Research Note on Working People's Party of England (1968-1986)

March 2026

Emerging in the London anti-revisionist movement as the Islington Workers' Committee, merging to become the London Workers' Committee and producing the *London Workers' Broadsheet*, the "Broadsheet" group had coalesced beginning of 1966 in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity/ CDRCU.[i]

ACTIVE IN CDRCU

Members of the London Workers Committee had been associated with the anti-revisionist CDRCU. Inspite its short existence the Committee to Defeat Revision, for Communist Unity had successfully implanted the ideas associated with Mao Zedong within Britain. Paul Noone (1939-1989), later a leading member of the WPPE, puts membership of at least 50 to 60 members with a Central Committee of comrades, representing the constituent groups, of about 10 to 12."[ii]

The CDRCU's newspaper *Vanguard* carried a statement in solidarity with James from the Stoke Newington Communist Party branch, with 14 signatories (all to be expelled from the CPGB) associating themselves "with the principled stand" and "fundamentally correct" "Appeal to All Communists" (1963) stating the leadership had substituted insults for serious political discussion, indulged in "vulgar lies" "damaging slanders" and "scurrilous practice".

A Communist Party London District Committee member from Stoke Newington, Johnny James had been expelled. James, the "40-year old accountant", illustrate the cross fertilisation within London's anti-revisionist milieu having an established political record , often holding dual membership within the space of a few years, that included in the Communist Party, the dissident CDRCU and the Caribbean Workers' Movement and London Workers' Committee, and WPPE.

After the departure from *Vanguard*'s editorial team of Evans and Jones, Johnny James was a named on the editorial board of *Vanguard*. The fluid nature of parts of the anti-revisionist movement in London was illustrated by some of the dual membership held at that time by the *Carib* editorial team, newsletter of the Caribbean Workers' Movement. They were simultaneously active in both organisation, sharing similar political outlooks and orientation.

Carib was advertised in *Vanguard* (iii) and carried a three part article by James described as a lecture to "advanced cadre of the Guyana National Liberation Movement" (iv). In his article "We Must Fight Racism", James wrote unsurprisingly dismissively of government initiatives, "Let us call upon the Labour Government to act against racism not just talk: and let us expose it when it fails to act. Only the mass struggle of the people can stamp out racism and Fascism." (v) Fellow CARD Member Ahilya Noone (also of *Carib's* editorial team) submitted articles on Cuba and a substantial piece called "Women under capitalism" raising the demand "to free her from the shackles of domesticity" (vi).

It was not only in the pages of *Vanguard* that displayed their sympathies: Paul Noone, John James and Dave Volpe were the CDRCU's platform speakers at a public meeting calling for the release of arrested Indian communists at Conway Hall in March 1965.

Changes in the editorial board of *Vanguard* was further evidence of the symbiotic relationship when Paul Noone joined *Vanguard*'s editorial team after McCreery's death. However Johnny James was no longer on the editorial team by the start of 1966. His comrade Paul Noone was still there but his published article "Some Methods of Work" was headed "Polemic". Noone shortly departs amidst the disintegration of the CDRCU.

DIFFERENT ROADS

The London Workers' Committee had a different party-building line from the largest of the groups that emerged from the CDRCU. The Action Centre for Marxist Leninist Unity/ACMLU - founded at a Manchester conference - argued the need to establish a leadership nucleus to rally both the fragmented anti-revisionists within and outside the revisionist party, The ACMLU regarded it as petty-bourgeois dreaming to consider that a Marxist Leninist party could be built from grassroots up at that time. Two alternative party founding projects – the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain (September 1967) and the British Marxist-Leninist Organisation that founded the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in Easter 1968– also adopted a stance that they were establishing the revolutionary leadership needed. The rump of the CDRCU also maintained a spurious claim to leadership of the anti-revisionist movement.

In others' view, McCreery was far ahead of his comrades in political development. Most were still enveloped in ideological, organisational and work-style deficiencies inherited from the CPGB. Most really did not know (and still don't) how to take revolutionary initiative; how to develop class struggle at their workplace or in their communities. Paul Noone defended the contribution of McCreery. In an introduction to a collection of McCreery's writings *The Way Forward* – The need to establish a Communist Party in England, Scotland and Wales, Noone argued that none had matched McCreery's analysis: McCreery himself died from cancer in April 1965 after a long illness at the age of 36. The claim to be the political successors of McCreery was never fulfilled in the organisation's political practice.

McCreery death in 1965 (in New Zealand) saw the activity of the group decline sharply, the CDRCU degenerated into an ineffective group without direction, unable to understand what it needed to do, meeting regularly to discuss abstract ideas and paper struggles. Inevitably such organisations splinter.

