history in Europe. Lenin however from the turn of the century was the first consistent anti-revisionist and in April 1917 was again the first propounder of a plan for a socialist, that is a working class, revolution. He was at once supported by Stalin, Sverdlov and other Bolsheviks.

Marx had described his own method as "critical and revolutionary". This is the Marxist attitude to everything and of course not least to Marxism itself. This is today the method of the Marxism-Leninism of our era, the Thought of Mao Tse-tung.

This self-criticism was implicit in Marx. Lenin made it explicit and stressed how essential it is for a correct policy and development. Mao Tse-tung has brought it to recognition as the universal general rule of work of Marxists.

Revisionists have criticised revolution and revolutionaries, starting with Marx and Marxism, instead of casting a critical eye on themselves and their methods. They are incapable of self-criticism which means they are incapable of learning.

The National Question

The first and perhaps the greatest achievement of the CPGB took place before its foundation. This was the successful sabotage of the ammunition ship the "Jolly George" in the London Docks, which led to the Government of Lloyd George deciding to call off its support for the war being waged by Poland, as a puppet of the Western Powers, against the newly-born Soviet Union.

This great event was the achievement of some who took a leading part in launching the CPGB in 1921 as an amalgam of left social democratic and revolutionary groups, the shop stewards of the Clyde and elsewhere providing the most important element, the revolutionary backbone of organised workers.

Before going on to a sketch for a critical history of the CPGB in close relation to the European Communist movement, it will be helpful to glance at the national question for our Islands.

At Easter 1916 Lenin had been alone among leading European Marxists in at once hailing the rebellion in Dublin as a great revolutionary act. This was when Trotsky and others denounced it as useless or diversionary.

In 1920 John Mclean was leading in Scotland an anti-imperialist and national struggle on the same general line as that of Connolly praised by Lenin. Unfortunately, Mclean never got to Moscow for the early Comintern meetings, and the national question for Scotland and Wales went by default. A Communist Party of Great Britain was launched and to this day an anti-national and therefore crypto-imperialist outlook persists in the revisionist CPGB and in those anti-revisionists who have failed tograsp the importance of a correct national policy.

What is needed is not an anti-revisionist party for Great Britain, but a Marxist-Leninist Party for the whole British Isles, and this can only be achieved on a federal basis with a unified political leadership of national parties in each of the four countries of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The First Phase 1921-19219

The first years of the CPGB can only be described as chaotic. There was no policy, no plan. The best elements were trying to understand Lenin.
"State and Revolution" was the gospel, but it was still an abstraction, its concrete application to Britain seen only in the vaguest terms.
In 1925, when a potential revolutionary situation was developing with the prospect of a general strike of miners, railwaymen and transport workers in support of miners' wages, the whole leadership of the Party allowed itself to be arrested and safely imprisoned until the danger to the class in power had blown over.

The General Strike of 1926, in spite of this failure of revolutionary leadership, has lessons for us today when once more the miners are threatened, this time by a Labour Government, with worse oppression than the wage cuts of 1926.
In 1925 the united front of miners, railwaymen and transport workers forced the Government to postpone the wage cuts. When the crisis came in 1926 the Government had been given almost a year to prepare for the clash and the employers everywhere given time to build up coal reserves. This happened because the leadership of the Trade Union Triple Alliance were bluffing and had no intention

of actually calling a General Strike. But they had reckoned without the workers. The printers of the "Daily Mail", then a Northcliffe Tory paper, refused to set up a leading article attacking the miners and the proposed strike. The rank and file had taken the initiative, the strike was in fact already starting without even a strike call. The Triple Alliance leadership had no option but to call everyone out and the strike itself was an overwhelming success.

In those days the majority of students and white collar workers were ready and keen to be strike breakers. This scabbing was an almost total failure and today, of course, the majority of students and the Technicians Unions would on the contrary be playing a leading part on the side of the working class.
The strike was such a success that in many parts of the country the police had no option but to ask permission of the local Trades Council, the ad hoc local workers leadership, to move essential transport, e.g. for hospitals. From the West Country a message arrived offering to kidnap the Western Region Army Command, showing that the workers themselves were not worrying, like Mr Kingsley Martin, the strike's "socialist" historian, about questions of constitutionalism, but were seeing the question in practical terms of simple class power as indeed it was. But the absence of any revolutionary leadership made defeat inevitable. On its third day the strike was altogether too successful for the Trade Union leadership. They made an abject surrender to Baldwin, the Tory Prime Minister, not only deserting the miners but making no sort of conditions for their own strikers on returning to work - a foretaste of the coming Labour Party split in 1931.

