Revisionism and Imperialism

P. E. J. SELTMAN
For more than three years now the struggle between Marxism-Leninism and modern revisionism has raged throughout the International Communist Movement. In the last years this struggle has reached new heights of Marxist-Leninists who publicly reject the revisionist programmes of the leaderships of these parties. In one case, Brazil, a separate Party has been formed on the basis of the programme of the original united Party.

In Britain, the leadership of the Communist Party made its attitude clear long ago on the international differences. From the publication of the Autumn, that year, prior to the 81 Parties Conference in Moscow, fixed viewpoint of the leadership on the differences and when John Gollan showed themselves, if anything, more deeply hostile than ever to the point of view expressed by the C.P.C. In the following two years, as attacks leadership of the British Party, although the hypocritical attempt was made to conceal it behind a mask of "impartiality".

During this year, this mask has been dropped. The E.C. Resolution of September, 1963, and John Gollan's statement, issued in the Daily Worker, attack the C.P.C. more openly than ever before, although the gesture is still made to the achievements of the "great Chinese people". Is this a different situation from that of other revisionist-led Parties?

In many ways it is identical, but in some very important respects the situation here differs from that in any other Party. In most other Parties relatively recent about-turn. This is true of Belgium, Brazil, Australia. What is noteworthy, however, in all these cases is that revisionism and anti-revisionism have appeared at all levels, from the leadership downwards.

This is the case of the British Communist Party two important differences leadership v. rank and file line-up. Secondly, the position of the leader-abort-turn on policy or programme, but arises out of a recent has pursued since long before 1951, The British Road to Socialism, published in that year, although constantly referred to by the leadership as the culmination of a long period of revisionist development which has only been extended since.

It is clear, therefore, that the anti-revisionist struggle at the present time in the Communist Party, although inevitably involving the current and misleading by the leadership, is rooted in a long history of deception deeply embedded in the history of the Party in this country, and inseparable from the leadership's record of failure to win any significant proportion of
support from the working class. It does not arise primarily out of a recent, obvious about-turn on the general line of the Party.

For these reasons, above all, a careful study of the history of betrayal of the British masses by the leadership of the Communist Party is necessary before a full exposure of the present, immediate, betrayals can be understood. This is true because the betrayal of the British masses is inseparable from the betrayal of the colonial peoples and the international working class. This cannot be carried out by one person, or even a few. It requires widespread collective discussion over a considerable period. That is why this pamphlet and those that are to follow it, are only introductions to this subject. The task must and will be carried by many Comrades, who, when it is generally understood that this is necessary, will make valuable contributions, theoretical and practical. Out of such a developing collective Marxist-Leninist analysis, unfettered by the subjective interests of an entrenched leadership, using its powers to suppress all genuine and honest reappraisal of the past failures of the British Communist Party, a new re-formed Party will be born, capable of as well as committed to, leading the working masses of this country to political power and socialism.

This will be a long process. Forty years of mistakes, failures and actual betrayals are not disposed of overnight. Moreover, it is essential that the struggle at the present time is seen as one on behalf of the Communist Party; an attempt to defend it against a minority of revisionists who have long dominated and controlled it. It is the safest thing in the world simply to walk out of the Party, or retire into inactivity, as many sincere but frustrated Comrades have done. What is not easy, what is difficult to accept, especially by those who, as individuals, have been thwarted in their often correct criticisms, is the long, hard battle to win wide support and understanding among the members of the Party so that the anti-revisionist struggle becomes not an affair of individuals but a collective and mass pressure for a genuine revolutionary line. It must never be forgotten that, however weak the Party in this country is, in British conditions it is the only way to stop the Party, to develop the Leninist political potential which is in advance of the mass of workers. This does not mean that there are not powerful, potentially revolutionary elements outside the Party today. But they are not part of the Party primarily because of the revisionist leadership and its policies. They can be worked with now and can certainly be won for a genuine revolutionary Party.

This pamphlet introduces a series. The work done on these was originally carried out for a statement that was to be submitted to the E.C. of the Party. In the meantime, however, the author has been expelled from the Party for undertaking, with his wife, the reproduction and distribution of literature issued by the Communist Party of China, to Party members. This is why these pamphlets are now being issued in this form.

Other pamphlets will follow entitled Revisionism and the Trade Unions, Revisionism and the Labour Party, Revisionism and the State, and Revisionism and Communist Party Organisation. Two others will deal with certain aspects of the class struggle in Britain which arise out of its longstanding imperialist history, and with suggestions for reorganisation of the work of the Party. These remaining seven pamphlets will become available at regular intervals in the future.

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P. E. J. Seltman

REVISIONISM AND IMPERIALISM

Colonialism, old or new, is the foundation of the economic and political power of the ruling class in an imperialist country.