The Campaign Against Racist Discrimination [CARD]

The anti-racist work of LWC members around the Campaign Against Racist Discrimination [CARD] saw the London Workers Committee / LWC help build the organisation, instrumental, wherever they had resources, in the formation of local branches. *Workers Broadsheet* would carry news of intentions to form a Merton branch of CARD and the formation of CARD's Wandsworth, its branch meeting monthly held at Earlsfield Road, describing CARD as "an

organisation primarily of and for coloured immigrants aiming to mobilise them for justice." Elsewhere, the Camden branch of CARD had secretary pro-term Mrs A Noone, a LWC activist. "In a few weeks a public meeting will be held with international speakers on the closely linked issues of racialism in Britain and imperialism throughout the world." ([vii])

Prominent in CARD was Jonny James, well known in London's anti-revisionist activist circles and in the public limelight with the events at the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, labelled as one of the dangerous Maoists. James "always wore a Mao button on his lapel" according to Diane Langford's memoirs, a volunteer in the CARD office. James contended that the majority who viewed their plight as part of a wider freedom struggle were frustrated by what he described as "white liberals and a few Uncle Toms" who did not support internationalising CARD's mission.

The struggle within the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and the transformation of the pressure group towards advocacy of Black Power in late Sixties Britain saw Johnny James and Ralph Bennett identified as amongst the drivers of radical change in the standard narrative. James was assistant general secretary for membership and chairman of the International Committee. Their impact on the civil rights lobbying group reflected the growing radicalisation of self-organisation and political advocacy within Britain's immigrant communities against the racist discrimination experienced in British society. What was heard loud and clear was the anti-imperialist sentiments and concerns expressed. The influence of the input of grassroots radicalism was evident at the third annual convention of CARD at Conway Hall on November 4th 1967. Following the routing of the liberals, Dr Alex Tudor-Hart joined Johnny James (Assistant secretary and organiser), as a new officer of CARD, along with CWM members S. Ennis and Ralph Bennett.

Bennett and James were founders of the London-based Caribbean Workers Movement in 1965, editorially involved in the single sheet one penny newsletter published from 1965 to 1967. Using the mimeographed technology of the day, the first issue of *Caribbean Workers' Weekly* appeared July 1965. Its audience was those who "escape from overwhelming unemployed and destitution by emigrating to the metropolitan country as cheap labour." [[viii]]

Originally from Guyana, in north-eastern South America, Johnny James, active within the London Left, had contacts with other small left-wing pro-Peking organisations in London. Principal amongst them was the anti-revisionist activists met at meetings and the work offices shared with the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the advocacy group founded in 1954. In 1962, the MCF organised a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, the lead banner carried by Bill Ashe, and Claudia Jones leading against the UK Colour Bar Immigration Bill which restricted the right of Commonwealth citizens to remain in Britain. The Movement was renamed Liberation in 1970. The CWM, working in a similar field, continued to reflected those early anti-revisionist concerns with the *Caribbean Workers' Weekly* exposing an activist as "a Caribbean stooge of the revisionist CPGB" [[ix]]. The opposition to the politics of "The British Road", the CPGB's political strategy was evident in the position taken by the CWM on domestic and international issues.

In October 1965 the needs of the time had been laid out in “Our Immediate Tasks”, an article authored by Paul Noone ([x]):

> “Without a firm footing in a Marxist-Leninist organisation they are adrift in the broad movement invariably tailing behind the petty bourgeois left-social democratic leaders of these movements. Let us be clear–there is no harm and some good in working in the broad movements for the purpose of rallying the militants to the need for reconstituting a Marxist-Leninist Party. But to put the broad movement above all else, as an end in itself is bowing to spontaneity, is submitting to left social democratic leadership.”
>
> “To build upon a careful analysis of our system of society, its economic base, its neo- colonial ramifications throughout the world; its classes: the present outlook of these classes and of the various strata within these classes; its trade union movement; its various other institutions such as the Labour Party which go into ensuring the smooth running of bourgeois democracy.
>
> “Our aim is to raise the political consciousness of the masses of working people but first (and this is our present task) we must raise our own political consciousness and that of the advanced sections of the workers and intellectuals –the activists and militants.”
>
> “What sort of a Party is it that we must reconstitute? How will it differ from the revisionist dominated C.P.G.B.? Comrade McCreery gave us the main features in a succinct and correct form in “The Way Forward.”
>
> 1. The Party will be based on proletarian internationalism with the working class and oppressed peoples of all countries. Our relationship will be based on genuine equality and mutual respect.
>
> 2. The Party will fight to establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat which involves smashing the capitalist state machine in a socialist revolution.
>
> 3. Struggles on all immediate issues (wages, rents, etc.) will be related to the above strategy. We must use the immediate struggles to raise the class-political consciousness of the workers.
>
> 4. The Party will carry a mass line to mobilise the mass of the working people which means that the Party will have to be organised at the places of work of the people.
>
> 5. The Party will fight inside the trade union movement, co-ops, parliament, etc. for progressive policies and even positions but in order to expose legalism and reformism in all their guises.
>
> 6. Democratic (and not bureaucratic) centralism will be the basis of the organisation of the Party.
>
> With such a Party the Marxist-Leninist cause will go from strength to strength in these islands. Powerful support will be given to our brothers in the front line of the struggle against imperialism in the colonies and

neo-colonies. Speed the day of the reconstitution of the Marxist-Leninist Party in England, Scotland and Wales!

Long live Marxism-Leninism!

