

Revolution

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UNITY IS THE AIM OF STRUGGLE.....P1
ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS THE KEY LINK IN PARTY BUILDING..P10
AGAINST OPPORTUNIST ATTACKS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CPC...P20
INTEGRATE THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS OF MARXISM-LENINISM WITH THE
CONCRETE PRACTICE OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTION.....P25.

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF

THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN

(MARXIST-LENINIST)

THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

The Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) holds that the central task in Britain today is to build the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, the party of the working class. This revolutionary Communist Party must unite the various struggles of the working class into a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the monopoly capitalist state to set up a dictatorship of the proletariat and build genuine working class socialism.

The Party must be constructed by ideological, political and organisational struggle. By a bold internal struggle the CFB(M-L) has recently decisively defeated serious opportunist errors. One of these was liberalism, which refuses to stand up boldly for what is in the interests of the working class, but believes in unprincipled peace to keep on good terms with everyone. As a result of the internal struggle the CFB(M-L) has taken important steps away from federalism and towards a united and democratic-centralist Party.

The CFB(M-L) is self-reliant in Party-building but it will not be self-sufficient: where it can learn from other British Marxist-Leninist organisations it will do so. We must break down the small group mentality which exists between Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain, and struggle for unity on correct principles so as to build the revolutionary Communist Party as fast as possible.

We have to apply the general truths of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete practice of the British revolution. In the contradiction between theory and practice, at present theory is the principal aspect. However practice is an important second. Training and tempering comrades in practical work is essential to build the revolutionary Communist Party.

The most important practical task is to build bases in the industrial working class. This will make sure that the future Marxist-Leninist Party is a firm proletarian party with deep and unshakable roots in the working class.

BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!

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EDITORIAL

NEVER FORGET CLASS STRUGGLE

At a recent meeting, the National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) passed a resolution warmly supporting the proletarian victory over the 'gang of four', Wang Hun-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan, and expressing confidence in the Communist Party of China led by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng.

The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is a bitter and protracted struggle which does not come to an end when the working class, led by its Communist Party, seizes state power. As Mao has pointed out, this struggle continues throughout the period of the construction of socialism. He also pointed out many times that class struggle involves struggle against capitalist roaders inside the Communist Party of China:-

"You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party - those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road."

This was the class character of the struggles in the party during the Cultural Revolution, of the struggle against Lin Piao, and the struggle against Teng Hsiao-ping's right deviationism earlier this year. It is also the character of the present victorious struggle to smash the clique of Wang-Chang-Chiang-Yao.

The editorial in the 'Peoples Daily' of October 25th (printed in 'Peking Review' no.44) should be studied closely by all Marxist-Leninist organisations and individuals. It is a sharp weapon against the rubbish dished up by the bourgeois press. The bourgeoisie in the West, seeing a struggle against so-called 'radicals' says that the Chinese people are tired of constant class struggle, and really want to get down to work. The so-called 'moderates' in the CPC they say, are really just like themselves, reasonable people who want to get on with the job and forget about the class struggle. This sort of stuff is really an attempt to confuse the working class, to make them believe that the construction of socialism in China is a temporary 'experiment' soon to be replaced with something more 'realistic', such as capitalism.

The 'Peoples Daily' editorial is a sharp blow against these bourgeois distortions, because it shows that just the opposite is true. It shows that the defeat of the gang of four is a further major victory for the Chinese people. The editorial points out that the Wang-Chang-Chiang-Yao clique had consistently operated as a faction within the Party. They were criticised for this by Mao because they violated the basic principles of the 'three do's and three don't's':-

"Practice Marxism-Leninism, and not revisionism; unite and don't split; be open and above board, and don't intrigue and conspire. Don't function as a gang of four, don't do it any more, why do you keep doing it?"
(Quoted in 'Peking Review' 44, p15)

The criticisms were made repeatedly, but were ignored by the four. The bourgeois press makes great play of the fact that the four were known as 'radicals'. But proletarian politics is not based on a spectrum of shades ranging from 'left' to 'right' with the 'good' characters as far to the left

as possible. The main line of demarcation within the CPC during the struggle against the four was not between 'moderates' and 'radicals' but over how to wage struggle within the party. Faction forming, conspiring and splitting will lead to revisionism, if errors are not corrected. Thus those who appear 'left' as Lin Piao did for a long time can be right in essence, can fall in to revisionism and thus become capitalist roaders:-

"Practice Marxism-Leninism, and not revisionism; unite and don't split; be open and above board, and don't intrigue and conspire. These principles are our criteria for distinguishing correct from erroneous lines and our sharp weapon for identifying the bourgeoisie inside the party. The whole history of our Party shows that only by adhering to the three basic principles can our party march in step, win whole hearted support from the masses of the people and organise a mighty revolutionary contingent and only by so doing can our revolutionary cause thrive." (ibid, p16)

The celebrations of the Chinese people following the appointment of Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman of the CPC, shows the truth of these principles. The party and its leaders have the confidence of the people. As Mao pointed out:-

"...the right task, policy and style of work invariably conform with the demands of the masses at a given time and place and invariably strengthen our ties with the masses,....." ('Quotations', p123)

The National Committee of the CFB(ML) warmly welcomes the victory over the gang of four. It also welcomes the correct decisions of the Central Committee of the CPC to persist in the struggle against Teng Hsiao-ping's attempts to reverse correct verdicts, to publish a further volume of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, to prepare the publication of the Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung, and to establish a Memorial Hall for Chairman Mao. These decisions have led to a great upsurge in the study of Marxism-Leninism in China, and will help to ensure that the Chinese people will continue to actively defend the dictatorship of the proletariat in China.

UNITY IS THE AIM OF STRUGGLE

The National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) recently sent a criticism to the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) of their Fourth Congress Statement. This criticism, 'Unity is the Aim Of Struggle' is being published in this issue of 'Revolution'. It is not published in the spirit of attacking the CPB(ML) in a sectarian way, but with the aim of struggling for unity. There are five major errors in the CPB(ML) statement, the most serious of which is the failure to grasp the danger of Soviet Social Imperialism. But these errors do not mean that the CPB(ML) cannot struggle against them, and correct them.

Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain have the duty of drawing lines of demarcation with the CPB(ML), and to make criticism with the aim of 'curing the sickness to save the patient'. The Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain is split into many small groups; to put an end to this situation there are two main principles which must be grasped firmly; start from the desire for unity, and fight for a principled unity behind correct ideas through active ideological struggle.

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS THE KEY LINK IN PARTY BUILDING

The Executive Committee of the CFB(ML) has replied to the proposals on

party building recently put forward by the Communist Workers League of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in their pamphlet 'It's Up To Us!'. This reply was approved by the National Committee and is published in this issue of 'Revolution' under the title 'Ideological Struggle is the Key Link in Party Building.' It is published as part of the process of struggling for unity in the British Marxist-Leninist movement. There has been progress in this struggle, but the movement is still weak and fragmented at this stage. The key to overcoming this fragmentation is to grasp the key link of active ideological struggle.

AGAINST OPPORTUNIST ATTACKS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

In January 1972, an opportunist resolution on the foreign policy of socialist countries was adopted by the CFB(ML). The resolution was an opportunist compromise between a basically correct line, but one which was not struggled for boldly, and a 'left' line which was rightist in essence. This resolution served as a pretext for public attacks on the CPC later on, in the pages of 'Struggle' the former monthly paper of the CFB(ML). This resolution was overturned by the National Committee of the CFB(ML). In this issue of 'Revolution', the article 'Against Opportunist Attacks on the Foreign Policy of the CPC' picks out the main errors in the 1972 Resolution, and shows that the resolution took the stand of the petty bourgeoisie, not the militant stand of the proletariat. A letter of self criticism has been sent to the Communist Party of China, criticising the 1972 Resolution, and outlining the errors made in it.

INTEGRATE THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS OF MARXISM-LENINISM WITH THE CONCRETE PRACTICE OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTION

The Resolution of the Third Conference of the CFB(ML) stated that, in the contradiction between theory and practice theory is primary at this stage. (see 'Revolution' Pamphlet 'Build the Revolutionary Communist Party to Lead the Revolution'). This article aims to deepen the grasp of this point. The necessity for theory is a class question because the working class must have theory to give it confidence and direction, and to understand the inner relations of surrounding events. Without theory, as Stalin has pointed out, practice is blind and gropes in the dark. In the present period, when there is no guiding line and policy theory becomes primary. At the same time Marxist-Leninists should grasp that we master theory in order to apply it. The task of integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the British revolution is also a key task in building the revolutionary Communist Party.

Editorial Committee.

UNITY IS THE AIM OF STRUGGLE

EDITOR'S NOTE

The article 'Unity Is The Aim Of Struggle' is a criticism by the National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) of the Fourth Congress Statement of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Liberalism and small group mentality on our part prevented a principled criticism from being made before. Through active ideological struggle we have grasped that there must be a struggle for unification of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain, as part of the process of building the revolutionary Communist Party. In the course of this struggle firm lines of demarcation must be drawn, and errors criticised and corrected.

The criticism concentrates on five major errors in the CPB(ML) statement. These are:-

1. The document does not grasp the danger from Soviet Social Imperialism.
2. It does not grasp the existence of imperialism in the world.
3. It does not grasp the imperialist nature of British society.
4. It falls into petty-bourgeois pessimism about the fact that the working class will inevitably carry out the socialist revolution.
5. Parts of it are written in a very subjectivist style of language.

There are some other errors too which may turn out to be important in the future but it was necessary to concentrate on the main ones at first.