The recognition of the barbarity of colonialism, and the unqualified identity of interests between the colonial peoples and the proletariat within the imperialist country, must therefore be the ultimate determining factor in the class struggle in such a country. Without this recognition there can be no rejection by the masses of an imperialist country of the illusion of freedom and economic security fostered among them by the ruling class; there can, therefore, be no revolutionary mobilisation of the masses; no challenge to the political power of capitalism; in a word, no revolution and no socialism. That is why the first pamphlet in this series is an analysis of the Communist Party's attitude to imperialism both in the past and at the present time.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, in all references and works dealing with Britain and the British working class, never once neglected or ignored the fact that the imperialist interests of British capitalism were the primary conditioning factors in the class struggle within Britain. It might be expected therefore, that the British Communist Party from the time of its foundation would have worked on this basis. The evidence points the other way. It will be seen that in the early years there was a correct assessment of the nature of the alliance between the colonial masses and the British working class, but no real attempt to analyse the effect within Britain on the working class itself, of imperialism. It will also be seen that even this correct tactical assessment went by the board in time. So serious is this failure on the part of the Party over the years that some explanation is essential.

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 1924, Comrade Newbold, then a Member of Parliament, made an attack in the Commons on current trends of imperialism. This called forth a criticism in an article in the Labour paper Forward on August 9th of that year by a certain Mr. Johnston. He haggles at India and the Crown Colonies, the protectorates and the mandated territories staying in the union. Why should there be any difficulty if they have Home Rule and come in of their own free will? Our business surely ought to have been to convert the subject colonies into free partners. In 1951 the British Road to Socialism was published, containing the following statement:

"All relations between the peoples of the present Empire which are based on political, economic and military enslavement must be ended, and replaced by relations based on full national independence and equal rights. This requires the withdrawal of all armed forces from the colonial and dependent territories and handing over of sovereignty to Governments freely chosen by the people.

"Only by this means can Britain be assured of the normal supplies of the vital food and raw materials necessary for her economic life, obtaining them in equal exchange for the products of British
industry, needed by those countries for their own economic development.

This would provide the basis for a new, close, fraternal association of the British people and the liberated peoples of the Empire. Only on this basis can true friendship be established between the peoples of the present Empire to promote mutually beneficial economic exchange and co-operation, and to defend in common their freedom against American imperialist aggression.1

Then Labour imperialism, as stated in 1924, received a new lease of life in the first major policy statement issued by the Communist Party nearly 30 years later. A comparison of these two statements by itself warrants a close examination of the manner in which this incredible imperialism is fundamental to the class struggle in Britain, the decline of the party and the degeneration into paying lip-service to colonial liberation “ending” of imperialism is intimately connected with failures in every other aspect of the Party’s work over the past 40 years.

It is the aim of this series to examine all these aspects in detail. But on the central question of imperialism itself, it is necessary first to trace this degeneration.

THE EARLY YEARS, 1920-32

In the years immediately following the foundation of the Party in 1920, there was no confusion or ambiguity on the question of the alliance and solidarity of the British working class and the colonial masses. But this is not the case now, and there is no confusion about perpetuating any form of the essentially imperialist relationship of Britain and the colonies. The resolution before the annual Party Conference in 1922 read as follows:

“On the Colonial Party:” introduces the struggle for imperialism, which has its foundation deeply laid in the economic and social conditions of the working class in Britain. The struggle is for the end of imperialism and the freedom of the masses throughout the world. Here it forsakes the links of bondage which make the struggle of the peasants and workers of the colonial peoples one with the struggle of the workers of Britain; it ignores the fact that the British Communist Party to shatter and replace the imperialist bond of the workers and peasants of all lands bound into society in a world-wide federation of Soviet Republics aspiring to communism.”

Similarly, in 1923 and again in 1924, where the colonial resolution stated that the emancipation of the colonial workers and peasants was the condition of our own liberation, and that it was the duty of the Communist Party and the British working class “to assist directly and indirectly in the emancipation of the Colonies and Crown Dominions.” In 1925, one of the most important factors in the waging of the class struggle in this country was clearly recognised:

“In conducting this campaign (the call to the working class to support the colonial peoples against imperialism) the Party had to take into account the growth of imperialist sentiment not only among the members of the Left wing, but sharply opposed by the Party.”

Even the view of the leadership of the national liberation struggle in the colonies was relatively clear in those years, as is shown by the statement that if the struggle for independence of the workers and peasants. This statement affirmed support in the following way:

“...as the same time this Conference declares that 'Independence' of the entire capitalist order by a united working class movement by the Communist Parties in alliance with the Communist International.”

