

# MILQ

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# Marxist Leninist QUARTERLY

## THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

The C.F.B.(M-L) is an organisation of Communists whose purpose is to help create the conditions to form a revolutionary party. The rising level of struggle against all oppression in Britain will not effectively challenge the ruling-class until the lessons of these struggles are widely understood by the working-class and its allies. A disciplined party guided by scientific socialism is needed to lead in this process of raising the struggle to a conscious political level.

No such party exists. The historical contradictions leading to the split in the international Communist movement in the early 1960's have not yet been resolved and the lessons applied to the actual conditions existing generally in Western Europe. Without this being done there will be no guiding political line and programme and no unity within the Marxist-Leninist movement.

The C.F.B.(M-L) is comprised of groups of Marxist-Leninists who have been working together since 1967 to aid in this vital task of forming a party. It has consistently worked to achieve this goal by combining two forms of political work.

FIRSTLY: We study the main problems facing the British people and the world revolutionary movement, applying the scientific socialist method developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung.

SECONDLY: We engage in immediate struggles on the main issues of exploitation and oppression.

We believe that only in combining the lessons of both these forms of political work can a correct line be developed. Without such a guiding line and programme the struggles on all the vital and immediate issues will continue to demonstrate the treadmill characteristics of the last 150 years.

In developing this line we recognise the need to destroy the influence of social democracy, revisionism and Trotskyism - the main defeatist ideological trends which act to disarm the working-class.

We understand that as all these tasks are increasingly achieved it will become possible to build a mass revolutionary movement capable of withstanding ruling-class attacks and finally of overthrowing and smashing the present system and its State machine. The working class and its party will then implement its own dictatorship over the present employing class to build socialism and prevent the restoration of capitalism.

Our basic policy document is 'The Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain; Origins and Perspectives' published in 1969. Readers wanting to know more about our policy and political work should contact their local group or the Secretary of the C.F.B.

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Signed articles in M.L.Q. do not necessarily represent the political line of the C.F.B.(M-L)

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

In this issue of MLQ we introduce 2 features which will be permanent additions to the journal. Firstly, we shall be featuring 'Political Notes' prepared by different comrades on current national and international trends and developments. We hope that this will invoke discussions on these issues. Secondly, we announce the start of a correspondence column on any aspect of MLQ. All are invited to contribute.

In this issue we publish 2 articles, a national CFB resolution on the situation in Ireland, and our present analysis of the national and international situation, passed at the 2nd Special General Meeting of the CFB in February.

The first article traces the development of the Bolshevik Party in the light of the developments in the Communist International and the struggle with the Mensheviks in the period at the end of the last century and the first 2 decades of this one. It gives us some interesting lessons in the fight against opportunism for the formation of a genuine Communist Party.

The second article, "On the 'Usefulness' of the Economics of Partition, attempts to destroy one of the central premises of the British and Irish Communist Organisation, that it was not British imperialism but progressive Protestantism that led to the uneven development of capitalism in Ireland. In doing so, it is also a reply to an article by EK in MLQ 6.

As readers of previous issues of MLQ will know, there has been a debate going on in the Federation on the question of the present struggle in Ireland (see MLQ's 4, 5, 6). This has been resolved in a General Meeting held in the middle of May, at which the 2 resolutions printed in this issue were passed. The first was passed with an overwhelming majority and the second was passed unanimously.

We are also publishing, along with an introduction, our present analysis of the national and international situations as passed at the 2nd Special General Meeting of the CFB. These are important documents, which we hope will stimulate discussion in the movement.

We hope that these new features will please readers and that readers will contribute by article or letter to any of the points made in MLQ.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

POLITICAL NOTES

## EXPOSE THE "REFORMISTS OF EVERY STRIPE AND HUE"

The 7th Labour Government was returned to Parliamentary office with the declared intentions to :-

- a) "Bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families;
- b) Eliminate poverty wherever it exists in Britain and commit ourselves to a substantial increase in our contribution to fight poverty abroad;
- c) Make power in industry genuinely accountable to the workers and the community at large;
- d) Achieve far greater economic equality - in income, wealth and living standards.
- e) Increase social equality by giving far greater importance to full employment, housing, education and social benefits;
- f) Improve the environment in which our people live and work and spend their leisure."

(The Labour Party Manifesto - 1974).

The above aims, written in the language of gradualism and reformism are, even so, very laudable, and would understandably gain the support of very many workers who had no knowledge of the integrity of the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party or more importantly any objective analysis of the treacherous role played by Social Democratic policies in the long history of the British working class movement. The 1974 Manifesto ends with the following:-

"The task will not be easy. But we repudiate the despairing gospel preached in some quarters that the British people cannot govern themselves and that they have lost the art to act cohesively, through their various democratic institutions, as a civilised community. That charge comes most insultingly from a Conservative Government which has adopted so many devices to corrode or destroy the power of those democratic institutions - local authorities, the Trades Unions, the House of Commons itself. These are the very instruments which Labour will use to restore and enhance the power of British democracy."

No Marxist would consider that the aims and the methods described to achieve them is a step on the road to Socialism. But it is necessary for revolutionaries to understand that the sentiments expressed in the Manifesto were a reflection of struggles inside the Labour Party and Trade Unions against suppression of working class rights and organisations, and against the autocratic and blatant class collaborationist policies of Labour leaders. There are few indications that the many people who have fought, and continue to fight, inside the 'official movement', for progressive policies, have begun to make the all-important decisive break with Social Democracy and to come to grips with Marxism-Leninism as the 'educator, organiser and agitator' in the fight for Socialism. The prime responsibility for this necessary and qualitative shift lies on the shoulders of the existing Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain.

Our ability to gain credibility and leadership among the working class, both inside and outside the formal official Labour movement, will very largely be determined by the methods we use to expose and smash the grip that Social democracy has on the organisations and consciousness of the British Working Class. Whatever methods are evolved in this crucial aspect of the struggle, it can be said with certainty that to dismiss Social democracy and its prime British expression - the Labour Party - as being irrelevant to the struggle for Socialism is to ignore British Working Class history and to rely upon spontaneous class development in a period of intense crisis for the ruling class. If revolutionaries, through fear of contamination, refuse to enter the arena of Social democracy, and confine their involvement with the decision making processes of the official Labour Movement to critical readings of the reports in THE TIMES or the GUARDIAN, they can rest assured that in protecting their own purity they will be leaving the door wide open for the forces of extreme reaction - jingoism, racialism and 'discipline of the militants' - to gain dominance, as Social democracy shows its true colours as bourgeois democracy collapses under the stresses of the capitalist crisis. Neither can the M/L movement adopt the objectively contemptuous attitude to the working class as displayed by the Communist Party of Great Britain and some Trotskyist organisations (notably the REvolutionary Workers Party) in seeing the struggle as primarily a question of the role of the present leaderships of the official movement. The hold that Social democracy has in Britain goes much deeper than indicated by a reliance on the capture of official positions by militants (C.P.G.B.) or to present the failure of all working class struggles to develop into massive and conscious confrontations with the British state as solely the responsibility of treacherous social democratic leaders. R.W.P.)