PARTY BUILDING

The *Workers' Broadsheet* exhibit the group's self-conscious bid for leadership and the confidence in its proposed way forward. From early on the practical focus was clear: the London Workers' Committee / LWC pamphlet "*Attack the Attackers*" [published 1966?] had argued for the need to put a positive programme of advance to socialism to the British working people. Hence *Workers' Broadsheet's* editorial calls for a Marxist-Leninist party, restating proposal , put for in May 1967, for a Workers National Plan as the only immediate programme issued by Marxist-Leninists in Britain.

Explaining the differences between the approach of fellow anti-revisionists in The Marxist journal and the Workers' Broadsheet, Strong stated,

> "We have therefore put forward this immediate and positive programme, not as a Party programme, but as the objectively revolutionary slogan required by the present moment…to appeal for support from a wider base than the rather small number of Marxists in Britain. This does not mean that we do not feel the urgent need for a Marxist-Leninist Party." ([xi])

As Jim Strong explained:

> "This is our number one priority today: building the Party of the working people. Our method for doing so is by participating in, learning from and giving leadership to their struggles. The Workers national production Plan is a call for ending imperialism; for solidarity with the just liberation struggles of Arabia, Vietnam, and throughout the world; and for raising the economic and democratic struggles of the British working people to a revolutionary level." ([xii])

There was an accelerated attention given to the issue of re-establishing a revolutionary communist party that had been addressed in Jim Strong "The Crisis of British Imperialism & tasks facing Marxist Leninists" (published in November 1966).

Reassuringly asserting that it will be based on Communist Party of China's 'A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement 'of June 1963, when announcing its decision to prepare a draft programme for a Marxist-Leninist party in England, to work alongside and in cooperation with WPS|ML and Caribbean Socialist Party.[[xiii]]

Our task "is to launch a Revolutionary Great Alliance that will unite all those who can be united against the main enemy" ...[reiterated the process envisaged in the workers national plan as the road ahead] *Workers' Broadsheet*, provided analytical articles on historical development of British imperialism and a class analysis that maintains preferred reference to working people . All evidence of the serious groundwork undertaken for the momentous decision ahead.

November's Special Issue of *Workers' Broadsheet* ended with an appeal from the October Organising Committee for the Working Peoples Party of England. The "Workers Broadsheet" conference of October 1st 1967 calls all the working people of England to form independent workers committees at their place of work and in their localities to discuss proposed programme for a WPPE, urging readers to send elected delegates to OOC in forming a truly democratic WPPE and take a full role in convening and participation in the thoroughly democratic foundation Congress on May 1st 1968, to decide the programme and elect its leadership. [xiv]

The mobilisation, in reality like that for the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain (September 1967) and the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in Easter 1968, appealed to the already committed. Likewise, the October Organising Committee Conference of October 1st 1967 was the initiative of those already active in the orbit of the LWC.

Working Peoples Party of England [WPPE]

In May 1968, the LWC transformed with the inaugural congress of the Working Peoples Party of England [WPPE] led by a team with Chairman, the Spanish Civil War veteran and former Communist Party member, Alex Tudor-Hart (1901-1992), Rod Lee the general secretary and with Jonny James as WPPE's Foreign Relations Secretary.

Alex Tudor Hart's Chairman's address to the 2nd Congress [xv]stated,

> "… since July 1966 that the objective situation here is potentially revolutionary and requires ONLY the development of the subjective factor, namely an effective revolutionary party, in order to make the potential stand"
>
> "When our inaugural congress met a year ago the situation demanded a revolutionary party of the working class so urgently that in spite of our small numbers and small resources we took the necessary first public step towards building such a party, making a public declaration of intention, putting forward the discussion the mass line we proposed for a revolutionary party."

He asserted that they organised and struggle in the times when "a potentially revolutionary situation" had been shown in France. Drawing a lot of the French experience, and probably the delegation that were witness to events in Paris reported in the pamphlet The Revolutionary Storm in France .A Report and Analysis By the Working People's Party of England'. (1968).

> "We must understand that public opinion must be prepared that the working people must WANT a revolution, that is they must want power. This preparation of public opinion has already gone quite far."

Congress was told the Bolsheviks did not try to imitate any previous revolution,

> "The conditions for a proletarian revolution in a country of advanced capitalism such as England, with a long imperialist history and a still predominant imperialist outlook in the majority of our workers, are totally different from of

> any country that has so far achieved, or even begun, a socialist revolution."
> "We in England and in Wales and Scotland and Ireland have to be equally self-reliant. We have to develop our own road, our own plan of campaign and this must not try to be a copy of someone else's success, because an imitation can only be a failure." [xvi]

Rejecting as lunacy the idea of a prolonged civil war in England, the Chairman's Congress address projected the scenario whereby "What we have to prepare to do is to overwhelm the class and national enemy, whose social base is extremely small, by a mobilisation of forces that will leave the capitalist government no forces strong enough successfully to oppose the mass tide of revolution."

Armchair strategists would have a few issues to raise about the armed capitalist state when the process of defence committees and in the context of a GENERAL STRIKE that revolutionary leadership wherein turns economic struggle into political struggle, and includes forcible occupation of workplaces , all means of transport and communications, were seen as feasible processes to win the revolutionary struggle.