Throughout these years the newly-formed Communist Party was carrying out a militant struggle for every change in this country. The question of its independent role was, of course, quite different at this time. The fact that the Party was making the demand for affiliation to the Labour Party one of its main struggles must structure the Labour Party itself in the 1920s. This is not the place to deal with this point which will be looked at later on. Generally, however, opportunism went side by side with the relatively clear grasp of the nature of imperialism and its corrupting effect on the working class in this country. In particular, it is necessary to conduct a vigorous drive to convert the capitalist colonial regime into a beneficial system.”

DEcline AND BOTHER, 1932-57

From 1932 onwards we see beginnings of the decline from the relative political clarity of the 1920s. The 1932 Congress simply reaffirmed “their (the colonial peoples’) right to complete independence and the right of separation from the British Empire,” but at the Congress of 1935, qualification of this independence was already beginning.

“...Because of the freeing of all parts of the present Empire from the burdens of interest on loans, profits made away and heavy taxation to maintain the British military and civil authorities, it will be possible for the workers in the Colonial countries to exchange their products for the machinery and other industrial equipment they require in order to build up their own industries. But only ideology now will the colonial countries be willing to exchange their...”

1. In particular, the campaign to affiliate to the Labour Party was abandoned. “The policy of a “fellow party” and the nationalisation of the Daily Worker date from this period.”
products for British Soviet goods. Given this outlook on the part of the British workers the situation was ripe for a renewal of contact with the British Soviet and fraternal interchange of products, whether in fact these former colonies also set up Soviet Governments at once or not."

Responsibility for the development of Party cadres and the drawing together of revolutionary elements in the colonies was also emphasised at this Congress.

Why was this statement qualified? Despite the reaffirmation of the need for the British working class to repudiate imperialism, this repudiation was now closely linked with economic advantages to be gained by a future Soviet Britain by such a repudiation—economic advantages, moreover, which clearly accepted for some time after the establishment of workers’ power in this country a primary producing role for the ex-colonies. The element of special relations between a socialist Britain and the ex-colonies was also now apparent.

It is important to remember, in view of what followed in the war years and afterwards, that this period in the mid-20s was one in which the sharp internal class struggles of the 1920s somewhat abated and the political struggle in general became more and more geared to the international anti-fascist fight on a broad-front basis. During the Depression the Party had rejected what was regarded as the sectarian line of 1929 (the January Resolution of 1929), and had reverted more or less to the position of the mid-20s as far as the Labour Movement in general, and the Labour Party in particular, were concerned, i.e. a general policy of co-operation, or united front, coupled with a renewed demand for admission to the Labour Party (1935). The sharpening mass struggles against fascism of these years, including the Spanish Civil War, have tended to obscure the fact that the basis of the Party’s betrayal on imperialism and confusion for the leadership of the working class in Britain were formed in these years.

These were the years in which the Party membership grew from approximately 9,000 (1931) to approximately 15,000 (1939), in which the mainly industrial proletarian character of the Party membership of the 1920s was swamped by recruits from white-collar and petty-bourgeois sections as a result of the mass Party line combined with the policy of a united front. These were the years in which the political level of the Party as a whole began to sink disastrously, despite the valiant efforts of many rank and file militants over the years to maintain and improve this level. The situation was created where a handful of "old-timers"—a self-perpetuating college of cardinals—dominated and controlled the Party, despite the democratic centralist form in which the Party was supposed to operate. It is in these years that the real entrenchment of revisionism in the leadership of the Party begins.

By the Congress of 1943 the attitude on colonialism had already changed. Full freedom for India, it was asserted, must be recognised during the war. "Similarly, the right of self-determination should be recognised for all colonial peoples," but with a definite qualification—"still not yet specifically mentioning any special relationship between a socialist Britain and the ex-colonies, but nevertheless preparing the ground for the same."

At the 1945 Congress, a large section of the political resolution was devoted to the colonies. But when compared with the current Labour Party plan there was very little difference. There was no mention anywhere of the absolute, unequivocal right to independence, but instead a call to the Government (Labour) for long term policies for the "achievements by colonial peoples of equal and free status among the nations of the world." "We call," said the Resolution on the colonies, "upon the Labour Government to break sharply and decisively with Tory policies of imperialist exploitation which have impoverished the colonial territories and denied them their elementary civil liberties." There is no talk here of absolute rights to independence. It is a far cry from the unequivocal Marxist Leninist statement of the 1920s. But then, some may say, we were all under the illusion in 1947 that the Labour Government, with its unchallenged majority, was on the threshold of initiating a new age of peace and plenty. The question is not why a vast number of non-Marxist British workers were under this illusion, but why was the Communist Party under the same illusion—with all the experience, knowledge and understanding it repeatedly had of the treacherous and diversionary character of social democracy in general and the British Labour Party in particular. The leadership of the Communist Party was fully aware that earlier Labour Governments had faithfully carried out the policies of British imperialism, especially regarding India. The leadership knew that Labour Party policy and the Party had stood unequivocally for a perpetuation of imperialism. Even the most cherished "Left" of the Labour Party were not except from this. George Lansbury, for example, could write in Labour’s Way With the Commonwealth (1915) as a prelude to his plan for land reform, "in the colonies, it is of course obvious that the white races must protect their standard of living." As will be seen, this complete volte face on the question of imperialism between the 1920s and 1945 can only be understood in connection with other growing illusions regarding the Labour movement in this period, illusions which have not disappeared since 1945 but have, if anything, increased.