### THE PARTY AND THE CLASS

The structure and understanding of the Working Class Movement in Britain has been formed over centuries of class struggle practically uninfluenced by the ideas of scientific socialism. In the battles in the Trade Union Movement of the 19th century for the creation of a political party that would express the view of the organised working class, Marxists were hardly in any position of influence. It is true that both Marx and Engels devoted considerable time and effort to the campaign for the formation of a Workers' Political Party, but in the event when the Labour Party was formed in 1906 it was dominated by Trade Union reformism, Co-operativism and Fabianism. Since then the Labour Party has gained and held the allegiance of the vast majority of the working class who are consciously opposed to Toryism and the establishment. The betrayals of the Working Class by the Hendersons, Macdonalds, Attlees and Wilsons could have been foreseen by anyone with an understanding of the realities of class power and a knowledge of the composition and aims of the Labour Party, long before the first Labour Government in 1924. Indeed, as early as 1920 Lenin exposed the role of the Labour Party in his famous work - "Left Wing Communism - an Infantile Disorder"; he also, of course, fully recognised the influence that Social democracy had in the Working Class Movement and that in order to combat it, it was imperative that revolutionaries entered the arena of social democracy in order to destroy it.

4.

" ..... but - and this is the whole point - we must not regard that which is obsolete for us as obsolete for the class, as obsolete for the masses. It is precisely here that we see that the "Lefts" do not know how to reason, do not know how to conduct themselves as a Party of the class, as a party of the masses. You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices - prejudices. But at the same time you must soberly observe the actual state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only the Communist vanguard), of all the toiling masses (not only of its advanced elements)."

(Lenin - 'Left Wing Communism')

Lenin's advice was indisputedly correct over fifty years ago. Today with the 7th Labour administration in office and fifty years of failure by the Communist Movement to fulfil the tasks set it, how much more important it is for the M/L Movement to firstly understand the depth of social democratic prejudice existing in the Working Class and secondly, the opportunities presented to it in its ability to draw upon the experiences of not only the present Labour Government but also the previous six. Many people in Britain who claim to be Marxists will shout from the rooftops their desire to smash capitalism and will portray the Labour Party as an agent of the bourgeoisie, but will not be familiar with either the Labour Party manifesto or the decisions of the 1973 Labour Party Conference, or of prime importance, have any understanding or knowledge of the alignment of forces in the official movement that have determined the present policy position of the Labour Government. It is impossible to imagine how these self-styled Marxist-Leninists will be able to demonstrate to themselves let alone to the masses the treacherous role of betrayal that this Labour Government will continue to play for its full term in office.

#### THE PROGRAMME AND THE PRACTICE

The decision of the 1973 Labour Party Conference and the 1974 Election Manifesto were probably the most 'progressive' policies adopted by the Labour Party since 1945, and if they were to be honoured would undoubtedly be met by bitter opposition from the entrenched big business and financial interests in Britain and abroad. However, the reality of the situation is that the Labour Party leaders were negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a massive loan to overcome "Britain's crisis" almost before they took office in February 1974. The terms for such 'assistance' can only mean an intensification of the attacks upon the living standards and organisations of the working class. For the Labour Party to enact even a moderate reformist programme of some benefit to the working class during a period of intense problems for monopoly capitalism - massive balance of payments deficit, raging inflation, lack of investment in basic industries etc. - would require the support and involvement of the working class outside of the apparatus of State Government developed in Britain over the centuries. This, of course, would be a complete departure from the whole philosophy and actions of the L.P. since its formation, because for all its twists and turns on policy matters central to its whole existence has been a complete adherence to the Parliamentary system of Government. In other words, the dependence on the approval of the Monopoly Capitalist State Machine for any measures on which it legislates.

The 1974 Manifesto states :-

" ..... Labour's determination to ensure not only that the North Sea and Celtic Sea oil and gas resources are in full public ownership, but that the operation of getting and distributing them is under full Government control .....

It took 3 Labour Governments to nationalise the coal industry, and it only then took place when the industry had so stagnated that it was no longer a viable proposition for private capital to make the necessary investments in order that coal could be an efficient prop to the rest of the privately owned manufacturing industries. How many Labour Governments will it require before the booming profits of the oil companies operating in Britain are brought under "full public ownership"? Are these Companies who in the first few months of 1974 made larger profits than ever before, and whose budgets exceed those of many States, going to stand idly by whilst their "Midas Touch" investments are taken out of their hands? Or more relevantly, is a Labour Party with its complete commitment to bourgeois democracy, and with its track record of seventy years going to embark on that challenge? In such a situation it is imperative that the Marxist-Leninist Movement is seen by the forces who have fought for the inclusion of such a clause in the Labour Party Manifesto to be campaigning for the Labour Government to carry out its pledge. In this way we can in practice demonstrate the real class character of Social democracy and gain credibility in the struggle for Socialist consciousness in the working class movement. When Dennis Healey in May 1974 stated :-

"No-one now believes that profit is a dirty word, if profit is honestly earned and put to proper social use"

he gave revolutionaries a valuable weapon in the fight to break the stranglehold that Social democracy has over large sections of politically aware workers, who still see the Labour Party and Parliament as vehicles in the fight for Socialism.

For the M/L Movement to earn a position of leadership in working class struggle it is necessary for it to be active participants in all the economic/political struggles embarked on by the working class. An important feature in the coming months will be the campaigns inside and outside of the official movement for the Labour Government to honour its Manifesto and for it to be answerable to its policy making Conference. It will be an act of criminal infantilism for Marxist-Leninists to stand aside from these campaigns and to say that we know the inevitable role of Labour Governments, and therefore we will stand aside from the struggles.

Below are some of the key decisions made by the 1973 Labour Party Conference :-

#### Food Subsidies

..... "Conference instructs the next Labour Government to reintroduce food subsidies to enable a cheap food policy to be a central plank of its election Manifesto ....."

#### Prices and Incomes

"This Conference declares its opposition to any wage restraint or incomes policy designed to solve the problems of the economy by cutting the standards of living of workers ....."

Taxation

"This Conference recognising the persistent increase in the inequality of incomes and in wealth in this country, reaffirms the principle of equality as a foundation stone of the Labour Movement .....

"The next Labour Government must therefore raise supplementary and National Insurance benefits and Family Allowances, which should also be payable for the first child."