So the first lesson of the General Strike to us is that such a mass mobilisation of the workers is entirely practicable and has shown itself to be so, and to be overwhelmingly strong when this is done, and that such a mass mobilisation requires a political leadership and a political aim and that this aim must include power to direct a change of policy in the only place it can be effective, the Central Government. In other works, a General Strike to be successful must not merely be for a wage claim but for the benefit of the whole working people - in effect to replace the whole present system by one that will be directed by and for the working people, not by and for the financiers - in fact, the Workers' National Plan that we have been proposing for nearly two years, possible only with the working class in power.

The second lesson is how to conduct a defensive strike for an economic wage claim when the conditions make the political aim of power impracticable. The miners in 1926 were suddenly deserted by their allies, not by the railwaymen and transport workers, but by their leaders. This should of course have been foreseen, but once the betrayal had taken place and the attacking policy of the General Strike had thus been betrayed from within, the miners, forced on to the defensive, should at once have reconsidered their own position and acted accordingly. Their leaders should either have made a

revolutionary call for support, not merely for themselves but for the whole working people, or failing this should have made the best terms they could and resumed the political and organised struggle to develop a socialist, that is a revolutionary movement.
The lessons drawn at the time were inadequate. The main slogan that emerged in the late 1920's in reaction to the capitulatory line of the Social Democrats (who were in effect supported by Bukharin) was "class against class" and this remained the dominant line throughout Europe (and China) right up to the shock of Hitler's installation in power in 1933. (Hitler never seized power - he was given it by President Hindenburg acting for the dominant millionaires).

During this period there was a change of leadership in the CPGB made possible by support from the Comintern in Moscow.
The 1920's leadership of Rothstein and Campbell was replaced by that of Pollitt and Dutt, representing the Left in the Party.
The change was for the better, yet it was not in fact Dutt and Pollitt who led the internal struggle for the change but the new generation represented by Bill Rust, first Editor of the first Daily published by the Party, which was started against the advice of both Dutt and Pollitt.
Nevertheless, the "Daily Worker", started on 1st January 1930, marked a great step forward towards a party that would be truly revolutionary, a party with a mass base and mass influence.
The next step forward was a successful campaign against fascism in Britain, the defeat not merely of Mosley, but of the whole Metropolitan Police Force mobilised to protect and support him. This took place in 1934-1935 after the defeat of the working class in Germany and coincided with the period internationally of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern dominated by Dimitrov.

Just as our General Strike of 1926 and our defeat of fascism at home in the 1930's still await their Marxist historian to draw the lessons of these events for us today, so also the international history of the Comintern awaits its Marxist historian whose task will be correspondingly more important.
Here, for our immediate purpose of helping to launch a revolutionary working class party in England and assisting to develop one for the whole British Isles, we stress both the correctness of the Popular Front line of the Seventh World Congress in correcting the sectarianism of the line "class against class", and at the same time we consider it essential to analyse its weaknesses and the serious errors that developed in the course of its application.
Any movement that calls itself anti-revisionist and fails to perform this historical task of self-criticism is simply opportunist or else is unable or unwilling to do its basic homework of theoretical ana lysis.

The Popular Front

First we must be clear that the Seventh World Congress and its main slogan of the Popular Front were necessary, since some self-styled Marxist-Leninists, without any explicit criticism of the slogan, write as if all that they need do in order to become true revolutionaries is to revert to "class against class" as an adequate mass line.

The defeat of the German working class in 1932-1933 was both unexpected and far more severe than its previous defeats in 1919 and 1923. The result of this defeat was the bloodiest world war in all human history, the war in which the first state of working class power, the Soviet Union, suffered more than any other. The victory in 1945 must not blind us to the importance of the defeat in 1933 or its lessons for us today.
Here we can only stress two points.
First that to regard the defeat in Germany as inevitable due to objective conditions etc. is mere passivity. When a man doing a job of work fails to get a good result he does not passively accept this result, he analyses its causes in order to ensure that the same mistakes cannot be made the next time.
That is Marxism, any other attitude is anti-Marxism.