In 1947 the story was repeated. Here are some of the statements on the colonial resolution of the Party Congress of that year:

"Only by the fullest economic, political and social development of all colonial countries can the future British standards be maintained." The declared aim of the Labour Movement of "independence for India and self-determination and social progress for the colonies must now be fought for by the whole Labour Movement." ... "we call on the Government to draw up draft proposals for trusteeship for Tanganyika, Togoland and the Cameroons in full accord with the terms of the United Nations Charter ..." The Colonial Services and methods of recruitment to them should be overhauled and modernised so that Britain may be presented in the colonies by men who really believe in democracy, progress and racial equality." The Communist Party had sunk to the level of calling for trusteeships and even had advice to give on how to recruit colonial administrators! If this un-Marxist, opportunistic line had been roundly repudiated in subsequent years, we would have gone some way towards rehabilitating ourselves before the international movement and colonial peoples, let alone discharging some of our responsibilities to the British working class, insofar as we would have distinguished the Communist Party in this country from all others on the fundamental question of imperialism. But we did not repudiate these statements. Instead, in 1951, a full policy statement was issued, the British Road to Socialism, in which the Party’s colonial policy was stated in full in such a way as to make it appear to any colonial that the British Communist Party talked freedom to ensure a better supply of
raw materials, etc., from former colonial territories. What an advertisement of our policy for peoples whose one ambition and whose only view of liberation has been—industrialisation—to break once and for all precisely the primary producing character of their economies which the imperialists have imposed by whip and gun. The formulation of the British Road to Socialism remained until 1957 when in the flurry and furore of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the Hungarian crisis, a Minority report was passed modifying the section on imperialism from talking about “fraternal association” to talking about “voluntary fraternal relations.” But behind this change, maintained up to the present, is still the implication that there are some special relations between Britain and former colonies—some special, albeit beneficent, economic ties which will continue after the achievement of Socialism and working class power in Britain.

THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF IMPERIALIST CORRUPTION

It may be argued that these are all academic points, nothing really to do with the day to day struggle in Britain—points that can be left to that indefinite time in the future when the working class comes to power. This is a dangerous view. What we say regarding imperialism does not only affect the attitudes of colonial people to the British Communist Party (important enough in itself). If it is accepted as part of the basic political analysis of the class struggle in Britain and the role of the Communist Party in that struggle, our attitude towards imperialism must also inevitably influence both long term strategy and tactics and day to day struggle in this country.

The steadily increasing emphasis on the special relationships existing between Britain and the empire which will not be broken after the achievement of working class power in this country, would be a serious enough error in any imperialist country. In Britain it is a particularly grave deviation and is, incidentally, an indication of the necessity for working class parties in imperialist countries to stand for the unqualified right of independence and self-determination of the colonial peoples and semi-colonial peoples everywhere. Likewise he emphasised the necessity for working class and peasant parties in the colonial territories to stand consistently for solidarity with the working class of the imperialist power in their struggle to overthrow the capitalist class. Only in this way could the national struggle for freedom yield genuine freedom for the colonial masses and the class struggle yield genuine working class power. Since 1917, this analysis has been proved again and again. Lenin’s analysis, however, was made at a time when there was no world Socialist system. This world system has developed in the course of the last forty years and particularly since 1945, precisely and only because Marxist parties have closely adhered to Lenin’s and later Stalin’s analysis of the necessary relations between the workers and peasants of oppressed and oppressor nations. Yet it is precisely in this period, again particularly since 1945 when the old imperialism has been disintegrating, that the Communist Party has developed its thesis on the need for special relations between British and colonial and semi-colonial people after the advance of a socialist Britain. But as well as this manifest deviation from the path of Marxism-Leninism and defiance of the Communist experience, this is a particularly grave error for us to have committed in Britain. Why is this so?