Public Ownership

- 1) "This Conference considers that industry will best serve the people of the country when they control it, through public ownership."
- 2) "Conference further believes in explaining all the benefits of a Socialist society and an economy planned for the needs of and under the control of the people."

Housing and Land

"Conference demands that the next Labour Government should eliminate private landlordism ....."

Clay Cross

"..... Conference further agrees that upon the election of a Labour Government all penalties, financial or otherwise, should be removed retrospectively from Councillors who have courageously refused to implement the Housing Finance Act 1972."

Education

"This Conference urges the next Labour Government to introduce a new Education Act which would make education effectively free for all children ....."

(This would include school uniform subsidies, free school materials, free school dinners, free school milk, free travel passes)

Common Market

"This Conference reaffirms the Conference decision that a Labour Government should submit the issue of the E.E.C. to the electorate for decision ....."

Chile

"Conference condemns the precipitate action of the British Government in recognising the military junta ..... and withholds all aid loans and credit from the military regime ....."



## South Africa

"This Conference :-

- a) recognising that the situation in South Africa is the key to progress or disaster in Southern Africa as a whole .....
- b) calls upon the next Labour Government to take urgent action to reduce drastically British economic involvement in South Africa, to stop all British Government assistance to British firms wishing to trade with or invest in South Africa, to end all other financial links including export credits, loans and grants, to bring about the withdrawal of all or part of existing British investment and to establish machinery to prevent any further investment ....."

The above extracts from the 1973 L.P. Conference decisions demonstrate the area in which Marxist-Leninists can work and have a dialogue with many honest workers who still have a commitment to the Labour Party. These policies are not presented here as vehicles of achieving workers' power, because indeed they are far removed from that, nor are they presented as issues around which we should campaign to make Social democracy and Parliament work in the interests of the working class but as a basis from which we can show the inability of Social democratic policies and methods to make any inroads into control of State monopoly capitalism. Therein lies a fundamental difference between Marxist-Leninists and the revisionist C.P.G.B.

## THE SOCIAL COMPACT/WAGE FREEZE

A central feature of this and previous Governments (both Labour and Tory) has been in the field of industrial relations. The term 'Industrial Relations' has been used to euphemistically describe the diametrically opposed positions of capital and labour in industry. All the major political parties have through the various propaganda machines at their disposal attempted to blur the edges of industrial strife and to convince workers that we are all part of one nation and should work together for the common good. But no matter how successful the propaganda may have been in some areas, the realities of industrial life are that workers will continue to struggle for higher wages and better conditions and will create the type of organisation necessary for such struggles. Though it is true that very often the type of organisation will only be formed some time after the objective conditions have existed for its formation. In spite of the subjectively apolitical character of very many Trade Union leaderships and the consequent class collaborationist policies adopted by them, both Labour and Tory Governments in the interests of State Monopoly Capitalism, have found it necessary to attempt to legislate against the Trade Unions. We had the ill-fated 'In place of Strife' of Barbara Castle and the soon to be repealed 'Industrial Relations Act' of the Tories. The Labour Government is also pledged to a policy of non-interference in collective bargaining and consequently is banking on the 'Social Compact' as the instrument to control the organised working class. Though as yet no details have been made known of what this means, we do know from past experience that it will be yet another attempt to use the formal structures and strictures of the official Trade Union Movement to control and discipline its members. Already Michael Foot (the leader of the 'Left' Labour) has opened the campaign

when he addressed the AUEW (Eng. Section) National Committee at the time it was deciding its attitude both to the C.S.E.U. wage, holiday, hours and equal pay claim, and to the sequestration of its funds by N.I.R.C. He preached moderation on both and asked for loyalty from the Trade Unions to their Labour Government. Whilst the AUEW responded to N.I.R.C. by a historic and successful strike, on the question of the C.S.E.U. claim following the advice of its President, Hugh Scanlon (the leader of the 'Left' Trade Unions), it capitulated and in the words of Jim Griffin, one of its leading right wingers, it gave a 'victory to the moderates'. In reality it was the first victory of the unspecified 'Social Compact'. In the coming months the battle for direction of the Trade Unions in its dealing with the Labour Government will be crucial for the whole movement.

We know from past and bitter experience that TU leaderships will only on very rare occasions confront the power of the State and in some ways the struggles against the bureaucracies in TU leadership becomes even more difficult when a Labour Party is in Westminster. This of course is understandable if we realise the depth of loyalty to the organisations and methods of Social democracy inherent in the official working class movement. At the same time it gives to Marxist-Lenists tremendous opportunities to make inroads in the social democratic and parliamentary prejudices existing in the working class, and at the same time demonstrate the inadequacies of leadership based on reformism both in the Labour Party and in the Trade Unions. Again, if we as revolutionaries first stand aside from these struggles for Trade Union direction and consciousness, we will allow the forces of reaction and class cynicism to gain domination.

#### OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE

In 1924 the first Labour Government took office in a somewhat similar situation to the present administration. It was a minority Government, the British economy was in financial crisis, and the ever present struggle between capital and labour was becoming acute at the point of production. In the early days of the 1924 Government a strike of 110,000 dockers took place that was sold out within 3 days. At the time the architect of the sell-out, Ernest Bevin, is reputed to have said :-

"I only wish it had been a Tory Government in office. We would not have been frightened by their threats. But we were put in the position of having to listen to the appeal of our own people."

(A HISTORY OF BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM - Pelling)

(Bevin of course was frightened by the threats of the Tories in 1926 when he played a prominent role in the sell-out of the 1926 Strike).

During this period of blatant class collaboration by Labour and TU leaderships a cynicism developed in the ranks of the working class towards what it had considered were its own organisations. In 1920 the TU membership in Britain was 8,348,000; by 1933 it had dropped to 4,392,000.

The fight for direction of the TU's will not be successful if it is fought on the conscious basis of expecting Social Democratic TU leaders to lead struggles and activate campaigns to expose Social Democratic Labour Party leaders.