In the Autumn of 1932 the Nazis were thoroughly defeated in the last general election to be held in pre-war Germany anf there was a general expectation that the working class would soon triumph. There were dissensions in the leadership of the German Party and an exact judgement will only be possible when more facts are available. We can only say that the leadership which was unable to mobilise any effective opposition to the installation in power of the most inhuman thugs of modern times did not set an example for us to follow. The massive victories of the Popular Fronts in Spain and France in 1936 suggests that the policy of the German Party had not been a good one.
These Popular Front victories were not merely electoral, though a revolutionary must never under-value the importance of capitalist semi-democracy and its electoral popular judgements. These electoral victories led at once to a change of political atmosphere. The initiative, as important in political war as it is in shooting war, went over to the masses, to the Left.
The tragedy was that the working class leadership did not know how to make use of these victories and of this initiative put at its feet by its own correct mass line of the Popular Front. In France in May 1936 the whole nation was jubilant.
Thorez could at once have put forward a programme for a national plan - this concept having spread throughout the world as a result of the first Soviet 5-Year Plan and its resounding success.
Such a proposal could have been based not simply on a majority in the bourgeois Parliament but on direct popular support. The bourgeois parties in the Popular Front could not have refused their co-operation except at the price of going over openly to the enemies of democracy. Whatever these gentry might have done the masses would have retained the initiative and the sense of power, and the Communist Party would have remained at the head of the storm.
Instead, Thorez meekly offered to support a Left Bourgeois Government headed by the bourgeois Socialist Leon Blum, and in so doing he in effect turned the French C.P. into a parliamentary party, a revisionist party in fact if not in name.
Can anyone have felt surprised at what Thorez did in 1945 or in 1960 after his behaviour in 1936?

Spain

SPAIN.

In Spain, where the Communist Party was very much smaller than in France, the situation developed differently because of two factors. First the reactionary initiative of the Army leadership based on the foreign Fascist Governments of Hitler and Mussolini in Germany and Italy. These generals displaced but not dismissed by the bourgeois Popular Front Government, planned a seizure of power for July. But the Spanish people defeated this attempt in one of the most heroic strugglesin revolutionary history in those few days of July. They were enabled to do so in Madrid by the last moment gesture of the bourgeois Prime Minister who ordered that arms be supplied to the people. In a critical situation such as Spain was in during July 1936 the decisive test of whether a government is or is not on the side of democracy is precisely this:

Does it or does it not trust the people to have arms?

We can contrast Singapore in 1942 when the defeated British imperialist General collaborated with the conquering imperialist Japanese General to ensure that the people of Singapore and Malaya should not be able to get arms.

The Right deviation that showed up in France in May 1936 showed itself in Spain in the spring of 1937. After the annihilation of Mussolini's troops at Guadalajara in March, there was militarily a stalemate. The Fascists had been defeated but not got rid of. The Republicans were blockaded with the connivance of the Governments of France and England under the hypocritical pretence of "non-intervention" that can be compared to the policy of " negotiations" for Vietnam in the 1960's, the policy so dear to Lord Brockway and his revisionist friends. The Republicans could get neither arms nor food in sufficient quantity to launch a positional military offensive. The correct policy would clearly have been to develop a guerrilla war of the peasantry throughout the occupied areas as the Chinese did in somewhat similar circumstances, though on a much larger scale, in 1937 to 1945. To do this it would have been necessary to adopt the policy of Mao Tse-tung of an alliance with the national bourgeoisie but with no subordination to them in that alliance. Instead the Spanish Communist Party submitted to a policy identical with that of Wang Ming after 1937 in China, in effect subordination to the bourgeoisie. This subordination showed itself in a policy the very opposite of that of a guerilla war based on the peasantry and led by the proletariat. They attempted a positional war and for this purpose developed the Republican Army increasingly to approximate to a bourgeois Army as the Soviet Army was also doing. There is an obvious parallelism with the attempt at positional warfare in Kiangsi in 1934 and the attempt to copy the Soviet Army in the P.L.A. in China in the 1950's.

So first Germany, then Austria, then Spain, then France were lost in the 1930's, while in China the policy of Mao Tse-tung developed more

and more victoriously.

BRITAIN IN THE 1930's.