The traditional view has been that only certain sections of the British working class have been economically corrupted by imperialism. But economic corruption does not consist solely of £s. d. It is not the cash—a tribute that may at this or that time fall to one or other section of the workers, large or small, in this country which is the only factor to consider. It should be remembered that the total industrial capitalist economy of this country—the total material environment of the working class, its history and the growth of its Labour Movement, has been and are, conditioned by, and dependent upon, the imperialist system. How else could a country with such few natural resources enjoy such a relatively high standard of living in comparison with the colonial and semi-colonial masses? Could there be a Dunlop without Malaya—a Unilever without control of the economies of the countries of West Africa—a Tate & Lyle without the domination of the West Indies? Could the cotton magnate in Lancashire have survived after the American Civil War without imperial control of India and Egypt? Where would the great oil companies be without the political domination and economic control of the Middle East? These are only some of the bigger monopoly industries. They could be multiplied many times. On the existence of these great industries depends the existence of the multitude of small scale minor industries, let alone the vast field of servicing trades and industries which these major ones automatically call into existence. Even British agriculture has in the last 100 years been heavily influenced by the imperialist tie. Recognition of these facts is basic to any scientific analysis of the class struggle in Britain. They have operated longer (200 years or more) and more generally than in any other imperialist country in the world. Being determines consciousness, said Marx, and social being therefore determines social consciousness. It is true that the bourgeoisie have worked overtime over the years to corrupt, ideologically, the masses of this country. This they could never have succeeded in doing (and from time to time over extended periods they have succeeded a very large part of the way) had there been no material foundation to work on. No one can deny the political backwardness of the working class in Britain today. If it is denied take a look again at the election results since 1950 (remembering that 80 to 90 per cent of people in this country are wage earners and own no part of the means of production).

Political backwardness of the working class in the era of imperialism is the direct product of imperialist corruption. Everyone who lives in this country is inevitably subject to these corrupting influences. It is the first duty of the Communist Party vigorously to counteract them, ideologically and practically. But what has been done? Since 1945, the leadership have progressively capitulated to the very corruption which they should have been combating. They have passed over and more and to the deeply instilled belief in the British masses that imperialism is necessary. They have, in a word, walked out on the greatest responsibility any Communist Party can have in an imperialist country, and particularly in Britain.

For this responsibility precedes all other responsibilities to the working class because it is through such corruption that the bourgeoisie, by disguising its exploitation of the working class of this country, struggles to maintain its grip on the minds as well as the bodies of the masses. For an imperialist country the first condition for allowing the masses from their bondage to capitalism, the first condition for proletarian solidarity and militancy of which the British working class is as capable as any other, is a clear and uncompromising attack on imperialist exploitation and deception of the colonial and British workers alike. And let no one say that the British working class is not capable of acting in solidarity with another
working class struggling to overcome its exploiters. Remember the action of the cotton workers in the American Civil War when the cotton famine prevailed. They were fired up by the North on the anti-slavery issue. Remember the actions of the British T.U.C. in 1913 when a call went out to support the strike of the starving Dublin dock workers. Remember the Councils of Action of the British dockers in 1920 when the bourgeoisies were posed, under Churchill's instigation, to attack the new born Soviet Union. Remember Ben Bradlee and the Moorab Trials. Remember in our own time the mass demonstrations over Suez. All these things show clearly the capabilities of the British working class under the worst possible conditions of imperialist exploitation through every medium the bourgeoisie could lay its hand on. The possibilities are immense. All the more cowardly and invidious is the Party leadership's opportunism and flight from its responsibilities.

The fact is that the position the Party has taken up on internationalism reflects closely the desire, especially since the war, to become acceptable to the working class of this country. Look at the following paragraph in the British Road to Socialism of 1951: "The enemies of Communist declare that the Communist Party by underhand subversive means is aiming at the destruction of Britain and the British Empire. But it is a lie, because it is precisely the Tories and Labour leaders who are doing this by their policy of armed repression and colonial exploitation." And again in the General Election programmes for 1955 the following comments were made: "Tory policy has worsened colonial conditions. No wonder (my emphasis, P.S.) the colonial people everywhere are demanding their freedom—the right to run their own countries in their own way." And these points were followed by a repetition of the "raw materials" argument.

The Common Market and Neo-colonialism, 1957-63

Since 1957, the story has not changed. In two statements by John Gollin, What Next (November 1959) and Gatsbel or Socialism (October 1960), both of them purporting to be up to the minute analyses of the stage of struggle reached in Britain, there was not a whisper about imperialism or an odd reference in the first to colonial liberation. In one recent policy statement, A World of Difference, the section on imperialism (minute enough anyway) reads like a balance sheet. Here it is exactly as it stands:

"The right of all colonial peoples to be free and independent and to rule themselves will be recognised. A Socialist Government will at once renounce all colonial possessions and interests."

"You sometimes hear a fear expressed that if Britain had no colonies she would never pay her way in the world, that this would mean unemployment and starvation for our workers."

"This is nonsense. We need raw materials, foodstuffs, minerals. We have manufactured goods, capital equipment, scientific and industrial knowledge. We need manufactured goods, capital equipment, scientific and industrial skill and knowledge. They have raw materials, foodstuffs and minerals. When we treat the former colonial peoples as friends and equals it will be in their interest to trade with us. The products of our factories are needed all over the world."