The Marxist Leninist Movement must campaign for democracy in the TU's and be seen as a leading force in the fight against the collaborationist policies of the TU bureaucracies. This will be done only by campaigning from within and without the official TU's on policies geared to involve the maximum participation of the rank and file in the organisations that they have created and finance. The struggle for direction will be a decisive factor in determining the ground for the coming struggles with the Labour Government, the outcome of these struggles and the development of class consciousness amongst many militant workers who will find themselves in unexpected but bitter conflict with both their TU leaders and the Labour Government. The fight for direction of the TU's cannot either be confined to the elect-ioneeing arena of obtaining TU official positions for militants. The record and role of the CPGB over many years has shown the futility and the dangers involved in these tactics. In the late 1940s the CPGB through its TU officials had a bureaucratic control of the ETU, the Fire Brigades Union, the Foundry Workers; they had extremely powerful positions in the National Union of Mine-workers, a strong position on the leadership of the AEU, and 9 members of the Executive Committee of the T&GWU. Today they have a much reduced position of influence in the official circles of the Trade Unions, and neither have they achieved any depth of political awareness amongst the rank and file that should have developed from such a strong organisational position. In real terms their political position in both the Trade Unions and the wider movement is one of being a left appendage to Social democracy as expressed by the Labour Party. It is true to say that of all 'left' parties and groupings existing in Britain the CPGB remains the most influential in the Trade Unions and consequently in the broad Labour movement, though because as an organisation it has long since ceased to be a revolutionary organisation its influence is as described above and at best it plays the role of a left and sometimes militant ginger group. Evidence of its desire to be seen as a respectable influence in Social Democratic circles can be gauged by the treatment, or rather non-treatment, of leading 'lefts' such as Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon by the MORNING STAR on such issues of sell-out as the Ford strike of a few years ago (the first secret ballot due to legislation), Phase III legislation the last two CSEU claims and their advocacy of the Social Compact. However, there still remain many individual CP members who are militant and courageous fighters against the boss, and again the Marxist-Leninist movement must work in such a way as to win these people to revolutionary politics by involvement in the struggles for direction, democracy and consciousness in the Trade Unions.

### "Shod on all Four Feet"

The above is an attempt to pose some of the relevant questions facing the Marxist-Leninist Movement in its attitudes and tactics to a Labour Government in Westminster. I have dealt primarily with aspects of the struggle inside the official and existing working class movement; this of course is only one side of the all-embracing struggle for a Marxist-Leninist party in Britain capable of winning the confidence and leadership of the working class in its struggle for power. It is, as Plekhanov pointed out, necessary

for the movement to be 'shod on all four feet!'. To expose and defeat Social democracy in all spheres of the working class it will be necessary to build organisations and stimulate campaigns outside of the confines of what is possible in the official movement. These activities are inter-related, and the success of one aspect will be largely determined by the success of the others. A conscious revolutionary involvement in all aspects of class struggle goes hand in hand with the development of the programme and organisation of a Marxist-Leninist Party. Economic and political struggles of the working class in all arenas where they take place will reflect themselves by necessity in the organisational forms and political stances adopted by a revolutionary party. If that party stands aside from aspects of the struggle of the class it claims to represent and be part of, for reasons of its own purity or conceit in the completeness of its own knowledge and analysis, then it will be correctly rejected by the working class as having no credibility in its claims to be the vanguard organisation of the class.

"Day-to-day propaganda and agitation must be of a genuinely Communist character. All press organs controlled by the parties must be edited by reliable Communists who have demonstrated their fidelity to the cause of proletarian revolution. Dictatorship of the proletariat should be discussed not simply as a set formula, but popularised in a way that will bring home its necessity to every rank and file working man and working woman, soldier and peasant. It should follow from the practical facts systematically publicised in our press. Third International supporters must use every available medium - the press, public meetings, Trade Unions, co-operative societies - systematically and relentlessly to expose not only the bourgeoisie but also its abettors, the reformists of every stripe and hue."

(Conditions for affiliation to the Third International 1920).

Dick Jones

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPOSED DOCUMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL SITUATIONS

Britain in the seventies is going through historic and radical change. Never in the post-World War Two period have the economic and political struggles of British workers been so widespread and hard hitting. Never before in this period has the failure of parties claiming to lead the way towards socialism in Britain been so explicit as it is now. The need for a revolutionary party is being felt by a growing number of class-conscious workers.

A revolutionary party cannot be created by proclamation. Its programme and policies cannot be copied from another party's documents. Such a party has to be created by applying the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism in the concrete condition of Britain. Only concrete practice guided by Marxism-Leninism can bring the revolutionary theory, without which there can be no revolutionary party.

The years of activity of the Communist Party of Great Britain have produced little or no revolutionary theory, because for a considerable period of its existence the CPGB has followed an incorrect method of work. A 'revisionist' decision-making process controlled by a bureaucratic leadership attempting to mechanically follow the policies of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has ended in tragic and abysmal failures. The process is to be rejected totally.

Thus in Britain the young Marxist-Leninist movement is left with no other option than to carry out its work without adequate revolutionary theory available, let alone an established strategy. How do we go about developing such theory and strategy? With the help of interim or working policies based on the existing knowledge of different political fields of struggle, we shall change our environment and develop theory, and train cadres in mass work. These interim policies or 'working lines' which we intend to formulate and present to the Marxist-Leninist movement and the broad labour movement in the coming months for discussion, will guide our involvement in immediate struggles, bringing out the components of the required strategy.

But in the absence of a strategy, practice in different fields of struggle cannot be co-ordinated and could even be largely unproductive, unless these are related to a broad understanding of the international and national situations in which we find ourselves today. By continually relating the different struggles to these broad pictures we can develop deeper understanding of all struggles i.e. grasping the essence of capitalism and imperialism today, determining the stage of the revolutionary process we are at now and the future that awaits us. Finally, in the light of the historical experiences of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist countries we shall be able to construct a strategy - a 'programme' for the British revolution.

With this objective in mind, we devoted a large part of our time in our Second Special General Meeting held last February to summing up our preliminary findings on the present international and national situations, which we have presented in the following pages. Preliminary as they are, only from a reconnaissance survey, there has been an emphasis on formulating principles, developing a Marxist-Leninist methodology to be used in subsequent investigations. This is the most significant aspect of the two statements presented.

As we embark on an analysis of the international and national situations for the first time in the Marxist-Leninist movement we, as expected, have found ourselves in conflicting positions in some cases. Our understandings of present-day imperialism differ. And while we unanimously recognise that the US and the USSR are the two main enemies, differences arise as to their relative strengths and weaknesses. It is agreed that the Soviet leadership is Social-imperialism, in Lenin's sense of the term, although since a substantial minority do not accept the 'social-imperialist' characterisation of the Soviet state, such characterisation has been dropped from the statements. A large minority does not agree with the statement made about internal and external contradictions and thus does not accept some implications regarding Socialist diplomacy drawn in this document. There are differences on the question of relative rates of degeneration in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries.

In the statement on the national situation we have primarily drawn the lines of demarcation between ourselves and those whom we consider as diversionary tendencies in the working class movement. But the failure to develop a positive Marxist-Leninist position indicates the political and theoretical weakness of the movement.

We present the two statements to the Marxist-Leninist and broad labour movement. Like any documents guided by Marxism-Leninism, these are by no means final positions. The correctness or incorrectness of the various positions contained in the statements can only be tested in practice, improved upon and used as guides. The significance of these documents lies in the role they can play as a perspective for the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain, and we therefore hope that this document will initiate a debate within the Marxist-Leninist movement on the concrete issues faced by us.