Meantime in Britain what was probably the highest peak of achievement of the C.P.G.B. was reached in 1936 to 1938 with the considerable mobilisation of forces for the International Brigades in the Spanish War.
This was done in a serious manner both politically and organisationally. About 1500 volunteers went out and of those some 500 died in Spain. Already in 1936 the "compagnie anglaise" of the first (11th) International Brigade was among the best fighters in the arrest of Franco's large professional Army in the suburbs of Madrid. Throughout 1937 and into 1938 the British Battalion had an honourable reputation in what became a first-class fighting army of the working class, in spite of the aforementioned attempts at bourgeoisification. The effect in Britain was that the International Brigades was a passport throughout the Labour movement to anyone who spoke in their name from 1937 for many years thereafter. It is sad that the political leadership of the Communist Party did not know how to make use of this cloud of glory nor of course of the very valuable military experience gained.

Basic Failure of the CPGB





The basic error of the C.P.G.B. leadership from 1921 can be summed up in one phrase: they never developed a revolutionary mass-line for the Britain of that period, a native British revolutionary policy for a potentially revolutionary situation, nor did they organise in the Leninist manner necessary for a revolutionary party.
At best they only attempted to follow the advice - often excellent - of the Comintern. If we contrast the history of China in the same period we find that the revolution in China succeeded precisely because the Chinese Party developed its own revolutionary mass line under its own leadership.
Was the mistake that of the Comintern itself?
Should there have been the polycentrism advocated later by Togliatti?
We do not think so.
To take again the example of China, the overall policy of the Comintern was always supported by the Chinese party, but the Chinese leadership insisted correctly that policy in China could be successfully developed only by Chinese, just as they have always insisted that mistakes made in China under Comintern influence were the responsibility of the Chinese comrades who took the advice. So in Britain the mistakes made by the CPGB leadership when it was following, or attempting to follow Comintern guidance, must be accepted as British responsibility.
Looking back on the 1930's now with the advantage of hindsight one can see that from the very onset of the cataclysmic world economic crisis starting in 1929, that reduced industrial production in the capitalist world to about 60% of potential, the correct slogan for a Popular Front would have been a national plan for Britain under workers' power, as we are putting forward for Britain today in a

situation that threatens to become similar to that of the 1930's. To march as the Unemployed Workers' Movement did only for a better dole, against the means test, was not enough. Politically it was economism and tactically it could not win. Similarly the very successful struggle of the London busmen, achieving better wages and conditions than they have today, was politically lagging behind the potential of the busmen themselves as they marched in hundreds in uniform in the 1936 May Day demonstration.
This lagging behind the political potential of the masses of the people, in an attempt to win bourgeois support or toleration by not being revolutionary, was a general feature of the Communist Movement in Europe of that period. We had not understood that to unite all who could be united against the main enemy, what we had to develop was not a less revolutionary policy but on the contrary a more revolutionary policy appealing to more people to benefit from such a revolution. In the economic disaster of the 1930's, with millions unemployed, the most widely appealing and therefore the most effectively revolutionary line would have been precisely that of economic reconstruction and advance, which everybody already recognised could only be done under working class leadership. We could and should have put forward the demand for POWER to reorganise the whole economy for production, not for restraint of production.

The War

In 1939 came another test. Because Germany had been lost the Nazi war danger had begun to loom.
Because France and Spain had been lost the Nazis had swallowed Austria and Czechoslovakia and were obviously about to swallow Poland.
This resulted from mistakes of the popular front period that had left the initiative and leadership to the bourgeois Socialists instead of keeping the revolutionary working class in the van. At the time we all laid the blame on the French and British Governments just as previously we had laid the blame for Hitler's success on the German Social Democratic leadership. But how can revolutionaries blame the class enemy for their own failures?
We have to learn from these failures, not blame others for them.
So in 1939, having lost Spain through not understanding the need for and the possibility of a truly People's War, we also inevitably lost France because of our opportunism in having tolerated Blum's policy in 1936, just as China and Albania would have been lost in 1945 had the incorrect advice of keeping Chiang in power been followed by the Chinese Party or had the Albanian Workers Party not maintained a similar courageous self reliance. France was lost in 1939 not merely to the French bourgeoisie, but from the potential anti-fascist alliance which did not finally materialise till 1941. The Soviet Union in 1939 found itself, because of these mistakes of the leadership of the Western European Communist parties, isolated before the Nazi threat and had no alternative but to gain time and divert Hitler westwards by signing the Nazi-Soviet pact. The working class movement in the West thus found itself in a very bad position. If they persisted in the struggle against Hitler they would break with the Comintern and achieve nothing. If on the other hand they proclaimed a policy of peace with Hitler they would inevitably lose their position as a national leadership essential to a revolutionary party.
The CPGB leadership split on this issue. Pollitt and Campbell took the line of national resistance, Dutt and the rest that of the Comintern. The whole Communist movement in Western Europe was hamstrung for nearly two years.
When in June 1941 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union his action had the effect of re-uniting the working class throughout Europe.
The CPGB, continuing its policy of seeing its main duty as to the first Socialist state and unable to achieve this as it should have been doing by attacking the enemy at home, called vehemently and correctly for a second front, but in doing so neglected its other and parallel duty to fight for the direct interests of the British working class.