The May 1968 edition of the WORKERS BROADSHEET Vol 3 #5 contained the much publicised "Programme for the Working Peoples Party of England" that took up 12 pages, and "Get Organised - for power" and called again to "establish Workers Committees everywhere".

Rod Lee resigned by the end of the year. An organisational note informed readers that the acting General Secretary of the WPPE was Paul Noone following the resignation of Lee who remains a member of the Secretariat. Noone, a founding member of the Junior Hospital Doctors' Association, a prominent member of the small Medical Practitioners Union, based in Islington. Public members of the organisation were: John O'Dowd, Gillian & Michael Mouzouros, Malcolm Alexander, and Davie Deans. The Chairman remained Alex Hart, as did Guyana Jonny James as Foreign Relations Secretary. (xvii)

The Inaugural Congress of the WPPE, on May 4th/5th 1968, adopted a Programme, five years in the making, and had clear foundational lines such as stating the Labour Party was never socialist, and that the CPGB mistake at its very foundation was to discard the theoretical and practical achievements of James Connolly and John Maclean.

Willingness to address the National Question in the British Isles was evident in the newly-formed party title. Limiting the WPPE to an English party organisation was before the social explosion in the north of Ireland, the trial of the Free Wales Army members and growth of nationalist movement in Scotland which were all name-checked in the Chairman's 2nd Congress report the following year. Its application was in line with the underlying anti-colonial, anti-imperialist line applied to the domestic understanding of the historic dynamics and contemporary application in the British Isles comprised of four unequal nations. They had the prime example of their line in practice from former comrades in McCreery's CDRCU.

In Scotland the Workers Party of Scotland was formed when the decision in principle to form

the WPS (ML) on the behalf of the Scottish working class was taken in Edinburgh in May 1966 by anti-revisionist veterans. Thus, the Scottish elements of the CDRCU were placed on a separate organisational basis. *The Scottish Vanguard*, the organ of the WPS (ML), was launched in 1967. The WPS (ML) promoting national initiatives in founding the John Maclean Society and organising for the Scottish National Convention involving trade unionists and progressive nationalists. The forerunners of the Working People's Party of England viewed "the formation of the Workers Party of Scotland is a breakthrough in the revolutionary struggle of the British Working class" and established fraternal relations.



The LWC position on the National Question had long drawn the attention of critical rebukes from the prolific polemists of the CWO .They argued in their criticism of the WPPE position with relation to the Black Power movement in Britain: "Not only is the WPPE attempting to split the workers in Britain along national lines, but it is also attempting to split them along racial lines --black against white." *The Communist's* exposure of "the distortions of the WPPE" that their national principle of party organisation was anti-Leninist in multi-national states.[xviii]

The minority view amongst the anti-revisionists, inherited by the WPPE from the CDRCU, was the party organisation based on separate nations rather than a British nation-state, in the prediction that the four nations of the British Isle "will then develop a common policy and united leadership in a Federal party of the British Isles" [xix]

There was more critical thoughts amongst rival Maoists: WPS (ML) policy, was described by those who clung to the CDRCU in a Statement of November 19th 1967 as "anti-marxist, a petty-bourgeois deviation and opportunist". Citing Stalin in support it counterpoised a 'British monopoly ruling class' rather than the terminology of 'English Imperialism' used by the WPS (ML). For both Scotland and Wales its default position was that the remnants of language and culture were the "preserve of the bourgeoisie" and that "Britain has one language and a common culture."

A position echoed by the Reg Birch led Communist Party of Britain (ML). The basic point was that the WPS (ML) were seen as substituting petty-bourgeois nationalism for revolutionary class struggle. CDRCU member R Archbold's letter rejected a cornerstone of LWC policy in negatively concluding that separate workers parties in England, Scotland and Wales could not serve the interests of the BRITISH working class in the revolutionary struggle to seize state power and establish a socialist Britain. [xx] While the MLOB who claimed such "disruptive demagogues will be swept from the scene in the course of building a centralised Marxist-Leninist Party of Britain" [xxi]

WPPE: A BALANCE SHEET

The Secretary Report at the Second Congress in 1969 by Paul Noone summed up the experience of the first year touching upon progress and failures, provided an early balance sheet of the difficulties in advancing the political progress in England. Many of the points made that

Congress were repeated in Noone's introduction "Michael McCreery, the WPPE and the break with Reformist 'Communism' "an introduction to the 1973 pamphlet, *The Way Forward. A Marxist-Leninist analysis of the British State, the CPGB and the tasks for revolutionaries*, which reprinted three articles by Michael McCreery – 'Destroy the old to build the new', 'Organise at the place of work' and 'the Way Forward'. *[Added note, Italic quotes that follow are taken from Paul Noone in Michael McCreery, the WPPE and the break with Reformist 'Communism']*

"In England progress has been more difficult. The WPPE was formed in 1968 and has, in spite of several politically important campaigns, so far not developed sufficient strength and influence. Our programme was drawn up through full discussion of all members and contacts and remains basically correct although it needs further development and re-emphasis. A current task is the re-drafting of this programme, to make it more useful in developing class struggle." (The Secretary Report)

He spoke with pride describing the development of the Programme "the greatest single achievement of the WPPE". Echoing Tudor Hart's address, Noone still saw "the objective situation is VERY FAVOURABLE for revolutionary developments". Amongst the successes were a lot of propaganda work street leafling and production of *Workers Broadsheet*, the active support for demonstrations and meetings particularly those organised by the BVSF and RSSF.