In Summer 1969 the ideological and political standpoints on most basic questions facing the revolutionary movement in Britain at the time were stated by the Joint Committee of Communists, the forerunner of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in a document entitled 'Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain, Origins and Perspectives'. The document sought to place the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain within its recent historical context and to point the direction for future development. Analysing the

concrete conditions, it examined the fragmentation of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain and argued that only by acknowledging the actual state of the movement can an understanding of the possible path of unity and progress be grasped.

In the CFB we have come to the position of recognising the struggle for a political programme for the British revolution as the struggle to build the party itself. We maintain that for too long we have held the incorrect view that the programmatic work is something that is to be and can be separated from the task of party-building and time is somehow not 'ripe' for such work. Rejecting this erroneous view, we now place the development of a programme and the programme itself in the centre of all our activities. It is not enough to recognise that unity can only be achieved through struggles. It is more important to understand that struggles must be carried out systematically, and this can only be done round the concept of a programme. The present document is the first step towards it.

## Section B. WORLD SITUATION

### Main Contradictions

3. Without a correct world view of revolutionary development no organisation can pursue correct policies in its own country. In this, as in all other spheres of work, 'the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything'. Our own general line on the present international situation is based on recognition of the four main contradictions in the world today. These are :

1. between the oppressed nations on the one hand and imperialism and Soviet revisionism on the other
2. between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in the capitalist and between the proletariat and new ruling forces in the revisionist countries
3. between the imperialist and Soviet revisionist and among the imperialist countries
4. between socialist countries on the one hand and imperialism and Soviet revisionism on the other.

### Imperialism - the main enemies

4. The key feature of a real understanding of the world today is that since the beginning of the imperialist era, imperialism has been the main enemy of the world's peoples. Towards the end of the 19th century, capitalism due to the development of its productive forces and the surplus value at its disposal turned to the export of capital in its inherent drive for maximum profit. This introduced the era of super profit and imperialism to the world.

5. Throughout the 20th century collusion and contention have characterised the relations between different imperialist powers

in the continual striving of each to extend its own sphere of domination. The early domination of British imperialism began to decline rapidly following the 1914-18 War and by 1945 it had given place to the domination of US imperialism. The Russian Revolution of 1917 challenged the imperialist domination of power in the world and created a base for the extension of the democratic and proletarian revolutions.

6. During recent years imperialism has further concentrated its finances and power through the development of the multinational corporations. Also, it is rapidly changing its form from colonialism to neo-colonialism. Another new and complex development in economic relations between the countries is resulting from the economic changes that are taking place as the revisionist Soviet Union continually degenerates.

7. In terms of active military involvement, the US remains the most aggressive enemy of the peoples of the world. REFERRED. Its developed resources, its overseas financial assets, are still many times greater than any other state. Its active counter-revolutionary role in the world is as naked as ever. Its huge subversive organisations are daily busy planning and organising aggressions, interference or control in small or militarily weak nations. US intervention, covert and overt, has been responsible for the overthrow of governments like those of Iran ('53), Guatemala ('54), Indonesia ('65), Greece ('67), Cambodia ('70) and Chile ('73). US imperialism remains determined to export counter-revolution.

8. The next most powerful state in the world is the USSR. The Russian Revolution of 1917 brought in the era of Socialist revolutions. Today, the policies of the Soviet leaders are directed against the oppressed nations and the world's revolutionary forces. The foreign policies of the Soviet Union today closely approach those of an imperialist country. The pre-existing economic and political agreements with the East European countries have changed into unequal relations as indicated by the doctrine of 'limited sovereignty' which followed the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the 'socialist international division of labour'. The Comecon, from being an organisation of mutual assistance and co-operation, has become an exploitative instrument in the hands of the Soviet Union, characterised by its aid and trade policies. These policies include tying aid to the purchase of Soviet goods, often of inferior quality, and insistence on fixed period interest-bearing loans. In these, and in the tri-continental countries, the Soviet leaders have conducted policies that fit them to Lenin's description of the Second International leaders as 'Social Imperialists'. The reluctance of the Soviet Union to supply arms to the Palestinians to re-establish their national rights, accompanied by vacillations and manoeuvres in Middle East politics, refusal to recognise the legitimate Government of Cambodia led by Sihanouk until the latter's victory became certain, are clear indications of the Soviet backing of the national liberation struggles only to the extent that they can control and divert them. The relative increase in supplies of arms to North Vietnam after the mid-sixties was thus to check the fast deterioration in Soviet-North Vietnam relationship, and was meant to exert pressure on the latter. The



20-year Indo-Soviet treaty is a military pact, the nature and extent of which has hardly any parallel in the tri-continent. While realising this basic change in the Soviet foreign policy, we must recognise that we are theoretically inadequate in this area until we have a fuller understanding of how this happened, and until we have developed a class analysis of the present Soviet state and have examined closely the specific structure of its political economy.

9. Politically, the US and the USSR play the same role. The US is undoubtedly in a much better position to export counter-revolution directly and through puppet regimes, while the active military involvement of the USSR is restricted at the moment to certain areas of the world only. However, the ideological effect of Soviet revisionism acts as a counter-revolutionary force against progressive movements throughout the world, while the USSR is posing as their ally. Thus, strategically the two combined are the main enemies of the world's peoples. Tactically, one or the other will be the dominant hostile force depending on the specific situation in different countries and areas of the world. It will be adventurism not to take note of the specific strength that the US possesses, and it will be opportunism if we choose to depict the Soviet Union as merely a country 'betraying' the world's revolutionary forces.

10. The objective weaknesses of imperialism in general, and the US in particular, are today more pronounced than ever. Following the 1939-45 War, increasing areas of the world were removed from the imperialist orbit. National liberation struggles have dealt great blows to imperialism. Rivalries between imperialist powers are intense, and trade and currency wars are increasingly featuring in their relations. The 'dollar empire' received a considerable blow with the ending of dollar-gold convertibility, in August 1971, while such pacts as SEATO and CENTO have become considerably weak. This decline has been reflected in the inability of the US to control fully the UN over the past few years. In this situation the crisis-ridden US administration has been increasingly unable to cope with the rising struggles of its own people who play an important part in the anti-Vietnam war movement. In the immediate sense the US is still a real tiger, but its essentially paper nature becomes clearer year by year.

11. In the epoch of the collapse of imperialism the fate of the Soviet revisionism cannot be any better than that of the US. The treacherous role that Soviet revisionism plays is being increasingly recognised by the peoples of the world.

### Fight against Imperialism

#### The tri-continent

12. Since the last war the main revolutionary struggles in the world have developed in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In China, North Korea and North Vietnam, socialism is being constructed after victorious people's wars against foreign and domestic reaction. National liberation struggles continue in the southern part of Vietnam, in Laos and in Cambodia. The heroic fight of the Indo-Chinese peoples to expel the US aggressors and smash domestic reaction had a great influence on revolutionary

16.

developments all over the world. These successes have yet again proved that it is not economic or military might that always succeeds, but the poor or small nations can defeat aggression when their cause is just.