In studying this criticism, we urge that all Marxist-Leninists should concentrate, at the start, on grasping the nature of the first error, out of the five criticised. Soviet Social Imperialism is one of the two main enemies of the peoples of the world. It is the up and coming superpower, challenging the United States for supremacy. It is demanding the right to carve up the world again in the way it wants, not the way the United States wants. It is preparing for war. The main danger of war comes from the Soviet Union. Because the revisionist bosses in the Soviet Union talk of socialism and peace, some people do not yet fully understand that the Soviet Union is one of the two main enemies of the workers and oppressed people of the entire world. All the more reason then why revolutionary Communists should take a clear cut stand on this question and give a firm lead to the working class.

UNITY IS THE AIM OF STRUGGLE

A criticism by the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) of the Statement adopted at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

"If there is to be a revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism..."

(Mao Tsetung, Quotations, p1)

For this reason the central task in Britain today is to build the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class. We have achieved much too little progress so far in this task.

Owing to liberalism and small group mentality, the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain is divided into a dozen small groups, organisations and Parties. Out of these probably the largest organisation and the one which is most widely respected is the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). It has fraternal relations with the Communist Party of China and the Party of Labour of Albania, and a significant number of serious revolutionary Communists rally to it in order to contribute to the task of building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

For these reasons, a correct assessment of the CPB(ML) by all British Marxist-Leninists is essential. Every other Marxist-Leninist organisation in Britain has a duty to the working class to draw firm and definite lines of demarcation with the CPB(ML) and struggle to overcome the contradictions with the CPB(ML) by active ideological struggle, criticism and self criticism. Every Marxist-Leninist organisation in Britain which does not do so is guilty of liberalism and small group mentality, which at present is very widespread in the British Marxist-Leninist movement. This document is the first time the CFB(ML) has used the weapon of active ideological struggle to win principled unity with the CPB(ML).

In 1973 the third issue of 'Marxist-Leninist Quarterly', the old theoretical journal of the CFB(ML) carried an article above the initials "T.M.", which contained a severely subjectivist and sectarian attack on the CPB(ML). This article has been completely withdrawn and has been refuted in the second issue of 'Revolution', the new theoretical journal of the CFB(ML).

Earlier this year, the CFB(ML) sent the CPB(ML), as well as other Marxist-Leninist organisations, a copy of the boldly self-critical resolution of the Third Conference of the CFB(ML), together with the explanatory article, "Build the Revolutionary Communist Party to Lead the Revolution". The CFB(ML) requested comments and criticisms, but the CPB(ML) did not reply. This is a manifestation of liberalism and small group mentality on the part of the CPB(ML).

The CFB(ML) must now draw correct and principled lines of demarcation with the CPB(ML), following Lenin's famous statement:

"Before we can unite and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation."

(*'What Is To Be Done?'*, Peking edition, p26)

The struggle for unity will take some time but with perseverance it will succeed. As Mao Tsetung says: "Unity is the aim of struggle; struggle is the means to unity".

This must be our guiding motto in this work. It will ensure that the struggle serves the cause of the working class.

The CPB(ML) has recently published the Statement adopted at their Fourth Congress, held at Easter 1976. In order to draw the necessary lines of demarcation, we must make a critical assessment of this document.

The CPB(ML) has some important positive achievements to its credit. This must be said first. From its foundation in 1968, it boldly raised the flag of the working class and called on all advanced workers and genuine Marxist-Leninists to rally to the Party of the working class. By contrast the Communist Federation of Britain put forward a line defending the existence of the small groups and opposing attempts to rally round a proletarian centre. It put forward the idea of the federal road to Party building, which in words says that the working class needs a revolutionary Communist Party, but in deeds repeatedly compromises opportunistically with small group mentality, does not build national leadership, and does not implement democratic centralism, the fighting organizational principle of the working class.

The CPB(ML) has always spelt out clearly that the revolutionary Communist Party must be the Party of the working class. By contrast the CFB(ML) has been vague and elusive on this point in the past, reflecting the stand of the intelligentsia.

The Statement of the Fourth Congress of the CPB(ML) contains other strong points as well. It states clearly that only the working class can lead the people of Britain out of the present crisis of capitalism and the only way out is by socialist revolution. It points out vividly how Britain is *"providing us with the clearest demonstration obtaining anywhere of the fatal stranglehold which capitalist property relations place upon the social forces of production"* (p6) - in other words, the fundamental contradiction in capitalist society.

The Statement illustrates these points with an excellent assembly of striking facts. Comrades in the CPB(ML) must have gathered these through painstaking study and thorough investigation work. Investigation is a field of work in which the CFB(ML) has much further progress to make and it should welcome the opportunity to learn from the CPB(ML) on this point.

However there are also serious errors in the CPB(ML)'s Fourth Congress Statement. In order to draw lines of demarcation clearly and promote ideological struggle, these errors must now be criticised firmly.

1. FAILURE TO GRASP THE DANGER FROM SOVIET SOCIAL IMPERIALISM

The principal contradiction in the world today is between the peoples of the world and the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States. Of these the Soviet Union is the more dangerous. The Statement fails to grasp this truth and to warn the British working class about it.

Economically, the United States is still more powerful than the Soviet Union. But US imperialism has passed its noon and is now in decline. It is overstretched, and has already suffered some serious defeats. The victory of the Vietnamese People's War of National Liberation was a very important defeat for US imperialism. Subsequently it has had to retreat further in

other areas, including Angola.

The Soviet Union is more dangerous than the United States precisely because it is the rising imperialist power. Like Nazi Germany in the 1930's it is insisting on a redivision of the world. It is flexing its muscles and demanding more and more concessions from US imperialism. It is a more highly centralised state than the US and its ruling class operates a dictatorship over the people of a fascist type. Therefore, although economically the Soviet Union is weaker overall than the US, it can spend a larger sum of money on armaments, and is fast overtaking the US militarily. The Soviet Navy has been built up extremely rapidly. It has the largest navies in the north east Atlantic and in the Mediterranean. At a time of international tension it will be in a position to surround Western Europe and cut vital communications such as for oil. In Europe the Soviet-controlled land forces have clear military superiority and are trained for rapid surprise attack. Western strategists calculate that the Soviet Union now threatens Western Europe with the ability to get troops to the Rhine within 48 hours.

It is especially important that the working class of Western Europe should be alerted to the threat from Soviet Social Imperialism, because Europe is the main focus of the Soviet Union's ambitions and of superpower contention. Europe is the most concentrated area of industrial wealth in the world and is the juiciest prize in the struggle between the two superpowers.

The Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower also because it is treacherous and deceptive. It speaks of socialism but practises imperialism. It speaks of peace but arms and trains for expansionist war. It speaks of detente but takes one step after another to force other countries to accept its imperialist ambitions or face the consequences of its anger.

The CPB(ML) Congress Statement fails to grasp this. The Statement asks:

"Is detente a sham? Is it some perfidious plot by the New Revisionists, the more easily to seize Europe and perhaps the world?" (p2)

The correct answer to these questions is "Yes!"; but instead the CPB(ML) replies:

"No. It does not exist. US imperialism has no detente with anyone. Neither has the USSR, not even in Comecon. The sham detente from within the USSR is as much to do with the collapse of socialism within the USSR and the internal contradictions because of it, as for any external pressures and external contradictions."

This completely fails to grasp that the Soviet Union has a new bourgeois ruling class, a new imperialist bourgeoisie that cannot but show its imperialist class nature. Imperialism means war. The imperialist politics of the USSR ruling class are but the prelude to the imperialist war which will be their "continuation by other means" - by force of arms. Yes it is true the Soviet imperialist bourgeoisie faces internal contradictions. In the long term Soviet Social Imperialism is a paper tiger. But in the short term it is also a real tiger, which we must mobilise the British working class to be ready to fight.

The Fourth Congress Statement says:

"Those who say, if they do, beware of the imperialist designs of the USSR state the obvious."

This appears to recognise the fact that the Soviet Union is an imperialist superpower, but in fact it dismisses the question as not worthy of further attention. A little later the Statement refers to "so-called 'social' imperialism". All this makes it clear that the CPB(ML) has not firmly grasped that the

Soviet Union is the more dangerous superpower, and the most dangerous source of war, and is not preparing the working class about this question.

Because of this error the Fourth Congress Statement falls into a one-sided view of the Common Market, failing to see that the Common Market has a progressive aspect to the extent that it enables the peoples and countries of Western Europe to stand up better against the two superpowers.

2. FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND IMPERIALISM

The Statement makes a further serious error in relation to the principal contradiction in the world today between the peoples of the world and the two superpowers. The Statement completely fails to grasp that the peoples of the Third World, the developing countries, are the main force in the struggle against the two imperialist superpowers. It says:

"For our party there is but one world." (p1)

and:

"The division of the world into 1,2,3, is artificial and mechanistic."
(p2)

This completely fails to recognise the great importance of the Third World. Ultimately it denies Lenin's famous thesis:

"The characteristic feature of imperialism is that the whole world, as we see, is now divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, which command colossal wealth and powerful armed forces."

(Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions, Peking edition, p31; from 'The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions', July 26th 1920.)

Today no other nation can match the United States and the Soviet Union for colossal wealth and powerful armed forces.

Britain is one of the second world countries, minor imperialist powers, which waver between the two superpowers and the Third World countries. The revolutionary Communist Party must teach the working class to lead the British people to fight all imperialism, especially the imperialism of the two superpowers, and to ally with the oppressed peoples of the world. It must teach the working class to put pressure on the British government to line up consistently with the Third World countries against the two superpowers.