After all, recognition of colonial demands is good business! One of the major issues regarding imperialism which has arisen in the last three years is the Common Market. This issue has been treated as one of "national independence". Britain must not go into the Common Market, it was argued, because "we" would lose our "independence" which proper development of the Commonwealth (yes, it is politically respectable at last) would avoid. And yet facts and figures from widely differing sources such as Nkrumah and Sekou Toure on the one hand and Peking Review on the other, demonstrate that the main objectives of the Common Market are neo-colonial and that to oppose it on the grounds of Commonwealth preference is to take sides with one section of the capitalist class against the other in a quarrel which is itself a product of the deepening crisis of capitalism as a whole. What interest has the working class or the Communist Party in saving the skins of the old colonialies as opposed to the new? None whatever. Does the taking of sides in this quarrel among the "angels" further the cause of the working class? Does it bring the working class nearer to political power? Not at all. It simply identifies the Communist Party with a backward-looking section of the capitalist class which languishes after the old Empire as opposed to the monopolists, who see a temporary respite in and through the Market. Such a line is a tacit acceptance of imperialist corruption in all its forms, of the heyday of British imperialism and a demand for a continuation of the older perks of imperialism falling to the working class as against the likelihood of the loss of some of these perks through Britain entering the Common Market. One of the worst capitulations to imperialist corruption on this issue appeared in the article in the Daily Worker by J. R. Campbell on September 5th, 1961. Here, all presence at covering up the nakedly imperialist argument of imperial preference was dropped and the case plainly stated that the T.U.C. (1961) was wrong to vote in favour of any steps towards entering into the Common Market because of the "special relations" Britain has with the Commonwealth. Here are the relevant sections in full:

"It is utterly impossible to assess what would happen to the British workers by looking at the records of the Market Countries. For there is one very marked difference in Britain's situation. Neither Germany nor Italy has ever been an imperialist power in the first to colonial liberation. In one recent policy statement, A World of Difference, the section on imperialism (minute enough anyway) reads like a balance sheet. Here it is exactly as it stands:

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cannot possibly be arrived at by looking at what has happened in the direction."

In short, instead of publicising the fact that entry into the Common Market means a further possible avenue for colonial exploitation (in the neo-colonial sense) for British capitalism—and therefore a perpetuation of the bourgeoisie in this country—we have raised nationalism and special economic privileges arising from imperialism as a basis for the working class’s resistance to entry into the Common Market. Of course we must oppose entry into the Common Market but has it to be done by the Communist Party taking sides with the old guard imperialists against the new guard? Do we have to fill the columns of the Daily Worker with talk of "the country’s economy suffering," in a similar tone to the bourgeoisie press itself when describing the strikes of the working class? Do we shed tears over the domination and colonial bourgeoisie who would no longer be able to benefit from crumbs from the British imperialist table in the form of special trading privileges? Do we think that by keeping the "Commonwealth" the colonial workers Common Market or Commonwealth, will experience intensified exploitation? Do we think that the colonial countries maintain their grip on the colonial countries. The Common Market undoubtedly permits the imperialists to do this, but unless this opposition is linked with a true exposure of the neo-colonialist ploys of the imperialists, unless it is stressed to the working class in Britain that working class power here is the only guarantee against a fall in standards of living and an intensification of exploitation as the imperial system, one way or another, crumbles, this opposition can only be what it is now—pure opportunism.

The political aspects of the Common Market are equally important, but how are they dealt with? It is claimed that Parliament will lose its initiative; that Parliament will be tied to the controls of a handful of giant monopolists. What is it now if it is not thus tied—only to British monopolists, instead of British and foreign monopolists? Is there some qualitative distinction—a variation in moral tone between monopolists? The truth is that the political implications of the Common Market are feared by those who cherish the next picture of a peaceful transition in power. In previous analysis, we have delusions about their resigning power gracefully. They never have yet anywhere else in the world. The truth is that the Party’s responsibility here, as well as the whole question of imperialism, is to expose the fact that there is a illusion and a trap which with which to divert the working class from awareness of and vigilance against the imperialist plans. 

But such exposure does not preclude the Party and the working class from defending their own interests and from making concessions to imperialism. Such exposures are necessary, but they should be made in a way that is not just for the sake of making concessions, but because of their use as weapons against the bourgeoisie. Because, therefore, the Party leadership has deliberately turned its back on the real issues involved in the struggle against the Common Market, the Party has found itself on occasion shoulder to shoulder with "Britain Forward Movement," and the anti-Common Market League. Such a situation contains a grave warning. Nationalism among oppressed colonial masses has been and is a vital progressive movement provided it is properly understood and worked with by Marxists and Marxist-led workers’ and peasants’ organisations. But nationalism (not to be confused with patriotsism) in countries where imperialism is rooted, nationalism at the centre of imperialist exploitation (and Britain unquestionably falls into this category) can lead only to fascism. Nationalism in these circumstances is a clouding of the class issue—it is an encouragement of all the worst effects of imperialist indoctrination on the working class of the past in the imperialist countries.