Noone told the 1969 Congress that

> "Our most significant practical achievement was in organising a defence committee in the Euston area of north London, helping our brothers in the Pakistani Workers Union to organise, which won widespread support and respect."

For years, the LWC (and its successor the WPPE) in its involvement would carried reports on Pakistanis in Camden reorganising against Powelite fascism assaults, stimulating the growth of black people's organisation [eg Pakistani Workers Union also active in Black Peoples Alliance organised by Birmingham IWA's Jagmohan Joshi , and welfare centres in East London]. [xxii] Street patrols, a Camden Working People's Defence Organisation to forestall attacks ,were set up by the Camden CARD branch (headed by Paul Noone) as the only means of self-defence because "the Metropolitan Police in Camden and Islington Have been allowing and will continue to allow robbery with violence, window breaking and petrol bombing, so long as the victim are coloured." [xxiii]

However Noone did not shy away from airing the problems at Congress, and they were issues that would continuingly be raised in the future [some repeated at the 1977 Birmingham Conference]. The identified obstacles were issues of motivation, style of work and processes. Overall, the worrying stunted growth of the organisation, through failure to attract wavering but sympathetic militants, contributes to loss of politically immature and wavering members.

Initially, the WPPE suffered from the disruption of a leading group of individuals with sectarian and elitist political ideas associated with liberalistic and undisciplined methods of

organisation. These persons failed to get active among the people at places of work or in the community, starting with mobilisation for simple demands; but instead they talked of revolutionary violence while waiting for revolution to begin spontaneously and expecting the masses in such a situation to turn around and call in a clique of passive dogmatists to lead them! This group of paper Blanquists talked of seizing state power on behalf of the masses and then "giving" the masses "socialism". These petty-bourgeois conspiratorial and elitist notions were paraded as "Leninism". It had nothing at all in common with it. The Bolshevik Party led the masses not simply because of what intellectuals wrote but because the Party shared the life of the people in day-to-day struggles, because it was of and for the masses. It advanced general theories and analysis derived from close attention to real everyday struggles. It did not seek to impose itself. This is the way Lenin, Sverdlov, Stalin, and Orjonikidze worked. It was because of this integration with working people that the Bolshevik Party led the revolutionary masses in 1917. It didn't happen overnight. It wasn't a trick or a 7-day wonder, but a process growing and developing over 20 years.

"We have not sufficiently shaken off King Street and Transport house methods of work" listing petty bourgeois attitudes, sectarianism, elitist and liberal in attitude, formalistic passive and cliquish manners. Those who failed to develop political struggle at work or where they live, no investigations or understanding of the living reality of class struggle. The failure to carry activity through to completion, to check up on our work and see whether the initial approach/analysis was right or in need of modification – half-heartedly began, pious declarations. There was poor financial management record keeping that had organisational consequences.

He told Congress, and there was talk of the Blanquist conspiracy of a minority of trusted cadres seizing power on behalf of the masses -- anti-Leninist pseudo revolutionaries with fiery talk.

The verbal revolutionists usually fail to appreciate the possibilities of class struggle in their own lives, instead they are eager to proffer advice and leadership to already developed struggles, standing as they are on the side-lines. They dismiss their fellow workers at their own places of work or in their own streets as "reactionary" and "useless". Their Marxism-Leninism is an abstract collection of ideas and fantasies reserved for sounding off at political meetings or in publications. It's a hobby like collecting stamps or matchbox tops.

"Our WORST FAILURES were things NOT done: plagued by an attitude of waiting for something to turn up, thinking that all that was needed was ritual incantation of dogma.

"..it was a mistake on our part to attempt to builds an anti-imperialist united front by mere invitation to other organisations claiming to be Marxist-Leninists."

Appeals and attempts to initiate co-operation and co-ordination amongst Left co-thinkers were suggested but there was little evidence that there was any success in putting such plans into effective. The project of a Socialist Federation of August 1970 consisted of its own supporters under other names, such as the PWU and surviving branches of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination. ([xxiv])

Another common error of the time was to see political campaigns developing through an appeal to "national figures" or the leadership of other "left-wing" organisations to launch a joint "movement" on this or that topical issue. Each such initiative was doomed to failure. A political appeal to political opportunists futile unless they see clear personal advantage in such a campaign. "National figures" and "Left-wing leaderships" will support any successful campaign (and probably try to pervert it to their own ends) once it is developing strongly and they can no longer ignore it. Their support may serve a useful tactical purpose but gaining it should never become our strategy, nor must we ever surrender the political initiative to these opportunists in any such campaign.