13. Similar struggles are developing against British, Portuguese and white South African colonialism in the continent of Africa. Recently, people's wars in Guinea-Bissau reached an important new stage with the defeat of the Portuguese army and the declaration of a sovereign and independent republic. In a number of countries in different parts of the world, armed struggle is developing against local reactionary ruling classes. These experiences continually illustrate the correctness of Mao Tse-Tung's dictum that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'.

14. The growth of democratic and revolutionary forces has assumed a significant level in South Asia. The fight of the Bengali people against the West Pakistani military dictatorship was welcomed in our resolution in October 1971. The struggle has not succeeded in achieving national self-determination, due to the comprador bourgeois leadership of the struggle, as we pointed out in the resolution. However, the revolutionary forces who carried a parallel struggle for democracy and advance to socialism have continued their fight with opposition to Indian expansionism and Soviet revisionism.

15. The struggles in the tri-continent are going through different stages, led by different developing leaderships, ranging from Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries to bourgeois nationalists. Insofar as all these struggles demonstrate a growing awareness of the nature of imperialism and a desire by the masses to improve their conditions, we support them. This support will encourage the working class in its fight for hegemony in the anti-imperialist movement.

16. Although popular struggles have had enormous successes, they have also suffered a few defeats as well. The tragic events of East Bengal (now Bangladesh), Sri Lanka and Chile teach many lessons by negative examples. As part of the international communist movement, we have the right and duty to criticise and condemn the leaderships responsible. We wholeheartedly extend our support to the people in their struggle against repressive regimes in their countries. Such events necessitate the furthering of our understanding of the variable roles of the bourgeoisie through the studies of the policies of revolutionary organisations within these countries.

17. Studies on the role of the 'national bourgeoisie' will help to understand why many tri-continental countries today proclaim neutrality and claim to tread the path of non-alignment. Though the final defeat of imperialism in these countries is decided by the victory of the working class and its strategic allies, nevertheless the progressive or vacillating roles of sections of the bourgeoisie, which creates problems for the US and the Soviet power blocs in their

attempts to control policies of these semi-colonial countries, are of tactical importance. We must remember in this respect that in the semi-feudal and semi-capitalist countries the social stratification is more complex than that of advanced countries like Britain. Unlike Britain, where the principal contradiction is between capital and labour, in the tri-continental countries the conflict of these two most antagonistic classes has not yet come to the fore. In these countries there are a number of contradictions with different class alignments and while all contradictions, in the long run, are reduced to that between capital and labour, due attentions are to be paid to other contradictions so as to bring about the major class conflict onto the surface.

18. So we welcome the opposition of many tri-continental countries, temporarily away from alignment with either of the super-powers weakening the latter's supremacy in the UN, in such regional bodies as the OAS, and the general moves to strengthen state sovereignty as illustrated in the campaigns to protect fishing and mineral rights of the medium and small maritime nations. Imperialism is to be defeated by the broadest possible united front of all progressive people. In this united front, the vacillating sections of the bourgeoisie have a temporary and limited role to play as distinguished from the role of the workers, peasants and patriotic middle classes which have a long term, strategic aspect. The UN today provides a useful forum for anti-imperialist propaganda, though it cannot be used as an instrument for the objective expression of the will of the peoples of the world.

#### Western Europe

19. National liberation struggles are rapidly exacerbating the inherent contradictions of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. The repeated currency crises, trade wars, accelerating export of capital, are manifestations of these contradictions. An important by-product of capitalist rivalry and crisis is the weakening of the post-war agreements which resulted in the formation of NATO. Britain, the one-time prime imperialist power, finds itself more and more under attack. It has joined the EEC in an attempt to increase the rate of profit on its investments at home and abroad. Membership of the Common Market goes hand in hand with the intensified attack upon the rights and conditions of the British working class, and as such we have and we will continue to oppose Britain's entry.

20. British membership of the EEC and the weakening of the 'special relationship' with the US illustrates the nature of the new contradictions developing between the US and West European states. The evolution of the independent foreign policy of French governments follows the end of the Fourth Republic, demonstrated by their pressures to reject 'dollar imperialism' and US nuclear hegemony has been a positive factor in lessening US dominance over West European capitalist powers. The plan of the EEC countries to form their own super-state in an attempt to become a third superpower creates difficult problems for the US and the USSR. The working class in Britain can take advantage of these rivalries between the imperialists and capitalists, as such developments will not only weaken the main enemies of the world's peoples,

but also these create contradictions amongst the bourgeoisie groups in Britain.

21. The world crisis of capitalism represented as clearly within the EEC as elsewhere by commodity overproduction and monetary instability makes international capitalist co-operation imperative but unstable. The paternalistic and counter-revolutionary notion that British workers need ruling class internationalism in order to develop working class internationalism must be rejected.

### Eastern Europe

22. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet revisionism marked a new phase in the political developments of Eastern Europe. The dictatorship of the proletariat had never been consolidated in Eastern Europe; the process of degeneration here is much faster than that of the Soviet Union. The new ruling forces are divided among themselves differing in their attitude towards Moscow with an increasingly strong tendency for independence from it. Stresses can be observed operating upon the Warsaw Pact, but as yet Soviet control is still considerable. However, the independent policies of countries like Romania have aided similar pressures for change in other East European countries as evidenced in the recent Helsinki preparatory talks for the planned 'European Security Conference!'. These divisions among the east European revisionists are to be encouraged to the extent they create problems for themselves and for the Soviet leaders, but we should not confuse these developments with working class advance.

### Socialist Camp

23. In the fight against imperialism the revolutionary people of the socialist countries have a vital role to play. By consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat they are able to best oppose the class enemies. In the forefront of the socialist camp are China and Albania. Both are consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat through continuing the class struggle. In China this has taken the exemplary form of the Cultural Revolution.

24. It is the duty of the Socialist camp - consisting of Albania, China, North Korea and North Vietnam - to extend moral and material support, as appropriate, to the people fighting for national liberation and socialism. Strategically, the internal contradictions are prime and therefore tactical attitudes towards bourgeois states must serve the interests of the internal progressive forces. The dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist countries allows additional opportunities to fight world reaction on a diplomatic level, although at all times aid and diplomacy are an auxiliary form of struggle. The Vietnamese comrades have amply demonstrated how to combine political, military and diplomatic struggles. The vacillating bourgeois states join the united front with the socialist countries to exploit the contradictions between

the superpowers, in their own class interests. The socialist states must use these diplomatic gains, however temporary, for revolutionary advance forcing the ruling class to retreat further from their class positions. Aid and diplomacy help to heighten internal class contradictions if the benefits of these are experienced by the masses.