The CPB(ML) does not yet grasp this at all. Instead of pointing out the positive revolutionary strengths of the Third World countries it puts the main emphasis on warning:

"there are especial dangers inherent within the so-called developing countries and within the liberation struggles today." (p2)

By contrast the CPB(ML) seems to think that Britain should lead the world in revolutions:

"We were the first modern proletariat, once again we must lead: the opportunity is ours, if we only seize it others will follow as before"
(p7).

This is quite incorrect.

3. FAILURE TO GRASP THE IMPERIALIST NATURE OF BRITISH SOCIETY:

Although British imperialism is well past the peak of its power in the world, it is essential to grasp that Britain is still an imperialist country. Yet British imperialism is never mentioned in the entire 16 page Congress Statement. The word, "imperialism", does not appear at all in the section on Britain (pages 6-7).

The Statement almost completely ignores the fact that Britain's relations with the rest of the world have been, and very largely still are ones of imperialist plunder. It glosses over this fact with the following words:

"The triumph of the industrial revolution in Britain heralded the birth of a new world order, the epoch of capitalism. For where we led others were compelled to follow." (p6)

A little later the Statement merely describes Britain as having been "the workshop of the world". To gloss over British imperialism in this way is to fall into social chauvinism.

This error is closely linked to the CPB(ML)'s seriously incorrect "two classes" theory, which says that there are only two classes in Britain. It ignores the existence of a relatively privileged section of workers within this imperialist society. The CPB(ML)'s Congress Statement says:

"The division of society into two as it has developed here has no parallel. This is the most proletarian of countries." (p7).

On the contrary, there is a substantial privileged stratum of workers who provide a social base for the severe opportunism within the British working class movement.

Ignoring and denying this will have most serious consequences for the future. It will be much harder to protect the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class from the opportunist ideology brought in by these middle stratum. Secondly it will be impossible to handle correctly the contradiction between the working class and the middle strata in order to build a great united front under the leadership of the working class of all who can be united against the British imperialist bourgeoisie.

4. PETTY BOURGEOIS PESSIMISM

The Communist Manifesto points out that the fall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat "are equally inevitable". One of the most important tasks of revolutionary Communists is constantly to teach the working class this great historic truth. Mao Tsetung says:

"We should carry on constant propaganda among the people on the fact of world progress and the bright future ahead so that they will build their confidence in victory." (Quotations, p196)

But the CPB(ML)'s Congress Statement repeatedly falls into petty bourgeois pessimism.

It talks of "the backwardness of the...proletariat" (p1). On page 2 it says, "The forces of Marxism-Leninism in Europe are woefully weak." On page 5 the Statement says, "The labour movement is in process of awesome dangerous change". On the following page it says our rulers "will certainly destroy us if we stay our hand." On pages 9 and 15 it speaks about "the present desperate situation". On page 13 there is a longer passage with the same petty bourgeois pessimistic theme:

"And all the while the (working) class repudiates its own heritage. Scabs are found to act against their unions and the membership is mute. The development of company unionism, if not actively connived at, proceeds unchecked: more officials are appointed to union posts; sheer apathy allows the ruling class to call the tune. At present their approach is still largely persuasive. But how long before persuasion gives way to coercion as the full horror of their policy becomes more apparent and as our resistance becomes weaker? How soon before another reign of terror, when 'in conspiracy' becomes once more a feature of working class resistance? The attack on the civil liberties of the individual and on the most rooted and democratic of our institutions go hand in hand. And when the very independence of these institutions is at stake, those that would willingly submit would surely be fit instruments to enslave their brothers."

On page 14 the Statement continues the same gloomy and demoralising theme:

"The situation is fraught as never before. Affrighted by circumstance, chary of combat and in dreadful disarray is the army of labour. It is difficult indeed to discern any battle formation at all. Which way to the front? Meanwhile the master class prepares a truly dreadful peace."

In essence, the CPB(ML) is trying to scare the working class into being revolutionary.

All this is completely contrary to the bold, fearless stand of the proletariat, to the determination and perseverance of the Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains. It is petty bourgeois pessimism.

The historical roots of this error by the CPB(ML) are these. Although the CPB(ML) was one of the first British Marxist-Leninist organisations to declare itself a Party, it has not systematically set about building the Party. The result is that the party has largely remained one in name only. Unless we firmly grasp the importance of building a really strong revolutionary Communist Party as the vanguard of the working class, a well disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people - unless we understand this, we cannot see how to lead the working class forward to the revolution. Instead we fall into despair.

It is true that the British working class have shown a lower level of militancy in the last two years. But this is not because they are fundamentally backward. It is because they do not have a strong enough revolutionary Communist Party to lead them. Mao Tsetung points out:

"If the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organise their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level."

(Quotations, p132)

It is because the CPB(ML) do not understand that the revolutionary Communist Party has to be built and not just declared to be in existence, that it is now falling into petty bourgeois pessimism and calling the workers weak and backward.

5. SUBJECTIVIST STYLE OF WRITING

The first four sections of the Congress Statement, from page 1 to the middle of page 6 are written in a strange style which is often difficult

to understand. It is the same style as is used by one of the leading members of the organisation when speaking publicly.

The style can be called oracular. It is like an oracle: it sounds as if it is saying something very profound, but the meaning is hard to pin down. In Mao Tsetung's words, "*it strikes a pose in order to intimidate people*". It is "*pretentious with the deliberate aim of intimidating people*." Mao goes on:

"Those who write subjectivist and sectarian articles and speeches in the form of Party stereotypes fear refutation, are very cowardly, and therefore rely on pretentiousness to overawe others, believing they can thereby silence people and 'win the day'. Such pretentiousness cannot reflect truth but is an obstacle to truth. Truth does not strike a pose to overawe people but talks and acts honestly and sincerely".
('Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing'. Selected Readings, 1971, p192)

With the CPB(ML) Congress Statement, what is even more dangerous than the risk of intimidating people is that it is often hard to understand what it means. For example, on page 5 the Statement says:

"the party must demand self-sufficiency, self-reliance within the line in all localities in all branches."

This sounds impressive but on closer examination self-sufficiency and self-reliance are not the same thing and there is a big difference between them. Self-reliance means relying mainly on your own efforts. Self-sufficiency means relying exclusively on your own efforts.

The next sentence in the Congress Statement says:

"The caretaker, the director of the whole, the Central Committee."

But there is a very big difference between a caretaker role and a director role. Furthermore to call the Central Committee the mere "caretaker" of the line practised by the branches, could never be correct. It is a betrayal of democratic centralism and robs the working class of the voluntary iron discipline necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

The style of the opening parts of the Congress Statement is vague and elusive. This is a manifestation of opportunism. As Lenin said, a characteristic feature of opportunism is:

"its vagueness, its diffuseness, its elusiveness."
("One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", Section Q)

The opening four sections of this Congress Statement appear to have been settled by the draft of one man, which has not been criticised by his comrades in order to remove some glaring inconsistencies and grossly obscure passages. The fact that such major errors of style exist among leading comrades of the CPB(ML) eight years after its foundation is more important than the erroneous passages themselves. It points to a more fundamental error - the absence of healthy criticism and self-criticism, which would have overcome such errors of style within a few years. It points to an inner party life where things can be settled by the word of one man, an inner party life which is not democratic-centralist, but bureaucratic-centralist.

These are the main errors which should be criticised in the Statement adopted by the Fourth Congress of the CPB(ML):

1. Failure to grasp the danger from Soviet Social Imperialism.
2. Failure to understand imperialism throughout the world.
3. Failure to grasp the imperialist nature of British society.
4. Petty-bourgeois pessimism.
5. Subjectivist style of writing.

There are other subordinate errors which may be important for the future and which must be struggled over at a later time.

The errors in the CPB(ML) Congress Statement are serious, but not so serious that they cannot be overcome through bold self-criticism. They are no worse than the serious errors that the CFB(ML) is overcoming through bold criticism and self-criticism and internal ideological struggle. Such bold self-criticism will greatly strengthen the fighting capacity of the fine, honest comrades in the CPB(ML) and ensure they play a more valuable part in the struggle to build a strong, genuine revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

In conclusion, the CFB(ML) warmly urges the CPB(ML) to take these criticisms seriously, to correct mistakes if it has made them, guard against them if it has not, and to carry on a two line struggle to overcome the contradictions between the two organisations. The aim of this two line struggle must be to win ideological, political and organisational unity, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and the interests of the working class.

UNITY IS THE AIM OF STRUGGLE; STRUGGLE IS THE MEANS TO UNITY!

The National Committee of the Communist
Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

"ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS THE KEY LINK IN PARTY BUILDING"

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The article which follows is a criticism of the 'Draft Theses Conclusions and Proposals on the Central Question of Party Building' of the Communist Workers League of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), published recently in the pamphlet 'Its Up To Us'. As a result of further principled struggle with other Marxist-Leninist organisations after sending this criticism to the CWLB(ML), the CFB(ML) has deepened its understanding of the tasks of building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

Uniting the fragmented British Marxist-Leninist Movement through active ideological struggle is a task of great importance in Party building. However it is wrong to imply that this is the only major task of party building. There are other indispensable tasks of great importance, such as grasping the imperialist nature of British society. Thorough investigation work is also essential in order correctly to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the British revolution. Therefore it is more correct to say that "Active ideological struggle is the key link in uniting the British Marxist-Leninist movement for Party Building".

However the argument in the letter of criticism to the CWLB(ML) is overwhelmingly correct. Uniting the Marxist-Leninist movement in a single democratic centralist organisation is essential for bringing all positive factors into play. From this point of view, in Britain today, active ideological struggle is without doubt, in Lenin's words "the link that is least likely to be torn out of our hands, the one that is most important" at this given moment, and "the one that guarantees the possessor of a link the possession of the whole chain".