"We must remember that EXAMPLES is our most powerful weapon."

But above all else our experience both positive and negative over the past five years have served to re-emphasize the correctness of Michael McCreery's initial analysis. In a sense it is through our experiences of these years that we have at last begun to appreciate what Michael was saying and have at last begun to apply it to our own struggles and organisation.

The International Report given by 'John E. James' covered a global tour of resistance and anti-imperialist struggles the 9th Congress CPC, danger of social-imperialist and revisionism, condemnation of invasion of Czechoslovakia, heroic Albania, the Caribbean – invasion of Anguilla, support for Cuba "no one can doubt their revolutionary direction and their socialist aims" and in Guyana the Working People's Vanguard Party, Palestine and Biafra. The border conflict between the Soviet Union and China over the Ussuri River entitled "World War?" came firmly down in defence of China and that "the Soviet Union must be regarded as having joined the imperialist camp".

Workers Broadsheet reported messages of revolutionary greetings and solidarity "were received from the Working People's Vanguard Party of Guyana, from Swedish and Irish Marxist-Leninist and the Doncaster Socialist Alliance (added note, associated with activist Dave Douglas). Delegates or observers came to the Congress from the Caribbean Workers' Movement and Guyana Liberation Front, from the Frante de Liberatacao of Portugal, from the Pakistan Workers' Union, from the Internationalists Organisation, from the London Communists Group (ML), and from The Mineworker. WPPE branches in Newcastle, Camden, Brent and Merton were represented."

James conclude his International Report with Black Power in Britain– the same issue of *Workers Broadsheet* carried an individual article on the imprisonment of Tony Soares (Sinaris) active in the Universal Coloured People Association. He later, as editor of *Grassroots* newspaper published by the Black Liberation Front, was a campaign focus when charged over publishing public domain detail instructions on how to manufacture Molotov cocktails.

> "In addition to the remarks made by our Comrade Chairman on this matter, racism etc. black nationals from other countries living, working and/or studying here in Britain. These black people represent the most oppressed

section of the working people here."

It was an appropriate example of the connectivity between imperialism and racism manifest at the imperialist core, and reflective on an important stream of the concerns and practice of the WPPE. While regular articles on industrial struggles , and those favouring shop stewards organising on a national scale (all the better for a General Strike), along with those sectors like health that reflected some members' occupations, were carried in *Workers' Broadsheet*, it was involvement in the anti-racist and democratic rights struggles that stood out .

> "The successes of WPPE have always been derived from local activity of a broadly correct nature. It includes the mobilisation of Bengali workers and militants of all races against thug attacks in Euston and the East End of London; the support of gypsies threatened with eviction in Northumberland; mobilisation of building workers on Tyneside against the "Lump" system and during the recent strike; initiatives amongst young people in conflict with the forces of law-and-order in London; helping the destruction of the liberal-establishment misleadership of the anti-racist movement in Britain."

Connections, and emphasis on anti-colonial and National Liberation struggles (which included Quebec) were evident (as with the Revolutionary Marxist Leninist League led by A. Manchanda) both in the publications and activities of the group's activism. The 1967 September issue had carried article on "What is Black Power" "Black Power is not racialist, it is anti-imperialist power, it is people's power, it is workers' power for socialism and the destruction of all class and national oppression." [xxv]

A supportive statement on Black Power had been sent to the CARD meeting at Conway Hall on July1967: The London Workers Committee greets the struggle for Black Power because Black Power Fights White Imperialism.

The 'Working Peoples Party of England' held its first public meeting on June 18, 1968 on the subject of racialism and imperialism" The meeting was addressed by Johnny James one of the leaders of the WPPE, and- was attended by leaders and supporters of the Black Power movement. The CWO reported, the WPPE gave every encouragement to the racial position of the B1ack Power movement, while attempting to cover themselves with the odd, vague reference to class. … James' view expresses the most extreme form of tailism" [xxvi]

The *Workers' Broadsheet* had reprinted Mao's statement April 16 1968 on support of the Afro-American struggle against violent repression. [xxvii] It regular carried anti-imperialism reports on British imperialism in Aden, Oman and Zimbabwe [racist-ruled Rhodesia]/ and the struggle in Vietnam.

The internationalist stance of the group was upfront, and provided office services to several Black Power and Liberation movements - especially those with sympathies for China. These included: UCPA, Black Panthers, Black Eagles, Frelimo, ZANU, PAC, Portuguese and

Palestinian groups. Fraternal delegates attended from various Liberation movements, including ZANU who had attended the WPPE founding Congress in 1968.

Understated Maoists

Unlike the shrill declarations from the Internationalist camp, the WPPE were restrained but no less firm in their support for Mao's China.

"Our ideological guide is MAO TSE TUNG THOUGHT, the Marxism-Leninism of today, whose strategy is always SERVE THE PEOPLE and whose tactics are ever UNITE ALL THOSE WHO CAN BE UNITED AGAINST THE MAIN ENEMY." (1969 Report to Congress)

Reports of the London lectures given by David Crook, on January 24th 1967 at Holborn Assembly halls on the international aspects of the Chinese Cultural Revolution to an audience of 60, indicated the connections to sympathetic Maoists world-wide. Reportedly friendly relationships were established with the Chinese Legation in London and with the Albanian embassy in Paris, and a few members of the WPPE - including Johnny James - became members of the Afro-Asian Journalists' Association.