25. The contradictions which may appear from time to time between the diplomatic struggles of the proletariat states and the political struggles of the proletariat outside such states are non-antagonistic.

### The international strategy

26. The aggressive and counter-revolutionary policies of US imperialism and Soviet revisionism are bound to fail. The national democratic and socialist revolutionary movements, the two great historical currents of our time, complement each other and together with all-round support from the socialist countries constitute the main elements of the international strategy against imperialism.

### The international Marxist-Leninist forces

27. Certain positive lessons can be learnt from the break-up of the international communist movement in the '50s and 60s. One feature of these has been to underline the primary responsibility each communist organisation has for making its own analysis and developing suitable forms of struggle against its immediate ruling class. But because the communist movement cannot be but internationalist the policies and political records of all Marxist-Leninist organisations must be open to questioning and criticism while developing closer and closer links between them. Such development requires full equality of the organisations irrespective of their size, and frank exchange of views in a fraternal manner.

28. In recent years some aspects of Chinese foreign policy have caused concern within the CFB. We raised with the CPC questions relating to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and more particularly the British Marxist-Leninist movement. Unfortunately we have had no reply from the CPC, nor has there been any analysis published by the Chinese comrades on the recent developments in their foreign policy.

29. The world Marxist-Leninist forces have not developed as rapidly as seemed probable in the 1960s. Splits and divisions have occurred where opportunities seemed to exist for the creation of national Marxist-Leninist parties.

30. However, these events have demonstrated that revolutionary parties cannot be successfully formed on a basis of anti-revisionism alone, but they require the conscious assimilation and application of the living science of Marxist-Leninism. Where these lessons have been learnt, the last decade has provided invaluable experience for the completion of the world's revolution.

### Section C. THE BRITISH SITUATION

31. Britain's decline to a second class imperialist force after World War 2 has led her to seek a form of parity with the two super-powers through the EEC, see para. 20. Though this develops

a contradiction with them, Britain still requires the help of US imperialism to neutralise any future challenge from the USSR and Comecon.

32. A complex pattern of conflict and collusion between Britain and the superpowers is seen in the redistributed spheres of influence in the tri-continental countries. While the US and the USSR contend to take over the colonies and the neo-colonies of Britain, she co-operates with the US against the USSR on national liberation struggles.

33. The main enemy of the working class and its allies is British imperialism. Our present stage therefore is one of building the forces and leadership for the Socialist revolution, to overthrow and smash the present State machine, and institute the dictatorship of the proletariat led by a Marxist-Leninist party with the correct political policies for working class advance. In the present situation, with Communist forces still weak and inexperienced, our first priority is to draw clear lines of demarcation between correct and incorrect political tendencies, develop our mass work, and above all build the CFB as a prerequisite for forming a Communist Party. (See Sections D and E).

34. The decreasing strength of the British ruling class is now to a large extent masked by the weakness of the revolutionary movement in Britain. Economically and politically the British ruling class is in a crisis which is not only part of the general world crisis of capitalism and imperialism. Since 1945 Britain's force as an imperialist power has drastically declined and there have been many important changes in the economy, until today Britain stands as a second class imperialist power in the world. The British ruling class owns some of the most outdated and least profitable means of production, a situation that is exacerbated by its dependence on international trade. However, it still has considerable foreign investment and international financial power which partly disguises its decline. Britain's crumbling traditional heavy industry base is unable to withstand foreign competition, and the rise of new industries necessitates rapid restructuring if profits are to be maintained, let alone increased. The British ruling class is thus faced with the problem of capital necessary for the new industrial sector being still mainly concentrated in the older heavy industrial sector. The consequences of the changes outlined in this para. have not been analysed by the Marxist-Leninist movement, and should be regarded as an urgent task for the CFB.

35. In this crisis the ruling class is increasingly forced to mount attacks on workers' living standards and democratic rights. Instead of wages being determined in localised struggles between each employer and those he employs, the State is now playing a growing part in attempting to control this process. As a result of both so-called 'industrial relations' laws and prices and incomes policies, the working class is facing a combined and direct attack from the individual employers and the State machine. Such developments of state monopoly capitalism again raise the threat of fascism. At the same time it causes increasing contradictions

within the ruling class, teaches important lessons to the people about state power and helps destroy illusions about the potential of reforming capitalism. At times, however, the British ruling class still uses its other tactic, that of 'liberalism', of reforms and concessions, to confuse and disarm the people. This deceives a section of the workers and is an important cause of reformism and revisionism within the working class movement.

36. A growing number of workers are seeing through the facade of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and are seeking an alternative although as yet not on a politically conscious level. Workers' struggles for the protection and improvement of living standards and working conditions against the encroachments of capitalism are predominant, despite the TUC's class collaboration and concern for the capitalist economy, the open acquiescence of most trade union leaderships to anti-union legislation, and the policies of deliberate conciliation proposed by labour politicians. These apparently economic struggles necessarily become a political struggle against the wealthy minority of landlords, industrialists and financiers and their tail of administrators, lawyers etc., who own and control industry in Britain today. Miners, hospital workers, building workers and others have resisted wage freeze restraints, suffered arrest and imprisonment in defiance of ruling class law. As state institutions and the media, backed up by the judiciary and police, attack workers' rights and organisations, there is developing awareness that political power is the organised use of force by one class in order to keep another class in subjection.

37. Its history as the first capitalist ruling class and the first imperialist power largely determines its present position. Similarly, the ideology and politics produced during this period of world dominance had a considerable effect in weakening the working class and its allies in Britain. This is demonstrated in a tendency towards chauvinism and racism which is being used increasingly in ruling class propaganda and legislation, such as the Immigration Act, to oppress racial minorities and attempt to develop dangerous divisions in the working class. A fragmented trade union movement, together with reformist social-democratic politics, still forms a major obstacle to revolutionary change. It is also important to combat the sexist attitudes deeply rooted at all levels in considering any revolutionary advance of the British working class. Although sexism (i.e. discrimination, oppression and exploitation based solely on difference of sex) is not a direct product of imperialist ideology, the latter strengthens women's oppression and exploitation through all its institutions and uses the myth of women's inferiority to divide the working class.