The criticism was sent to the CWLB(ML) with the aim of struggling for uniting in the Marxist-Leninist movement. It was sent with the following covering note:-

To the Communist Workers League of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) 28th Sept, 1976

Dear Comrades,

I enclose the carefully-considered reply of the Executive Committee of the CFB(ML) to your statement on Party Building, 'It's Up To Us!' It tries to assess correctly the positive and negative aspects of your statement and where necessary it makes bold and comradely criticisms. You will see in many places where we make criticisms we are urging you to take warning from the sharp lessons we have learned from our own errors.

The reply attempts to draw firm and definite lines of demarcation. This is precisely, as Lenin says, "in order that we may unite".

We urge you to consider the criticisms carefully and in the spirit of "correct mistakes if you have made them, guard against them if you have not". We are not yet sure whether you understand this principle fully. We did not think it was correct for 'Voice of the People' to describe the Communist Unity Association's reply to your statement as an attack. In our view it

was a bold comradesly criticism and part of the struggle to build unity in the Marxist-Leninist movement.

'It's Up To Us!' is a public statement and it is necessary for our reply to be made public too. Although we very much desire unity with the CWLB(ML) and firmly believe this would be in the interests of the working class, the matter is not merely a private one between us but concerns the whole British Marxist-Leninist movement. We believe you have made some errors and it is therefore our duty to point them out not only to you but to all other comrades who may have read your public statement.

Because our reply will be published it is expressed mainly in the third person and is not expressed mainly in the form of a personal letter from "us" to "you".

You wrote earlier proposing a meeting between your comrades and ours before we took a final decision on the Party Building Commission. No decision is ever final because as Marxist-Leninists we will gladly make a self-criticism and correct a mistake if we are shown to be wrong. We would be very willing for our representatives to meet yours within the next 2 or 3 weeks to struggle with us on points in our reply. If you convince us that there are errors we will correct our statement before it is published in our theoretical journal.

We are not in favour of large numbers of comrades being present at such a meeting because this makes errors of ultra-democracy. At such a meeting the organizations should have their line presented by leading spokesmen. We propose at the forthcoming meeting there should be two comrades from either side.

The main business of this meeting therefore will be for you to make criticisms of our reply. If you agree could you please let us have as soon as possible a choice of several dates within the next two or three weeks?

This is our immediate proposal. Please also consider very seriously our long term proposal in reply to the idea of a Party Building Commission in the last paragraph but one of our reply: we must resolve to unite for the sake of the working class. We will unite by first winning ideological unity through active ideological struggle, criticism and self-criticism. A first step towards this is to draw "firm and definite lines of demarcation". We must wage this struggle with the firm resolve to press on after winning ideological unity to consolidate it into organizational unity with the weapon of democratic-centralism. This is the way to serve the interests of the working class.

With revolutionary greetings,

The Executive Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS THE KEY LINK IN PARTY BUILDING

A Reply by the Executive Committee to the Communist Workers League of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) on their 'Draft Theses, Conclusions and Proposals on the Central Question of Party Building' published in their Pamphlet, 'It's Up To Us!'.

The central task in Britain today is to rebuild the revolutionary Communist

Party of the working class. Without this Party, all the spontaneous struggles of the working class in this country against the British imperialist ruling class cannot result in the overthrow of the ruling class and the establishment of a socialist state under a dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Communist Party of Great Britain has been taken over by a clique of opportunists who have turned it into a revisionist party which is socialist in words but in fact serves the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is why rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party is the central task in Britain today.

The task is a big one which we cannot achieve overnight merely by announcing the formation of a new Party. We have to learn once again how to do the work of successfully leading the working class in making revolution. The process of Party building will be one of prolonged struggle.

It will be a complex task involving many subordinate tasks. In order to guide this work correctly and in order to avoid wandering off the correct revolutionary path it is essential to grasp the key link in Party building.

What is the key link in rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class in Britain today? The CFB(ML) says the key link is active ideological struggle. You in the CWLB(ML) see the key link as investigation. This is the principal line of demarcation between the two organisations.

The CFB(ML) wishes to state its high respect for the comrades of the CWLB(ML). The CWLB(ML) has persevered now for several years in modestly and conscientiously serving the cause of the working class. They endeavour to take a bold working class stand. They have published an important document which emphasizes the need to build Communist bases in the industrial working class; and within the last two years they have made real progress, despite their limited resources, in implementing this policy.

The CWLB(ML)'s recent pamphlet, 'It's Up To Us!', clearly states that the question of Party building is the central question in Britain today. This is an important advance. It answers some doubts raised by their pamphlet on building bases in the industrial working class which did not state so clearly that Party building is the central task. Nevertheless, the CFB(ML) still has doubts about whether the CWLB(ML) is grasping the central task of building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class really firmly.

The pamphlet, 'It's Up To Us!', emphasizes five important aspects of Party building and contains valuable quotations from the great Marxist-Leninist leaders and Parties on these five questions. They are:

1. The need for a class analysis based on a concrete understanding of concrete conditions within Britain.
2. The need for a scientific analysis of friends and foes internationally.
3. The need for a scientific understanding of the national question in the British Isles.
4. The need for a firm grasp of the leading role of the working class in the forthcoming British revolution.
5. The need for a firm grasp of strategy and tactics necessary for this proletarian revolution.

On all these five questions the CWLB(ML)'s pamphlet gives valuable educational material.

The pamphlet makes a sincere and systematic attempt to propose a solution

to the present fragmentation of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain into many different groups. For its part the CWLB(ML) has taken an important step in combating tendencies towards small group mentality in its own ranks. It is proposing to surrender a significant amount of its own independence of action and hopes to merge with other serious Marxist-Leninist organizations in order to do a better job of building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

All these are strong positive features which must be welcomed. In this reply to the CWLB(ML) we must concentrate on drawing lines of demarcation and struggling against certain errors which exist in the pamphlet. We do this so that over a period of time we can win principled unity with the CWLB(ML) on the basis of what is in the interests of the working class. In this way we will build a unity that will live. However at the same time as criticising the weaknesses and errors we should not lose sight of the positive aspects of their Party-building pamphlet.

WHY IS ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE THE KEY LINK IN PARTY BUILDING?

At present in Britain the Marxist-Leninist movement is deeply divided into a dozen different circles, organizations and self-declared Parties, all infected with small group mentality and liberalism. An essential part of the central task of building the genuine revolutionary Communist Party is to unite all those who can be united. The final ringing call of the Communist Manifesto, "Working Men of all Countries, Unite!", deeply applies to us too.

But how can we bring about a unity on the basis of principle and which will live, not a unity on the basis of opportunism which will perish? Mao Tsetung gives the answer in the first sentence of 'Combat Liberalism' - active ideological struggle.

"We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interests of our fight".

Active ideological struggle is not just a powerful weapon for ensuring unity: it is the weapon. It is not just the weapon which will help bring about unity: it is the weapon for ensuring unity.

Experience of prolonged ideological struggle in the CFB(ML) clearly demonstrated to us the truth of this statement. All comrades except those who refused to struggle, were united in a militant unity around correct lines and policies. This ideological unity is now being consolidated in a militant organizational unity on firm democratic centralist principles. The groups have become transformed into branches. The "Federation" is already almost dead. We will proudly announce the burial service when preparations are fully complete, and we will invite all other comrades to join with us in the celebrations! This change came about because active ideological struggle ensures unity.

Comrades! Active ideological struggle will ensure the unity of all honest comrades in the British Marxist-Leninist movement. Active ideological struggle ensures that we will sweep aside the dozen small groups that at present fragment the ranks of revolutionary Communists at present.

There is a second reason why active ideological struggle is the key link to be grasped in building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working

class. Ideological struggle is not a passive process; it is an active process. It is a battle between correct ideas and incorrect ideas, between proletarian ideas on the one hand, and bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas on the other. It is a battle which ensures that correct proletarian ideas win out in the end and are grasped not only by those who first put them forward but by all the comrades sincerely taking part in the struggle. But even more than that, the correct proletarian ideas do not just win out, they are developed and strengthened in the course of the struggle with the incorrect bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas. Mao Tsetung puts this very clearly:

"What is correct invariably develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong". ('On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People' Section VIII, Mao Tsetung Selected Readings, p464)

We must deeply grasp this truth and understand its great significance for Party building in Britain.

If we look at the British Marxist-Leninist movement, seeing only the surface appearance, it is a miserable picture of a dozen small groups, none very large, and riddled with liberalism and small group mentality. But within them there is a great reserve of energy which can be unlocked with the key of active ideological struggle. The struggle to unite these small groups will involve deep and protracted battles on almost all the major aspects of Party building. The struggles will ensure not just the unity of the small groups but that our grasp of correct ideas will be immeasurably strengthened in the course of the ideological struggles. At present the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain looks a miserable sight on the surface, but if we look beneath the surface we will understand that active ideological struggle can produce a great qualitative change, can build a strong, new, revolutionary Communist Party of the working class within a few years. That is why active ideological struggle is the key link to be grasped in Party building.

Lenin described the idea of the key link in 'What Is To Be Done?':

"The whole of political life is an endless chain consisting of an infinite number of links. The whole art of politics lies in finding and gripping as strongly as we can the link that is least likely to be torn out of our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that guarantees the possessor of a link the possession of the whole chain". (Peking Edition, p201)

In the British Marxist-Leninist movement today, active ideological struggle is precisely that key link which is least likely to be torn out of our hands. It is precisely the one that is most important at this given moment. It is precisely the one which, despite all our present weaknesses, we can grab hold of, and the possession of which will guarantee us "the possession of the whole chain". It will guarantee that with perseverance we will without doubt build a strong new revolutionary Communist Party.