Subscriptions to *Workers Broadsheet* from the autumn of 1967 included Anna Louise Strong's *Letter from China*, and *Workers' Broadsheet* carried substantial articles on the unfolding Cultural Revolution – a five page analysis, What Is Happening in China, and advert for a showing of the film, The East Is Red arranged by the Merton Friends of China (John Lloyd) and sold copies of George Thompson's Marxism in China Today [xxviii]. *Workers Broadsheet* advertised from January 1968 portraits & badges of Mao for sale as well as pamphlets [five constantly read articles and the Red BOOK], and they were subscription agents for *The Crusader* published by Robert Williams in Peking.

A major international issue of disagreement came that reflected on the domestic work of the organisation mobilisation of Bengali workers in self-defence groups in Tower Hamlets. In the spring of 1971 *Workers' Broadsheet* carried articles authored by Paul Noone & Michael Mouzourse on the tragic error committed by China's party failure to support the independence of Bangladesh : "This is a setback for all genuine revolutionaries who rightly look to Mao Tse-tung and the tried and trusted Communist Party of China for world leadership…. . " If you make mistakes the genuine friend is one who will criticise you in a comradely manner." [xxix]

In contrast, fellow WPPE leaders Alex Hart and John North took a different strategic perspectives writing of "the correctness of its [CPC] stand in insisting that the Indian neo-colonialist stooge government should not be allowed to take over east Bengal."

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Far from its promising start and for all of its confidence in "The Programme", the WPPE was few reference in the studies published on those operating on the left outside of the Labour Party. This was generally true of any of the Maoist groups not led by Michael McCreery or Reg Birch. Equally true is that the isolation of the WPPE ill-serve its intentions, and it would have brought strength, not least in its anti-imperialist orientation and Third World Maoism, to a

more integrated and truly larger national organisation.

The Seventies proved to be a long lingering twilight for the organisation as its influence waned as the failure to break out of it London base – cadres in Brent, Camden and Merton , in Newcastle-upon-Tyne [xxx] and division in the leadership team saw the resignation of Alex Tudor Hart. The disrupted infrequent publication of its Workers' Broadsheet added to the symptoms of decline.

- *"Alex Tudor has severed all connections with WPPE and no longer represents us in any capacity." was the single sentence carried in the Workers' Broadsheet Vol 7 #1. Whereas a split had occurred in 1972 as other members joined Tudor Hart and left to form the Committee for a Socialist Programme, that produced the newsletter, Working People.*

Discussions between the WPPE and newly-minted Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (the former JCC) in 1972 to work out a plan for closer co-operation broke down when the CFB(ML) delegation criticised the late Michael McCreery of having failed to understand what was needed to build a correct and proper revolutionary party. A definite red line for the WPPE's continuing admiration and promotion of McCreery's ideas. It saw a public rebuke: Michael McCreery, the Workers Party of Scotland and the Communist Federation of Britain.

*The jailing of disowned fraternal comrades from the Working Party of Scotland (ML) in 1972 was, in part, attributed to their "undisciplined and incorrect Tupamaros-style raids." [xxxi] Already noted were Noone criticism of "group of paper Blanquists talked of seizing state power on behalf of the masses" and while involved in attempts to build mass defence organisations, the WPPE was never associated or frequently referenced with adventurism confrontation unlike the Communist Party of England (ML). [*xxxii*]*

The Marxist-Leninist position did not advocate premature random guerrilla actions and violence for its own sake. It was seen through a political prism "we can only embark upon armed struggle when the working class is good and ready." An editorial in The Worker stated sentiments standard to those identified as the pro-China groups: "We will all take up the gun, not with the relish of shedding blood, but with the conviction there is no other way to achieve our emancipation." [xxxiii]

John O'Dowd, a long-time comrade, described Paul Noone in an appreciation in 1989. He

> *"applied the same careful, rigorous analysis in political work a she did in scientific work, which often provided a useful (and educational) counterweight to my own enthusiasms and lack of political analysis. An example of this was the change from a M/L Party (The Working People Party of England), to the Worker's Association. It was largely Paul's extremely painful and accurate analysis of the situation as a small, loosely formed organisation that helped us to develop an organisational form more accurately representative of our style of work and the development of our own analysis of events at that time. His leadership was of the best kind – constructive in criticism, careful to encourage action and initiative in others, personally modest and untheatrical."*

In 1975, the WPPE retired Workers' Broadsheet and began publishing the Workers' Newsletter. With reduced resources there was a retrenchment in members' activities and a major study, Fighting for Health in the NHS: a political analysis of the National Health Service, a 44 paged pamphlet reflected the expertise and commitment of remaining activists.