DEEP-ROOTED REVISIONISM IN THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

The desire to become acceptable to the working class in this country has led the Party leadership, on the most fundamental issue of the class struggle—imperialism—to become clearly and undeniably opportunist. But there is more to it than this. The question has to be answered how this could have happened in a Party claiming to be Marxist. Lenin's correspondence with the first leaders of the British Party, together with his book, "Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," indicated the main contradiction in which the Party is in an infantile nation such as Britain should fight. His views on the relation which such a Party should have with the Labour Movement and the Labour Party will be referred to later on. But it is relevant to say here that Lenin produced a dynamic interpretation of the position of the British working class as it stood in the 1920s. In subsequent years that dynamism has been curtailed by the Party leadership into a sterile dogma—a dogma which has not found favour up to the present. It is a dogma that rests on the assumption, whatever lip-service may be paid to the independent role of the Party, that the working class in this country is politically advanced because it has a complex and long-standing system of organisations; that these organisations are "organs of rebellion" in the same sense as Lenin described the Soviets in Russia in the 1905 Revolution; that this assumption included the Labour Party which must be regarded as the principal field of political activity of Communists and which must be accepted as the principal organ (once transformed by a victory of left over right wings) by which the working class will take power in this country (together, of course, with the Communist Party). By thus sterilising and discrediting Lenin’s original analysis we have inevitably been led into firstly ignoring and then definitely excluding the imperialist factor that has played such an important part in the growth and development of the British Labour Movement and the Labour Party in particular. It has led us on the one hand to the incredible assertion in 1957 (World News) that, "there is no guarantee that even a tiny share of the big profits from the colonies means higher wages in Britain," and, conversely, on the other hand to the analysis of the Common Market by J. R. Campbell quoted above. The first statement, over which considerable controversy raged, not only completely rejects the profound analysis of British capitalism developed in the 19th century made by Marx and Engels, it also throws out of the window the fundamental contribution of Lenin’s work to the Marxist understanding of monopoly capitalism. Worse still, it ignores entirely elementary facts regarding the complex industrial system which has grown up in this country, outlined above.

This failure to understand the impact of imperialism on the British working class is the most signal failure of all in the past 40 years. It is a
failure almost too great to assess in its repercussions on world events in that period. This is true because a failure to understand this impact is a failure to take into account the determining feature of the local conditions of struggle in Britain, conditions which are not recent but are of long historical standing. The failure itself, however, is not local but international since it has meant that the Communist Party has defaulted on its leadership of the British masses throughout the period of the intensifying crisis of capitalism and imperialism internationally. This failure has been most obvious since 1945. True, it is not restricted to Britain. The Parties in every imperialist country have to answer in similar ways for similar failings. We, however, have a special responsibility, because British imperialism today stands second only to the United States as an instigator of colonial and semi-colonial repression, as an aggressor of the first magnitude and as a preparer for a third world war to destroy Socialism. We say that imperialism is weaker today than ever before. It is undoubtedly weaker, but this weakening is due primarily to the struggles of the colonial masses together with the forces of the Socialist camp and not to the Communist Party's activation of the British working class. In the last two years in particular, the Communist Party has sunk itself deeper and deeper into various small movements. A peaceful transition to socialism is talked of glibly, while the British imperialists arm themselves more rapidly than ever before. It is true that these arms are not yet directed against the British working class, but who can say when this is to happen? The Peace Movement is treated as a major force in Britain today, yet the Peace Movement is riven by splits and finds it increasingly difficult to arouse enthusiasm among its flagging members because it is a movement led by pacifists whose leadership has time and again been confirmed and endorsed by the Communist Party.

**The British Communist Party and the International Struggle Between Marxism-Leninism and Modern Revisionism.**

Within the last year this disastrous history of abdications on the part of the Party, particularly its leadership, has reached a new low in the handling of the issues raised in the international differences. Hostile to the Chinese Communist Party at the 81 Parties Conference in Moscow in 1960, the leadership of the British Communist Party has persisted in this hostility and increased it since.

Our Chinese Comrades do not and never have asserted that the struggle between the imperialists and the oppressed masses excludes all other contradictions in the world revolution now in progress. What they and other Marxist-Leninist Parties do assert, however, is that the storehouses of the class struggle on a world scale lie, at the present time, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is in this, together with their analysis of the related issue of the peaceful transition to socialism, which has earned them the hatred of the leadership of the British Communist Party. These analyses and their clear truth contradict and expose the whole line pursued by this leadership over 25 years or more. It is that that has given rise to the perversion and lying vilifications of the Chinese view-point that appeared in the January 12th statement of the E.C., the Executive Committee Resolution and John Gollan's statement, both made during September, 1963.