As the comrades in the CWLB(ML) point out, it is up to us. There are no geniuses in the British Marxist-Leninist movement, no Lenins or Mao Tsetungs. All the groups are onesided in one way or another. But even starting with this poor material we will undoubtedly bring about a qualitative change if we persevere in grasping the key link of active ideological struggle.

CRITICISM OF THE CWLB(ML) FOR NOT GRASPING ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AS THE KEY LINK

The comrades in the CWLB(ML) do not yet grasp the significance of active

ideological struggle and do not grasp it as the key link in Party building. Instead they fall into the error of liberalism which, as Mao Tsetung says, "rejects ideological struggle".

The CWLB(ML) have never made a systematic public criticism of the line of another Marxist-Leninist organization. This is not merely accidental; it is a manifestation of the error of liberalism, which the CFB(ML) has also suffered from severely.

In the CWLB(ML)'s pamphlet, 'It's Up To Us!', they print a long list of the essential characteristics of a genuine revolutionary Communist Party, but nowhere in this list does it say that the Party must wage active ideological struggle for proletarian ideology against all anti-working class ideology. The longest entry on ideological struggle in the pamphlet is only seven sentences on page 56 in connection with a proposed Commission on Party building. It is liberally and vaguely worded:

"We also wish to stress that if in its work the Commission is to successfully fight against right and left opportunism, there must be initiated an honest struggle against erroneous ideas which permeate the thinking of some organizations. The CWLB(ML) will make no further comment on this issue now".

Certain subordinate points are then referred to briefly. This is a liberal way of writing about the key link of ideological struggle.

There are many deep differences between Marxist-Leninist organizations in Britain which cannot be resolved merely by honest and conscientious investigation work, co-ordinated by a Commission, as the CWLB(ML) imply they can. These differences represent contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas, principled and opportunist ideas, proletarian and bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideas. They can only be resolved by grasping the principal weapon for ensuring unity within the ranks of revolutionary Communists - active ideological struggle.

The CWLB(ML) makes a serious error of liberalism in not grasping the importance of active ideological struggle.

It also makes a serious idealist error by not grasping the class nature of the struggle between different ideologies. Ideological struggle is class struggle. It is the battle between the ideas which serve the proletariat and the ideas which serve the bourgeoisie or the intermediate strata. This battle goes on every day of our lives in class society. Instead the CWLB(ML) sees only the battle between correct or incorrect ideas, which it calls the battle between scientific and unscientific ideas. It is true these battles occur, but it is wrong to see the ideological struggle mainly in these terms instead of in class terms, and it is quite wrong to see the ideological struggle only in these terms. The ideological struggle that must go on within a revolutionary Communist Party to arm it to lead the fight of the working class to overthrow the bourgeoisie, is a class fight for proletarian ideas against bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideas. Only if the Party of the working class is armed with the proletarian ideas of Marxism-Leninism can it help the working class to organize and overthrow capitalism.

It is true that differences of opinion can start as a result of accidental mistakes and one-sidedness. But if comrades persist in a line for any length of time it almost certainly represents the stand of one class or another. In any major two line struggle there is always one line that in

essence most correctly represents the stand and interests of the working class and another line which represents the stand or interests of the bourgeoisie or sections of the middle strata, such as the intelligentsia.

As Mao Tsetung says:

"In class society.....every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class". (Quotations, p8)

The CWLB(ML) list many characteristics of a revolutionary Communist Party but do not name the most fundamental characteristic - that the Party must persistently and uncompromisingly take the stand of the working class. This is a class question.

Instead the CWLB(ML) elevate to first place the methods of work and techniques of investigation of a Communist Party. The CWLB(ML) say these must be "scientific", but do not sharply distinguish between proletarian science and bourgeois science and do not say which they mean. This too is an idealist error. For them a genuine revolutionary Party is in essence a party that has mastered a number of skills, not a party that in essence merely aids the historical struggle of the working class. In the final analysis the CWLB(ML) is falling into idealism and forgetting that it is class struggle that carries forward social history, not clever ideas or skills in themselves.

The words of the 'Communist Manifesto' are very important in guarding against idealism:

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered by this or that universal reformer - they merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes". (Peking Edition, p48)

The CWLB(ML) quote this passage but do not fully grasp it. The point is made again by Mao Tsetung on page 8 of the Quotations:

"Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism."

The single most important thing about a revolutionary Communist Party is that it must take the stand of the working class and aid the working class in its already existing class struggles. The single most important thing about a revolutionary Communist Party is not what the CWLB(ML) imply, that it possesses a number of skilful scientific techniques for doing political work better. To say this is idealist. It is in the final analysis a way of saying that history is made by parties of individuals who have mastered certain political skills. Instead we must say that history is made by the class struggle of the masses. This is the historical materialist standpoint.

Investigation work is a very important subordinate task of Party building. The CFB(ML) must state boldly that it has relatively ignored the importance of investigation in the last year or two and has fallen into one-sidedness on this question. Investigation is essential so that we can successfully integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions of the class struggle in Britain. The CWLB(ML) makes many valuable

points on this question.

However the CWLB(ML) is wrong to make out that investigation is the key link in Party building. By over-emphasizing its importance they fall into idealism in forgetting the fundamental importance of the working class stand of a revolutionary Communist Party. Also they try to draw a distinction between "the camp of science and the camp of anti-science", talking about science as if it did not have a class content. But in fact there is proletarian science and bourgeois science and the distinction must on no account be forgotten.

The CWLB(ML) do not make sufficiently clear that when Marxist-Leninists carry out an investigation we do not do so in a 'neutral' way but definitely from the stand of the working class. We must not assess all the facts we gather in a random way but by subjecting them to class analysis - by analysing the class content and the class meaning of each different fact. When we piece together ideas gathered from these facts we must not do this in an aimless way but firmly guided by the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism. All these qualifications are essential to make when talking about investigation work in order to guard against the danger of falling into bourgeois empiricism - the error of mistaking fragmentary experience for universal truth. But in the way the CWLB(ML) talks about investigation it does not draw this firm line of demarcation with bourgeois empiricism.

It is also necessary to guard against empiricism in another way. At this time of theoretical chaos in the British Marxist-Leninist movement, it is the duty of all revolutionary Communists to uphold, defend and propagate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism. The slogan "No investigation, no right to speak" should not be used in a way that would prevent comrades propagating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism. To do this would be to fall into empiricism. Certainly we need investigation in order to understand how correctly to integrate these universal truths with concrete practice, but that is a different point. At times (for example page three of the Introduction to the pamphlet) the CWLB(ML) do not stress sufficiently the importance of upholding the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism but appear rather to make this dependent on already having carried out a concrete investigation, ourselves.

THE PROPOSED COMMISSION ON PARTY BUILDING

In their pamphlet the CWLB(ML) make a proposal for a "Marxist-Leninist Working Commission on Party Building Preparatory Work", composed of delegates from different Marxist-Leninist organizations, with each organization having one vote. The task of the Commission would be to produce draft statements based on investigation on five major fields of policy for the future revolutionary Communist Party.

This proposal is a sincere attempt to carry forward the central task of Party building, but it makes certain serious opportunist errors. The Commission violates democratic centralism and compromises with small group mentality. It hopes to overcome small group mentality step by step without waging an openly-declared ideological war against the small group mentality that is rampant in the British Marxist-Leninist movement. The CWLB(ML) calls this Commission an "organization of a new type", but in fact it is an organization of an old type. Although the CWLB(ML) deny it is federal in nature that is precisely what it is. It is an opportunist compromise with small group mentality which violates democratic-centralism.

The CFB(ML) has just spent the last two years fighting this federalist compromise type of solution to Party building and it is deeply convinced that the federal road is an opportunist road. It must firmly criticize any proposal that would - however unintentionally - lead the working class down this road again.

If there are no major differences between particular Marxist-Leninist organizations, let them unite in a single democratic centralist organization and plan the distribution of their cadre resources to do necessary investigation work under democratic centralist discipline. If there are no major differences of principle what possible justification is there for perpetuating their existence as small groups and for embarking on a long process of investigation work organized in a federal way, which fosters small group mentality and individualism? Comrades! we speak with the experience of wandering in the marsh of federalism for six years. Be warned by our negative experience!

If on the other hand, there are major differences of principle between organizations, they cannot be resolved by investigation work and "calm" discussions (pamphlet, p50). On the contrary the organizations must follow Lenin's principles:

"Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation". ('What Is To Be Done?', Peking edition, p26)

Starting from the desire for unity, they must engage in active ideological struggle to reach principled ideological unity. They must then consolidate this unity by organizational unity in a single democratic centralist organization. This is the only correct way to serve the interests of the working class in such a situation.

The CWLB(ML) have made a number of opportunist errors in their pamphlet 'It's Up To Us!' - principally of liberalism, of idealism, and of compromising with small group mentality. The CFB(ML) has made serious errors of this nature too.

Because the CWLB(ML) has made some opportunist errors does not mean that they are opportunists. At the same time as criticizing the shortcomings of the CWLB(ML), we must also recognize their achievements. Their pamphlet firmly states that the central question in Britain today is that of Party building, and it sincerely attempts to put forward a solution to the fragmentation of the Marxist-Leninist movement into small groups.

The CFB(ML) regards the members of the CWLB(ML) as comrades and believes that with perseverance, and by using the Marxist-Leninist weapon of self-criticism to get rid of the bad while retaining the good, they will undoubtedly make a valuable contribution to building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class. We firmly believe that it is in the interests of the working class that the comrades from our two organizations should be fighting side by side in a single democratic-centralist organization.