Prepared by the WPPE for the July 1977 Birmingham Conference of Marxist-Leninists Unity of What....For What? was a comment on the search for a basis for Marxist-Leninist unity in the UK. Its judgement was the

"WPPE feels that it is not practical (or even correct) to unite the numerous so-called Marxist-Leninist groups into one party at the moment. There must be a clear perspective for such unity and whilst we are beginning to learn who we can and cannot unite with (from experience of informal contacts and through literature) we have not as yet had sufficient evidence to indicate that the time is right to merge our own organisation into a joint body."

The fruit of limited co-operation with fellow anti-revisionists saw a pamphlet written jointly by the Coventry Workers Association and re-named WPPE , Workers Newsletter Group, because "we believe that it is necessary to analyse the Labour Party critically from a Marxist standpoint at this time of debate about the struggle for Socialism within the Labour Party." This was around 1980, and in its conclusion there was fundamentally no difference from an analysis reached in the early 1960s.

To fight for socialism is consciously to struggle for the overthrow of finance monopoly capitalism and the institutions of state designed and created to maintain the economic and political dominance of the few who own capital over the many who have only their own labour power.

The extent to which the Labour Party is capable of leading this struggle was the subject of this pamphlet, The Labour Party: Vehicle for Socialism?

"All that the Labour Party has laid claim to do up to now is to be able to manage the capitalist ship of state better than anyone else. It has never seen itself – either in its policies or its propaganda – as being, despite its name, a party which represents the working class. It has consistently been a party for "the nation as a whole". It has claimed to represent the capitalist millionaire ruling establishment as much as the working class. It has therefore never sought to overthrow that ruling establishment, but, on the contrary, to gain admittance to its hallowed citadels. The cruellest trick that the Labour Party has played has been the game of capitalist democracy and that has led to its total failure over the last 60 years to use its position within working class culture to popularise any real vision of socialism distinct from capitalism."

In 1980, the WPPE renamed itself the Workers' Newsletter Group.

In 1985, it again changed its name, to the Workers' Association before the organization appears to have disbanded in the following year, 1986 ending a twenty year organisational history.

March 2026

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[ii] Michael McCreery, the Workers Party of Scotland and the Communist Federation of Britain. *Workers Broadsheet* Vol.6 No.7, 1972

[iii] *Vanguard* Vol 1 #9 October 1964

[iv] *Vanguard* Vol 1 # 8 &10

[v] https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/periodicals/vanguard/1-11.pdf

[vi] *Vanguard* Vol 2 #1 January 1965

[vii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol2 #2 March 1967 page 18

[viii] *The Carib* Vol.1 No.5 February/March 1965

[ix] *Caribbean Workers' Weekly* #41 April 16-23rd 1966

[x] *Vanguard*, Vol. 2, No. 6, October 1965.https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/uk.firstwave/noone-tasks.htm

[xi] Ditto *Workers Broadsheet* page 16

[xii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 2 #3 (sic) May 1967 page12

[xiii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 2 #8 September 1967

[xiv] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 2 #9 October-November 1967 [Special Issue]

[xv] May 10th and 11th 1969 at the Student Movement House in Gower Street, London. Congress reports were carried in *Workers' Broadsheet* Vol.5 No.2 (1969)

[xvi] Workers' Broadsheet Vol.5 No.2 (1969) Page 3

[xvii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 4 #5

[xviii] *Workers Broadsheet* No18 August 1968

[xix] *Workers Broadsheet* 4 No1 June 1968

[xx] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 3 Nos 1-2 January/February 1968

[xxi] *Red Front* Vol. 2 No. 1, March/April 1968

[xxii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 4 #5.

[xxiii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 5 #3.

[xxiv] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol. 5 No. 6 – Socialist Federation

[xxv] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 2 No8 1967 page 9. A position criticised by the Communist Workers Organization, the British section of the Irish Communist Organization [later the BICO]. In *The Communist* No.16 June 1968.This was an organisation fond of commenting on others mistakes and errors eg On 'Stalin's Errors' , an open letter to the LWC " few critical comments on the article "Notes For a Critical History of the CPGB", published in the January-February issue of " *Workers Broadsheet*".

[xxvi] The Communist No.19

[xxvii] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 3 #5 May 1968

[xxviii] advertised in *Workers Broadsheet* Vol1 #10 1967

[xxix] *Workers' Broadsheet* Vol 6#3 April-May 1971 page 8

[xxx] *Workers' Broadsheet* Vol 6#3 April-May 1971

[xxxi] *Workers Broadsheet* Vol 6 No 7 May 1972.

[xxxii] Clutterback (1978) *Britain In Agony*, the growth of political violence. Penguin Books

[xxxiii] The CPB (ML) *The Worker* December 15 1972

A dubious and erroneous speculation that the so-called English People's Liberation Army may have originated in a split from the WPPE should be laid to rest; Pawlowski's own account states when in Camden High Street, having "lunch in Cypriot restaurant with my lady when Bijour comes in sits with us at our table and we talk. Bijour says What Britain needs is British people's liberation army.
I took on his idea and improved it. What Britain needs is English republican ideology — Republican Party of England — English people's liberation army. The monarch abdicate — Republican England is born." [see Woodsmokeblog (2018) *Ramblings of Pawlowski*]