To take a minor but significant instance, Herbert Morrison, a Labour r ight winger who was Home Secretary with charge of all home defence organisations, put the Fire Service, dealing with the effects of air raids, on the preposterous duty roster of 48 hours on, 24 hours off. This grossly inefficient as well as humanly intolerable system was protected by the CPBG, against all protests from within the fire service and the F.B.U. The class struggle was in general treated as in abeyance for the duration of the anti-fascist war, just as the Popular Front in France had been treated as superseding the class struggle.

The result was that the struggle against Churchill, as the British imperialist temporarily fighting the same enemy as was the whole working class and its first socialist state, was led in fact and also in the view of working class public opinion, not by Pollitt and the CPGB, but by Bevan the opportunist social reformer who knew how to keep his base among the masses and in fact gave a fine demonstration of how to develop a mass line even thpugh his intention, of course, was never revolutionary. It is symptomatic that Pollitt is reported to have expected Churchill to win his general election in 1945, as did also all but one of the Labour leaders, when Bevan alone was confident of victory. This electoral victory in 1945 can be attributed to three main factors.

First, the tremendous prestige of the victorious Soviet Union, secondly, the relatively good work of the CPGB in the 30's; and thirdly the agitational work in Parliament and "Tribune" of Bevan himself during the previous 2 to 3 years.

This policy of the CPGB during the Second World War of inadequate political independence, of inadequate struggle for the working class itself also explains their own electoral defeat in 1945, while the Labour Party swept to victory.

The CPGB in 1945 had confidently expected to win a good number of Parliamentary seats. They only held the one they had in Scotland (where Willie Gallacher had an honoureble record as the only M.P. to have denounced Munich in the House of Commons), and got one other seat by a well-managed campaign in Stepney. (Even so how does this compare with the 437 votes at Gorton in 1967?)

The CPGB then continued its critical support of Attlee's Government and lost popular support in consequence just as Attlee did.

The 1945 Situation

We can here consider the question of whether, given a revolutionary leadership (which of course was absent) there was or was not a potentially revolutionary situation in 1945 as, in our opinion, there was a potentially revolutionary situation in the General Strike of 1926 and again in the 1930's.
That there was such a situation in France and Italy cannot be doubted by any Marxist-Leninist, though we have yet to see an analysis by French or Italian comrades of this critical situation in their respective countries. There the people had the arms of the victorious resistance.
All that was lacking was the decision to be prepared to use them. Such a decision was made not only in China, but also in Albania so that in both countries the working class is now in power.
An attempt was also made in Greece under very difficult and much worse conditions and failed for various reasons.
In Britain the people were armed too. They were in their millions in the army that had just helped to defeat Hitler, an army whose votes are acknowledged to have helped in the electoral defeat of Churchill and which had already demonstrated, for instance in the Cairo Parliament" of 1942, its political anti-Toryism which could quickly have developed into full anti-capitalism. The class division of society was extremely unpopular in the British Army of 1945 as anyone who was then in it will remember.
We believe that a Marxist-Leninist Party, i.e. a revolutionary Communist Party, would have so conducted itself, both before and during the war and at the election itself, that the whole mood of the Labour movement, which was eager enough as it was for the assembled Labour M.P's to sing the "Red Flag" in the House of Commons, would have swung so far against the whole capitalist class setup that the Attlee policy would have been impossible and that a revolutionary development would have continued instead of stopping short. True, such a revolutionary Communist Party would have had to throw off entirely the opportunism of the revisionist party leadership. They would have had to have the ability to unite all who could have been united against the main enemy, then as now imperialism.