The CFB(ML) calls on the CWLB(ML) to set aside their incorrect proposal for a Commission on Party building, to struggle for early unity with the CFB(ML) and other serious Marxist-Leninist groups in a single democratic centralist organization, and immediately to start work on this by drawing lines of demarcation and by using active ideological struggle.

If we firmly grasp active ideological struggle as the key link in Party

building the task will be accomplished in a relatively short space of time. Another shovelful of earth will have been shifted. The genuine revolutionary Communist Party of the working class, and the proletarian revolution, will be that bit nearer!

Active Ideological Struggle, Not Investigation, Is The Key Link In Party Building!

Executive Committee of the CFB(ML)
September 1976.

AGAINST OPPORTUNIST ATTACKS ON CPC FOREIGN POLICY

The National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) recently passed the following resolution:-

"The 'Resolution on Certain Aspects of the General Line of the Foreign Policy of Socialist Countries' passed at the general meeting of January 1972 made serious opportunist errors.

The resolution did not firmly grasp the principal contradiction in the world today, that between the oppressed nations and peoples of the world and the two superpowers. Instead the resolution stressed the internal contradictions in third world countries and did not grasp the necessity for a United Front of all who can be united, including sections of the national bourgeoisie, against imperialism. This was a 'left' opportunist error.

Another serious opportunist error was intellectualism. The comrades who supported this 'left' opportunist line thought that they were "the supreme power of the world order." (Hoxha) Instead of modestly getting on with the central task of building the revolutionary Communist Party in Britain and following the overwhelmingly correct lead of the Communist Party of China on the world situation, these comrades tried to lightly decide the principles which should govern the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China.

A serious right opportunist error was liberalism. Comrades who upheld the correct line on the world situation failed to struggle correctly and made opportunist concessions on matters of crucial theoretical importance. As a result the resolution wriggled like a snake between two mutually excluding points of view.

The National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) completely rescinds this opportunist resolution. It states that continued ideological struggle will be essential to guard against future right and 'left' opportunism."

National Committee of the CFB(ML)
October 1976

In January 1972 the CFB(ML) passed a resolution on the general line of the foreign policy of socialist countries. The resolution was passed before the correct line on building the revolutionary Communist Party had triumphed in the CFB(ML), and at a time when the organization was wandering in the marsh of opportunism. It was inevitable therefore that serious right and 'left' opportunist errors were made.

The most serious right opportunist error was liberalism. The resolution was passed at the end of a big ideological struggle in the CFB(ML). The struggle centred around the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Although no comrade in the CFB(ML) at that time understood either the importance of active ideological struggle or the correct way of carrying that struggle out, nevertheless the struggle broke out independent of the will of comrades.

One group of comrades argued for an ultra-left, essentially Trotskyite, line on the world situation and the foreign policy of socialist countries. This line failed to grasp that the main contradiction in the world today is that between the two superpowers and the oppressed nations and peoples of the world.

Failing to grasp this firmly these comrades argued that in third world countries the principal contradiction was that between the working people and the ruling class. They failed to understand that in third world countries today the principal contradiction is that between the people as a whole, including sections of the national bourgeoisie, and imperialism.

The comrades pushing this incorrect line questioned the correctness of the foreign policy of the PRC and indeed said that China had made some opportunist errors concerning the events in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Sudan in 1971. Some comrades pressed for an 'all-round condemnation' of China's foreign policy and one member even thought that the Communist Party of China had probably changed its colour and become a revisionist party!

The other line argued for a generally correct line on the world situation and China's foreign policy but made serious opportunist liberal errors in fighting the incorrect line. Instead of establishing clear lines of demarcation and firmly refusing to make concessions on matters of theory, these comrades objectively capitulated to the 'left' opportunist line. They didn't understand Lenin's warning that:

"...an unimportant 'Mistake' may lead to the most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation of shades superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for many, many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or other 'shade'." ('What Is To Be Done?' Peking edition, p28)

And indeed this unimportant 'mistake' did have the "most deplorable consequences". It was the opportunist concessions to the 'left' opportunist line that were later used, in July 1974, to justify a public criticism of the PRC's refusal to admit the leading revisionist Michael McGahey to China, in the CFB(ML)'s old monthly paper 'Struggle'.

Because of the failure of the supporters of the correct line to struggle strongly enough for their line, the resolution that was passed at the end of the struggle was a fudge compromise between the correct and incorrect lines. It was mandatory at a time when all opportunists, of both right and 'left', were attacking the PRC and its revolutionary line in foreign policy, to clearly state that China's foreign policy was correct and serving the interests of the peoples of the world. The 'left' opportunist line couldn't stomach this, nor could the supporters of the correct line support a 'condemnation' of China's foreign policy. So the resolution tried to please both camps. The first paragraph said:

"The socialist camp...belongs to the international proletariat and working people as well as to the people of the socialist countries. Because the communist movement is internationalist in character the policies and political record of all Marxist-Leninist organizations must be open to questioning and criticism. Only on these principles can a genuinely proletarian internationalist communist movement be built".

Although the supporters of the correct line knew well that the ideological basis of this paragraph was the subjectivist desire of the supporters of the incorrect line to criticise the foreign policy of the PRC, they contented themselves with the knowledge that such criticism had been staved off for the moment. Both here and elsewhere in the resolution these comrades made serious opportunist errors. This conciliation with opportunism, instead of bold struggle against it, is exactly the type of opportunism referred to by Lenin:

"When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a feature that is characteristic of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, diffuseness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will always evade formulating an issue clearly and decisively; he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to 'agree' with both and to reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, good and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth." ('On the Struggle Against Revisionism', Peking edition, p8)

Why was all this an error of liberalism? Because these comrades had their Marxism, but they had their liberalism too. They talked Marxism but practised liberalism. They kept both in stock and found a use for each. As Mao said:

"Liberalism is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism. It is negative and objectively has the effect of helping the enemy; that is why the enemy welcomes its preservation in our midst. Such being its nature, there should be no place for it in the ranks of the revolution." ('Selected Readings', p136)

The other big error of the struggle and of the resolution was intellectualism. It was an error that the comrades who held the 'left' line raised it as a matter for struggle at all. It was typical of the arrogance of the intelligentsia who think that they are "the supreme power of the world order" (Hoxha), and that they can therefore encompass the whole world and solve all its problems from the comfort of their armchairs.

Instead of grasping that the Communist Party of China is the most tempered, most experienced and most far-sighted Communist Party in the world, and that its policy has been proven to be overwhelmingly correct, and therefore following its lead, the CFB(ML) thought it necessary to lay down the principles by which the PRC should conduct its foreign policy.

Instead of modestly getting on with what should have been its central task, building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class, the CFB(ML) thought it necessary to pass such a resolution when its grasp of the world situation was weak indeed. Stalin defines Marxist theory as "*the experience of the working class movement in all countries, taken in its general aspect.*" ('Foundations of Leninism', Peking edition, p22). The CFB(ML) failed to grasp that the CPC has the most thorough grasp of this theory and is thus far more likely to be correct in its analysis of the world situation than a fledgling Marxist-Leninist organization just pulling itself up by its bootstraps.

The resolution itself, because of the failure of the supporters of the correct line to struggle boldly enough, made significant ultra-left errors. Essentially the resolution fell into Trotskyism.

Although the resolution tried to state the theoretical principles governing a socialist country's foreign policy, and to some extent succeeded, it failed

to grasp the world situation. As Mao pointed out *"without comparatively complete knowledge it is impossible to do revolutionary work well"*. ('Selected Readings', p216). The knowledge of the CFB(ML) was far from relatively complete and inevitably opportunist mistakes were made.

The resolution states (in para.6) *"...within non-socialist countries not occupied by foreign troops the main contradiction is between the working people and the ruling class"*. Despite saying (in para.4) *"The basis of all policy...lies in making distinctions"*, this statement makes no distinction whatsoever between first, second and third world countries. It ignores the fact that for the third world countries the main enemy is imperialism, and their domestic agents, the comprador bourgeoisie, not the domestic ruling class in general.

Thus it says (in para.6) *"within these countries the main enemy is the ruling class"*. The resolution completely fails to grasp the necessity for a United Front of all who can be united, including sections of the national bourgeoisie, against imperialism in third world countries.

Similarly the resolution states (in para.10) *"peaceful coexistence defines a relationship between countries of different social systems, never between oppressed and oppressor classes and nations."* Whilst this is generally true, a United Front against imperialism is frequently a temporary alliance of workers and peasants with their secondary enemies, the national bourgeoisie, against the main enemy of imperialism. The revolutions in China and Vietnam, amongst others, could never have succeeded without such alliances.

The resolution also made an oblique attack upon the PRC by saying (in para. 9) *"The other error to be opposed is that of the rightist position of putting the 'national interests' of a socialist country before that of actively aiding revolutionary struggles wherever they occur"*. This sentence was included to satisfy the petty-bourgeois indignation of the intelligentsia that the objectively existing struggles of the world, and thus the foreign policy of the PRC, did not correspond to their grand scheme.

This is basically the key to understanding the nature of this Trotskyite error. Marx and Engels pointed out;

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas that have been invented by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from an historical movement going on under our very eyes". ('The Communist Manifesto', Peking edition, p48)

The "historical movement going on under our very eyes" is a struggle of the oppressed nations and peoples of the world against imperialism. The struggle against the super-powers is not something invented by the CPC, it objectively exists, independent of man's will.

The resolution chose instead to emphasise the internal national struggles. The supporters of the ultra-left line, like all other ultra-lefts, sought to impose their will on the world and gave vent to squeals of petty-bourgeois moralism when the peoples of the world ignored their will. This is the error of idealism.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE

The two-line struggle in the CFB(ML) on the foreign policy of socialist

countries was a class struggle. It was a struggle between comrades who tried to uphold the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and who thus took the class stand of the working class, and comrades who took the class stand of the intelligentsia.