The sharp arrows of the Chinese arguments drive too closely home for the comfort of Gollan, Dunn and Co.

Nor is this a question merely of past errors such as the British Road to Socialism or the attitude of J. R. Campbell on the Common Market in 1961. The playing down of the anti-imperialist struggle has continued throughout this year. Take the record of the Daily Worker alone. The vitally important Third Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference held at Moshi in February received scarcely a mention. Why? Because it stressed that the anti-imperialist struggle was the key to peace. The liberation struggles raging in various parts of the world have received scant attention—South Vietnam scarcely at all until August, the Omani people's armed liberation struggle, specifically against British imperialism, which has continued for seven years, no mention at all. Both the Party and the Daily Worker ignored the call for an "Omani Day" on July 18th, by the Afro-Asian Conference. The extensive armed struggles taking place in Venezuela, Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador and Colombia have been virtually ignored. The question of Malaysia was covered only when it was a fait accompli. The North Ralimanattan people's armed struggle, in operation since December 1962, has been completely ignored.

At home, actions in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle have been pitifully small throughout the year. An example of this was the flat refusal of the Party leadership to act immediately after the coup in Iraq, followed as it was by a wholesale massacre of Communists and militants. This time the leadership excused itself on the grounds that a Labour Party observer mission was on its way to Iraq and that it would be unwise to act precipitately in view of this.

Why all these errors and omissions? Why all the lies about and attacks on the Communist Party of China and other Marxist-Leninists? The answer is that, at last, on an international scale, a challenge to reformism and opportunism has begun in earnest and it has caught up within it those in the British Communist Party who long before the international differences arose, practised reformism and opportunism; who have misled the British masses and above all have betrayed their prime responsibility to wage an unceasing war on imperialism. The leadership is fighting a defensive rearguard action against an incoming exposure which is, at last, overtaking them.

Yet what is there to defend, apart from the positions these leaders hold? Has the British Communist Party succeeded over the past years in gaining the support of even a moderate section of the working class by these methods? No. Election results are ludicrous, the Party's influence in the factories and Trade Unions is reduced to a pitiful attempt at recruiting for positions—an attempt doomed to failure especially exemplified by the E.T.U. strike.

After 40 years of existence, the leadership still talks of transforming the Labour Party and still evidences the 1960 Scarborough decisions as proof, ignoring three successive General Elections producing increased majorities for the outright party of imperialism and war. The record in the support of even a moderate section of the working class by these methods is, at the least, pitiful. Yet they are only some of the Party's failures.

The truth stands bold and clear. There is nothing to defend except the entrenched positions of those who are most responsible for the present condition of the British working class and Communist Party. Yet there is no need for the revolutionary mobilisation and leadership of the working
class at the present time? Is there not a need to develop the day-to-day struggles of the masses against exploitation into a wider and deeper struggle of the working class against imperialism and Socialism? Is there not a need to extend the revolutionary consciousness of the working class? Is there not a need for a strong and vigorous Communist Party in Britain?

The answer to all these is an emphatic yes! But the basis of all of these actions is the correct understanding of the role imperialism has played and is playing in the escalation of the class struggle. Unless there is a continuous exposure of imperialism to the masses, unless the Party and its members are themselves activists in the struggle of the masses against imperialism, unless they are prepared to take the initiative in the struggle of the masses against the exploitation of the imperialists—then there can be no revolutionary consciousness among the working class. The Party must be at the forefront of the struggle against imperialism and Socialism.

CONCLUSION

These things are not a political panacea for all the ills of the British working class movement at the present time. It is a long, hard and difficult process to combat successfully the material as well as ideological effects of imperialism. It will take time for the masses to learn, at last, that they are being exploited by the imperialists, that the continued political power of the imperialists is a threat to the working class. But unless this struggle is embarked on, and we have to make up for the many years lost by the opportunism of the康家 the working class in Britain—then we must not be content with political as well as economic, which the working class can expect. Parim Peace—peace when the profits from imperialism can be used, partially bourgeois times, only in quietening the class anger of the masses. But the rule of the bourgeoisie is not over. The weakening of imperialism has meant the strengthening of the bourgeoisie, the increase of monopoly concentration and political centralisation and political centralisation which, despite its immediate resort to measures of repression, has meant the weakening of the imperialists' position. This has been amply demonstrated in modern times, in the case of Iraq, in the case of America, in the case of Cuba and in the case of the Latin American countries, especially the Castro regime in Cuba and in the world.

This need not be the case here. This will not be the case here. This need not be the case here. This will not be the case here.