CPGB DEGENERATION

In 1951 the CPGB leadership produced "The British to Socialism" which was published in "Pravda" in full but never woke much response in Britain. We cannot agree that this marked the turning point of the CPGB to revisionism.
Their essential revisionism dates from much earlier. They had never in fact become a revolutionary party, though in the mid-30's

they seemed to be under way of becoming one.
1956 was a testing year for all revolutionaries.
As to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, we find ourselves still in general agreement with the assessment made at the time by the Chinese Communist Party, and also with their assessment of the Hungarian events made later that year - both published under the title of "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat".
The Hungarian attempt at a counter-revolution that had started (as in Poznan a few months earlier) as a legitimate working class protest against bourgeois bureaucratism in the governing Communist Party, had some common features with the Kronstadt revolt in 1921, that was certainly supported by the whites and about which practically every Marxist has agreed with Lenin that to suppress it was a tragic but inevitable necessity.
1921 in Petrograd had been an incomparably more difficult year than any had been in Budapest since 1945.
It had been a terrible year.
But just as there had been bureaucratic rule in Hungary that fostered counter-revolution by losing working class and popular support, so in Petrograd too there had been Zinoviev.
A Marxist-Leninist should note that whatever the errors of the CPSU leadership before 1956 the errors of the alternative leaderships of the 1920's would certainly have been incomparably worse.
The CPGB leadership in 1956 simply did not know what to say, and succeeded in continuing its policy of in fact saying nothing, or in any case nothing that mattered.
Since then their political influence has continued to diminish until today what they say matters to almost nobody.
The political struggle in Britain goes on without their playing any significant part, except the negative one of influencing a number of militant comrades in the unions, especially the A.E.U, Building Workers and the E.T.U. and keeping these and other good potential militants restricted to an economist line and away from developing to revolutionary Marxism.

The Present Situation

The revisionist CPGB has now become merely a manifest echo of the CPSU. A Marxist-Leninist Party can never allow itself to be an echo of anybody, no revolution can ever be led from outside.
Self reliance must be our constant watchword. self-criticism
Therefore we, as Marxist-Leninists, must conduct a thorough^of our own past which includes for us both the CPGB for the first 40 years of its existence and also the international Communist movement, since we have been and are part of it.
The mistakes of Stalin, like the mistakes of Lenin, are our mistakes.
We cannot assume the credit without also assuming the debts.
We cannot take the good apples from the tree and say the bad ones are none of our business.
There can be no development of any kind without mistakes and

failures.
This is well understood for science and industry, and applies, of course, no less in politics. But there is always the fundamental difference between those seeking truth and the people's welfare, who take the side of the workers and are revolutionaries, whether scientific or political, and those seeking selfish ends, who for this very reason resist any socialist development.
Lenin and Stalin, who were revolutionaries, both made mistakes, and acknowledged them as honest revolutionaries must, but Stalin made far more serious and prolonged mistakes than Lenin.
Marxists now understand that the struggles within the CPSU in the 20's and 30's were an inevitable reflection of the inevitable class struggle within the Soviet Union under proletarian dictatorship.
The duty of the party leadership in a country with the working class in power is continually to strengthen that working class power, especially by ever-increasing and ever wider real democracy.

The Internal policy of the CPSU

The internal policy of the CPSU while under Stalin's leadership is generally recognised by Marxist-Leninists as correct up to the mid-thirties. The capitulatory policies of Trotsky and Bukha in and their supporters were rejected, and the first 5-year plan, sponsored by Stalin, showed the whole world that the working class in power could advance production at a pace never previously achieved or even approached by capitalism. This had a great and permanent effect on people's thinking in all industrialised countries and led to the general acceptance of socialism as the practical alternative to capitalism. This was a great achievement of the Soviet people under Stalin's guidance and is the direct forerunner of the Workers' National Plan that the London Workers' Committee are putting forward as the immediate programme for the British people in the present increasingly critical situation.