Because the comrades who upheld the correct line made right opportunist errors in not struggling boldly enough for that line, the resolution passed by the CFB(ML) was an unprincipled compromise and made serious concessions on matters of vital theory. Thus the resolution took the class stand of the intelligentsia.

In compromising with the 'left' opportunist line and trying to please both camps the resolution inevitably took the capitalist road. As Lenin said "*...the only choice is either bourgeois or socialist ideology, there is no middle course*". (Quoted in Hoxha, Selected Works, Vol. 2, p126).

The struggle was not only a theoretical struggle. The resolution misled honest comrades, particularly working class comrades, in the CFB(ML). It caused them to doubt that the Communist Party of China is a great, glorious and correct Party. If the resolution had not been overturned in the course of the CFB(ML)'s rectification campaign it could have caused untold damage in the Marxist-Leninist movement, especially now when we are confronted with the task of supporting the International United Front against the super-powers.

The National Committee of the CFB(ML) has recently overturned this ultra-left resolution and states that the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China is a correct policy, and is serving the interests of the workers and oppressed peoples and nations of the world in the world-wide struggle against the two super-powers, United States and Soviet-Social imperialism.

INTEGRATE THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS OF MARXISM-LENINISM WITH
THE CONCRETE PRACTICE OF THE BRITISH REVOLUTION!

The necessity for theory is a class question. Stalin summed this up concisely when he said:

"Theory is the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realise not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well known thesis that:

'Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.'" ('Foundations of Leninism' Peking edition p22)

Stalin defines theory as "the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect". The principles of Marxism-Leninism have formed the basis of the policies of the most advanced Communist Parties. It was only by integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Russian Revolution that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, led by Lenin, and then by Stalin, led the working class of Russia to take state power in October 1917, and then on to construct socialism. This they continued to do until the leaders like Krushchev seized the leadership of the CPSU and led it away from Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism was the theoretical basis guiding the thinking of the Communist Party of China which defeated imperialism and reaction to set up the People's Republic of China in 1949. Moreover each of these great victories has enriched Marxist-Leninist theory, made it more profound. Each victory adds to the experience of the working class movement, and enables Communists to deepen their grasp of Marxism-Leninism.

Stalin also points out, in the second part of the quotation above, that Communists study this theory in order to serve their practice. Theory guides practice, gives the movement confidence and enables Communists to understand the inner relations, or laws of development of the events surrounding them. It enables Communists to derive policies which are right for the concrete situation. Theory, as Stalin explains, is developed in connection with the struggle of the working class, and is developed to serve these struggles. The working class must have theory in the interests of its fight. As Mao has summed it up:

"No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound grasp of the practical movement."
(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung' p4)

EMPIRICISM DENIES THE ROLE OF THEORY AND RELIES ONLY ON DIRECT EXPERIENCE.

The fact is that there is a contradiction between theory and practice, but there is also a unity between them. They are contradictory aspects of

a single whole. Failure to grasp this firmly leads to mistakes in work. In the past practice of the CFB(ML) one of the major errors was empiricism, which denies the role of theory.

To deny the role of theory prevents Communists from fully integrating theory with practice, and will lead to empiricist errors. The essence of the error of empiricism is that it mistakes fragmentary experience for universal truth. It therefore denies the role of theory and relies only on direct experience. CFB(ML) statements in the past talked about combining theory with practice but in essence put practice first. This was clearly shown at the first session of the Third Conference of the CFB(ML) where one line put forward was that 'collective practice is primary'. This line took a number of forms. It was argued for example that the main weakness of the organization was a lack of collective practice, and that the remedy for this was an organizational form which gave priority to the exchange of experience! The main form of practice advocated was building bases, out of which would arise direct experience which would then enable the CFB(ML) to develop its 'own' theory of the British revolution. This theory was separate from the indirect experience of the international working class movement. Thus we were to learn only from our direct fragmentary experience.

This line stood the concrete situation completely on its head. In the contradiction between theory and practice it was practice which was argued to be primary. In circumstances of complete theoretical confusion, this was a formula for a blind local practice which 'groped in the dark' without a guiding line, method or policy. A base was seen as an area for 'action', a place where Communists 'did things', and then talked about what they had done with the aim of elaborating theory from this experience. For Marxist-Leninists a base is a place where policy is fought for and where theory is integrated with the current struggles of the working class. As Mao sums it up:

"Those experienced in work must take up the study of theory and must read seriously; only then will they be able to systematise and synthesise their experience and raise it to the level of theory, only then will they not mistake their partial experience for universal truth and not commit empiricist errors." ('Quotations' p308)

We must continue to guard against this error which is still widespread in the Marxist-Leninist movement as a whole. The error is particularly strong in the local circles who argue that the indirect experience of the international working class movement is relevant only for the particular situations of, for example, the Russian or Chinese revolutions. Another form of this argument is that we need more direct experience before we can begin to discuss the formation of a revolutionary Communist Party in Britain. But the truth of the matter is that we will never have enough direct experience to create for ourselves, all over again, the accumulated knowledge of one hundred years of the international Communist movement.

The essence of the matter is that there are two lines on experience. The Marxist-Leninist line maintains that experience comes from practice in the class struggle. As Mao says *"All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience."* But direct experience is not something absolute and rigid. It is always partial and mistakes of empiricism occur when we underate, or deny the correct experience of others, or of the masses. This view leads straight back to the idealist line on experience, the view that what one individual, or even one group of people subjectively experience is the objective truth of the situation.

To thoroughly get to know a thing it must be examined allsidedly, and its essence must be grasped. The appearance of a phenomenon often does not correspond to its essence at all.

Particularly in social life, reactionary forces which are in decline try to preserve their existence by concealing their anti-working class nature behind a false appearance. The present Labour Government is a good example of this. It put forward as 'socialism' policies such as nationalisation in a desperate attempt to find a way out of the capitalist crisis at the expense of the working class.

In the same way the Soviet revisionists talk about 'socialist co-operation' and in reality practise social imperialism, oppressing and exploiting third world countries like India. In such cases it is necessary to grasp the essence of the matter, and not be fooled by appearances.

Furthermore the area of practical activity is extremely wide, whilst the scope of an individual's experience is limited. It is therefore essential to learn from others, from those parties and organizations who have successfully integrated Marxist-Leninist theory with the concrete conditions of their own countries in making revolution. We cannot possibly have direct experience of everything. In practice therefore most knowledge comes from indirect experience, it originates in the direct experience of others.

To deny this is narrow empiricism. Neglect of theory, neglect of indirect experience, intoxication with narrow practice leads to a lack of correct orientation, and to the capitulation to all sorts of erroneous lines. Direct experience reflects a partial reality but it is only perceptual knowledge and it is therefore superficial and incomplete. To make the leap to conceptual knowledge, to knowledge which reflects the real, cannot be attained without the Marxist method. This is why the fundamental way to overcome empiricism is to study Marxism conscientiously.

"It is only by studying conscientiously to gradually grasp the viewpoints of dialectical materialism and historical materialism that one can know the essence of things in a deep and comprehensive way, grasp the law of objective things, and enhance consciousness and avoid blindness in work." (Mao 'On Contradiction' Selected Readings 43, 1972 ('Overcoming Empiricism' Peking Review 43, 1972 p7)

IN THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE, THEORY IS PRIMARY AT THIS STAGE.

In the situation where practice is groping in the dark, when it is not illuminated by revolutionary theory, the main task is to grasp correct theory.

"The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy." (Mao 'On Contradiction' Selected Readings p116)

In the contradiction between theory and practice, theory is primary at this stage precisely because there is no guiding line or policy.

The predominant line which guides working class struggles in Britain is

a bourgeois one. The dominant aspect of these struggles is their spontaneous character, which, in the absence of Marxist-Leninist leadership means that they will take the form described by Lenin as "bourgeois working class politics". The main political tendencies active within the working class, and which have some influence in class struggles are those of revisionism, social democracy and Trotskyism. All these tendencies are varieties of opportunism and mislead the working class.

Revisionism has robbed Marxism of its class content. In the 1920's and 30's the young Communist Party of Great Britain was a genuine Communist Party which struggled to rally the vanguard of the working class in the fight against capitalism. Although, as M. McCreery has pointed out, there were shortcomings in its work, especially in the field of integrating Marxist-Leninist theory with concrete conditions, it was nevertheless in the forefront of class battles and played a significant role.

In the post-war period however opportunist elements began to gain control of the CPGB. As McCreery argued;

"The line of betrayal of working class interests, the argument that it was possible to transform social democracy, that it did not need to be exposed, emerged from the war years, from the complete subordination of the policy of the CPGB to the democratic anti-Fascist fight."

(M. McCreery 'The Way Forward' p4. republished by Workers Bookclub Glasgow)

This tendency was strengthened and confirmed when the CPSU was captured by bourgeois elements like Khrushchev after the death of Stalin. Today the CPGB holds up the fascist Soviet state as the 'land of socialism' and internally opposes struggle against capitalism, preferring to proceed along the line of 'realisable demands' which are 'acceptable' to capitalism. It puts forward these counter-revolutionary policies under the guise of Marxism and so spreads confusion in the ranks of the working class. It uses Marxism to spread bourgeois policies.

The Labour Party is the organized expression of social democracy in Britain. Again posing under the banner of socialism, it is in fact the best party of the bourgeoisie.

"In power the Labour Party serves the interests of the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie and launches fierce attacks on behalf of the bourgeoisie. In the course of these attacks the Labour government tries to hamstring the working class by posing as a genuine government of the class, and by bringing pressure on all reformist trade union leaders to accept its anti-working class policies."

('Boldly Combat Social Democracy in the Struggle to Overthrow Capitalism' Revolution 1 p24)

Trotskyism, whilst in words it opposes these other tendencies, in reality provides a 'left wing' excuse for them. It worships the spontaneity of the working class movement, but at the same time favours 'acceptable' demands, to vote Labour, or to nationalise industry, and it refuses to take a class stand on the nature of Soviet social imperialism.

All these tendencies are forms of bourgeois ideology in the working class movement. The proletarian party can only win over the vanguard of the working class in the course of smashing these opportunist tendencies.

"One of the indispensable conditions for the preparation of the proletariat for its victory is the protracted, determined and merciless

struggle against opportunism, reformism, social chauvinism and the influence of the bourgeois currents of this kind, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts in the conditions of capitalism." (Lenin 'The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat')

All these tendencies are road blocks on the road to the revolutionary Party of the working class. This is why Communists must begin to sweep away the mountains of theoretical confusion produced by such organizations as the CPGB and the Labour Party, by integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the British revolution. Genuine proletarian policies will be the main weapon in this struggle.

As Lenin points out, opportunism, reformism etc, are bourgeois currents, and they are inevitable "as long as the proletariat acts in the conditions of capitalism". These currents, although they wear the mask of 'Marxism' or socialism in fact oppose socialism and substitute bourgeois ideology in its place.

THE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS OF MARXISM-LENINISM

"For Marxism-Leninism is the theory created by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the basis of practice, their general conclusion drawn from historical and revolutionary reality." (Mao 'Selected Readings' p212)

This quote stresses that Marxist-Leninist theory is the generalisation of the experience of the workers' movement. It is essential to grasp this fact, and to combat the view that the 'Quotations From Mao Tsetung' are alright for the Chinese people but are of little relevance to British Communists, or that Lenin had a good grasp of the Russian situation, because he created a 'Russian' version of Marxism. The principal aspect of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao is not their particular national context, but that they sum up concisely the development of the science of Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the international workers' movement. These writings contain universal truths, which are applicable everywhere, at least during the present era.

Why is this so? Primarily this is because Marxism-Leninism rests on the materialist dialectical outlook. The materialist dialectical world outlook maintains that changes in nature are primarily due to the development of internal contradictions, and that changes in society are due to the development of the contradictions in society. The most important of these is the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradictions between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new. It is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and provides the basis for the supersession of the old society by the new. As Mao explains: *"There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist."* ('Selected Readings' p92) Marx and Engels based their conclusions on the analysis of the contradictions between the forces and relations of production, and between labour and capital:

"In his 'Capital' Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday relation of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this 'cell' of bourgeois society) analysis reveals all the contradictions (or the germs of all the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (both growth and movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the summation of its

individual parts, from its beginning to its end."
(Lenin quoted in Mao 'Selected Readings' p95)

Marx and Engels studied the contradictions specific to capitalist society. In so doing they were able to draw general conclusions which reflected reality. As they said in the 'Communist Manifesto', the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism, the 'general conclusions' are not invented out of the heads of great men:

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or discovered, by this or that would be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."

(*'Manifesto of the Communist Party'* Peking edition p50)

The truths of Marxism-Leninism are universal because contradiction exists in all things. But to ensure that knowledge reflects reality those universal truths must be integrated with the particular conditions. And, as Marx and Engels said, these conditions are under our very eyes. The general principles of Marxism-Leninism express actual relations springing from an existing class struggle.

The international working class movement provides many vivid examples of the need to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with concrete conditions. Analysing the contradictions of capitalism on a world scale Lenin was able to see that imperialism intensified all the contradictions of capitalism, and that it was the highest stage, the stage of moribund and declining capitalism.

By integrating this with the concrete conditions of Russia and learning from the existing class struggle of the workers and peasants against Tsarism, the Bolshevik Party put forward the strategy for proletarian revolution in Russia - the first socialist revolution in the world.

The Communist Party of China has pointed out:

"Stalin said, 'Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.' This is entirely correct. Since Lenin's death the world situation has undergone great changes. But the era has not changed. The fundamental principles of Leninism are not outdated; they remain the theoretical basis guiding our thinking today."

(*'Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPC'* p21)

Through grasping the laws of materialist dialectics and learning from the existing class struggle, Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao summed up important stages of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and deepened and extended Marxism-Leninism. This is why the indirect experience of the international working class movement is of major importance at this stage of the struggle in Britain.

INVESTIGATION OF CONCRETE CONDITIONS, AND INTEGRATION WITH THE MASSES ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO INTEGRATE THEORY WITH PRACTICE.

At the present stage, theory is primary in the contradiction between theory and practice, and indirect experience is primary over direct. But to say this does not mean that we will become good Marxist-Leninists through book learning alone. This would be to fall again into the right opportunist error of intellectualism. To combat this we must grasp why we

struggle against opportunism, reformism, social chauvinism and the influence of the bourgeois currents of this kind, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts in the conditions of capitalism."
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struggle to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with concrete conditions.

This underlines the point that the great Marxist-Leninist leaders were not just 'brilliant theoreticians'. They integrated with the working class and they learned from them. To give just one example, it was the heroic struggle of the French proletariat during the Paris Commune of 1870 which taught Marx the key lesson that the working class could not simply lay hold of the bourgeois state, but must smash this state and build a new, proletarian one. This truth has been a key line of demarcation between genuine Marxist-Leninists and revisionists and opportunists ever since. And it was a lesson first taught by the working class themselves.

Failure to take a bold working class stand, and to learn from the masses when solving problems will mean that there will be no criteria for distinguishing correct from incorrect ideas:-

"The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge." ('Quotations', p118. Emphasis added)

Solving a problem through investigation depends on the mass line. This is another aspect of the struggle to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions. The process of investigation lays the basis for proletarian policies which give direction to the struggle against the bourgeoisie. This also depends on combining the indirect experience of the international workers' movement with the experience of the masses at a particular stage of struggle. It is necessary to learn from the masses, to concentrate their experience, to sum it up in the light of Marxist theory. If this is done well, then the masses will come forward and embrace correct ideas:-

"Twenty four years of experience tell us that the right task, policy and style of work invariably conform with the demands of the masses at a given time and place and invariably strengthen our ties with the masses, and the wrong task, policy and style of work invariably disagree with the demands of the masses at a given time and place and invariably alienate us from the masses." ('Quotations', p123)

THE CORRECT LINE EMERGES THROUGH STRUGGLE

Another aspect of integrating the truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions is that of the struggle between correct ideas and incorrect ideas. Two-line struggle inside Communist Parties reflects class struggle within society. Even when some Marxist-Leninist principles have been grasped, and progress has been made in investigation and integration with the working class, the correct line and policy for a given situation will not emerge for all to see, with the label 'correct line' stamped on it. Again the history of the international workers' movement shows this to be true. A recent article in 'Peking Review' pointed out:-

"The entire history of the international communist movement is in fact a history of the struggle between Marxism on the one hand and opportunism and revisionism on the other, a history of the struggle between the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary line and opportunist and revisionist lines of all descriptions. Truth develops in the course of struggle with the false." ('Peking Review', no.43 1976, p18)

The struggles of Marx and Engels against opportunist trends and the struggles of Lenin against the revisionism of the Second International produced great lessons for the working class movement which we study and apply today - especially in the struggle for a proletarian line against modern revisionism and social democracy. Correct ideas emerge in the course of struggle against incorrect ideas, both inside and outside the Party.

Investigation, integration with the masses, learning from the masses and struggle against incorrect ideas - all these are aspects of integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the British revolution. Through study and hard struggle revolutionary Communists can master these aspects and carry forward the struggle for a correct line. When we have begun to master these we will be putting forward ideas that reflect the concrete situation. In the words of the 'Communist Manifesto' our conclusions will *"express...actual relations springing from an existing class struggle."*

When we have mastered this, and begun to test our ideas in practice, the masses, at first the advanced elements, will come forward and embrace them. This is why we struggle for correct ideas. Revolutionary Communists struggle for policies, not for self-cultivation, but to give direction in the struggle of the working class to smash the bourgeoisie. It is only when correct ideas are grasped by the masses that they can become a material force capable of organising the working class into a united and invincible force.

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CLASS STRUGGLE

Today the two superpowers, Soviet Social Imperialism and United States imperialism threaten the peoples of the whole world. The two superpowers speak 'detente' and prepare for war.

British imperialism, wounded and limping, still throws its weight around, tries to oppress and exploit countries like Ireland, the Arab countries, Southern Africa, and Iceland. At home it steps up its attacks on the working class with massive job cuts, pay cuts, and cuts in essential services, in a desperate attempt to resolve the crisis of decaying capitalism.

There is only one answer to these problems. The working class itself must come forward, lead the people in opposition to the superpowers, and overthrow the British imperialist ruling class by force.

The working class must speak out loud and clear. It must speak out in its own voice, the voice of no other class. It must speak out strongly to rally its forces and build a truly revolutionary Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class.

'Class Struggle' is being published to help the working class rally its forces and build that revolutionary Communist Party. It is the organ of the National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

'Class Struggle' is primarily a propagandist paper aimed at the class-conscious vanguard. Its main aspect is to present 'many ideas to the few', to win over the advanced workers to Marxism-Leninism.

The central task of building the revolutionary Communist Party guides every aspect of the paper. In the task of rallying the working class vanguard to build the Party, it serves the central mass work task: building Communist bases in the industrial working class.

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