But with the completion of the first 5-year plan and the liquidation of the capitalist section of the peasantry through collectivisation, Stalin failed to understand that the class struggle necessarily continues and is therefore reflected in the Party throughout the whole period of proletarian dictatorship right up to the development of Communism. (see Stalin's speech at 17th Congress)
This failure to understand the inevitably of class struggle under socialist conditions, that is under proletarian dictatorship, led Stalin to treat differences within the Party as if they were contradictions not among the people requiring to be resolved, but between the people and imperialist agents requiring suppression.
Thus the standard phrase when a Party member was arraigned was that Citizen So-and-So (no longer Comrade) was an enemy of the people and he was then treated as such.
Comrade MaoTse-tung had from this same period of the 1930's expressed the opposite view that struggle within the Party is inevitable and necessary. This view he more fully developed in his famous speech of 1957 "on the correct handling of contradictions among

the people."
But this was by no means a new proposal or analysis.
It was simply an elaboration of views already put forward twenty years previously.
It was precisely because MaoTse-tung had been thinking in this manner for many years that he was able, when the revisionist storm broke at the CPSU Twentieth Congress, to seize the opportunity for further progress in the development of socialism and democracy in China, and therefore for the world - another instance of turning a bad thing into a good thing.

The Chinese Party had itself suffered severely from an incorrect policy in the years 1931 to 1934 and an analysis of these mistakes was made by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in 1942.
Comrades should refer to this analysis as an excellent guide to understanding the mistakes of the CPSU.

The present Great Cultural Revolution in China is itself a development of the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom, launched in 1956, reiterated by Chairman Mao in his speech to the National Conference on Propaganda in 1957, but never really accepted by the leading bureaucrats of the C.P.C.
The method of Mao Tse-tung in strengthening and developing Socialist society under the dictatorship of the proletariat is always to pursue a mass line, always to mobilise the masses themselves, to correct the errors of bureaucratism, always to have confidence in the masses.
Stalin's failure to do this in the 30's had two bad effects.
First, that in the absence of mass pressure for a more popular democratic and socialist policy against the constant pressure of the bourgeois elements, led idealogically by the right wing of the party, Stalin and the revolutionary wing of the party fell back on "administrative methods".
Instead of mass pressure as their main defence against bourgeois pressure they used and developed a police force. This inevitably led to mistakes as acknowleged by Stalin in his speech to the 17th Congress.
Mao Tse-tung had criticised such methods by denouncing the policy of dealing with differences within the party, and also therefore within the people, by "relentless struggle" and "merciless blows" and substituting the correct slogan of "fighting the illness to save the patient".
Authoritarian and brutal methods alienate the party from the masses and open the way to capitalist restoration by encouraging unintentionally but inevitably a popular demand for liberalism.
This was the second bad result of the mistakes of the C.P.S.U. leadership in its internal policy. Because the proletariat and poor peasant masses were not drawn into themselves correcting bureaucratic tendencies, political leadership fell into the new right wing elements developed in the party on the basis of the massive new bureaucracy, leading to the present situation of the dominance of open revisionism in both the CPSU and all the parties that are its satellites and follow its conductor's baton, and the development of

state capitalism in the Soviet Union and all its client states. Near the end of his life Stalin began to realise that socialism in the Soviet Union was in danger from revisionism.
In 1952 he published his "Economic Problems of Socialism", which is still for us a valuable analysis but does not yet deal fully with the question of contradictions within Socialist society, still less propose any practical steps to deal with them.
The C.P.C. has the credit of demonstrating to the whole world movement the Cultural Revolution as the means of furthering socialism under established workers power by mobilising the masses to fight for it, with a parallel development in Socialist Albania.
In 1952 Stalin also made his short contribution to the Nineteenth Congress of the CPSU, in which he correctly raised the question of the need for the European Parties to take a national stand.

A detailed critical review of CPSU policy over the past forty years will be the task of Soviet Marxist-Leninists just as they too will have the task of restoring socialism in their country.
It is the task of Marxist-Leninist Parties in other countries to make a self-criticism of the policies of the Communist Parties of their own countries as the CPC did when it finally came under the correct leadership of Mao Tse-tung.
Such a self criticism necessarily involves some criticism of Comintern policy and therefore of Stalin as the world leader of that period. But while the achievements and also the mistakes of the CPSU up to 1953 must be related to Stalin, the failures in other countries cannot be regarded as his. Each new evolving Marxist-Leninist Party must take the responsibility of the mistakes of its predecessors even if these are now open revisionists. In particular, each Marxist-Leninist Party must carefully analyse the history of its own now revisionist predecessor.

This article should be read as our first sketchy attempt to do this here in England.

LONDON WORKERS COMMITTEE