38. The main political representation of this social-democratic tradition is the Labour Party. Formed by certain trade unions to negotiate for them in Parliament, this relationship between the two main reformist forces has not changed since then in any qualitative way. This organisation, which has mass working class support, is nevertheless a bourgeois party. The constitution of the Party claims control from below, but it has been

amply proved that the rank and file have virtually no control over the decision-making process. Undoubtedly the Labour Party is just another executor of capitalism, duping the workers with its 'socialist' phraseology, which is in essence reformist and corporatist. Our tactics and strategy towards it should be worked out in this light and bearing in mind the recent exacerbations of the contradiction between the Labour rank and file and trade unionists on the one hand, caused by the Industrial Relations Act, Housing Finance Act, Wage Freezes, and the Labour Party's leadership's openly opportunist stance on such issues - i.e. opposing them in words but supporting the ruling class in the name of upholding the constitution. These are the same issues which have forced the TU leadership, under pressure from the rank and file, to voice the contradictions within the Labour Party in order to maintain their own facade of solidarity with working class interests. We must not allow workers to be taken in by the forced face-saving 'shift to the left' of the Labour Party. We must point out that the nationalisation proposed by the Labour Party is no real shift to the left as the industries come under the control of the bourgeois state. This does not mean control by the people, but more effective control by the bourgeoisie.

39. The revolutionary tendency that was demonstrated by the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was never fully realised in the creation of a revolutionary strategy for the British working class. The final authority of the Communist International had certain attractions for the immediate post-war period when a European Soviet Republic was expected to be won within months or at the most a very few years. But when this failed to materialise the British Party, like many others, was left high and dry, dependent for its strategy and at times even its tactics on the decisions of international meetings. Self-reliance, the objective corollary of building Socialism in one country, was never practised because of a false view of internationalism. 'Self-reliance' in this context means creating an ideologically mature and expert cadre force capable of applying Marxism-Leninism to British conditions and an effective leadership to give optimum support for decided policy. By the end of the Second World War the CPGB had degenerated to the state where it tailed behind the mass social-democratic movement: an unwelcome, militant but essentially reformist junior partner to the Labour Party.



40. The present political situation is a direct product of this experience. The CPGB in effect blames its reformist politics on the working class, arguing with almost classical revisionist opportunism that workers have to be won to vote 'left' as a precondition to further advance. At the same time these politics of gradualist advance lead to the economist belief that industrial struggles provide the experience which will lead to revolutionary political change. The CPGB is characterised by dogmatism in the political defence of its 'programme' and bureaucracy in its style of work both towards people within the Party who disagree with the Party and those outside the Party. The programme itself - 'British Road to Socialism' - revises the Marxist-Leninist teachings that the bourgeois state must be smashed and cannot be used in the construction of Socialism under a dictatorship of the Proletariat. It is only a hypothetical blueprint for what might happen when a 'left' Labour/CPGB government comes into being. While the CPGB is a relatively powerful paper organisation we should bear in mind that some members are active communists engaged in day-to-day struggles and are at times extremely critical of the 'British Road'. It is to these comrades, perhaps long made cynical by revisionist politics and methods of work, that we should direct part of our attention.

41. A section of the anti-revisionist movement has, in a distorted form, produced its own variant of revisionism. The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (CPB(M-L)) appears to believe that political theory can only be developed when the masses are ready. Whatever their differences with the CPGB, their methods of manipulation, their attempt to mechanically impose a leadership on the movement, and a thoroughgoing economism, are all hallmarks of British revisionism. Especially evident in their approach is the incorrect equation of economic and political struggles, notably their comparisons between the inevitable, continuous and disconnected wage battles in factories and the conscious political strategy of guerrilla war developed by the Chinese and Vietnamese comrades.

42. In contrast with both the revisionist CPGB and the distorted anti-revisionism of the CPB(M-L) are the various Trotskyist tendencies. These groups have an incorrect understanding of the role of a revolutionary vanguard party, believing that such a vanguard will in itself transform a crisis of capitalism into a revolutionary situation and the seizure of state power. The International Marxist Group and International Socialism move rapidly from one struggle to another in search for a slogan or a new form of movement which will convince the masses that the time for 'revolutionary leadership' is ripe. The IS have recently been concentrating efforts into economist work in factory and shop floor organisations, and have therefore submerged the overall political and cultural struggle into a desperate search for decisive strike action. The Socialist Labour League, similar to IS in its industrial orientation, has adopted a political and organisational form which mirrors the bureaucracy and commandism they simultaneously attack in the revisionist CP. In relation to the principal conflicts in the world today - the national liberation struggles in the tri-continent - the Trotskyists find themselves in a dilemma as they follow Trotsky's 'Permanent Revolution' which rejects the concept of the democratic stage of revolutionary development in the semi-feudal countries. Thus, they cannot

explain the nature of the revolutionary movements in these countries, and when they attempt to analyse these movements the 'Stalinist' leadership has to be made to be seen selling out the movement. The growth of the various Trotskyist groups indicates an increasing acceptance by some advanced elements of the working class and their allies of the need for revolutionary politics: but the inevitably self-defeating nature of the Trotskyist analysis results in discouragement and apathy amongst militants who have seen their tactics and policies fail. There is an urgent need to recruit such cadres into the discipline of a Marxist-Leninist approach to militant action. In order to aid such a recruitment it will be necessary to undertake a thorough analysis of the Trotskyist movement.

43. We for our part must draw demarcation lines between ourselves and these 'left' and right opportunist trends. We recognise that the creation of a revolutionary strategy and the building of a Communist Party is a protracted struggle. It demands an understanding that while the creation of revolutionary theory is an essential and present task whatever the state of the movement, the development of a mass revolutionary movement itself can only come from the testing of this theory in mass struggles. Working class revolutionary consciousness and the Party can only develop dialectically as the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions demonstrates. Mass consciousness and correct leadership cannot be posed one against the other as if they are independent factors.

44. More specifically, social-democracy can only be effectively combated and destroyed by consistently posing alternative policies which start from a realistic assessment of the present stage. We do not and must not condone or accept present illusions, but our political organisational and tactical policies must be effective in mobilising workers and their allies, and must not be geared to some desirable future state of affairs.

45. Only by grasping this dialectic between freedom and necessity, between policy and objective reality, can we both avoid the error of tailism on the one hand, and on the other the left-sectarian error of the 'revolutionary phrase', which however superb and intoxicating will only condemn us to irrelevance. This section demonstrates that our understanding of the British situation is extremely vague. There has been no assessment of the changes in the structural and economic base of British industry since the war, or of the changing class structure of British society. Despite a developing crisis within capitalism and movement towards corporatism, we have not assessed the changing nature of the British state. In the absence of such assessments this document is of limited guidance to the activists and militants of the Labour movement. Indeed, the document reflects the weaknesses of the revolutionary movement and shows the vital theoretical and practical tasks that have to be carried out in the coming period. Our central aim, therefore, must be to overcome the weaknesses in order to develop a revolutionary policy. In this way only can we play our part in challenging and finally destroying the decadent and moribund system of British imperialism.

INTRODUCTION

It is both because of the complexity of the struggle in Ireland against British imperialism and because of its importance to the British working class that the CFB did not at its inception adopt an 'instant line' on Ireland, but instigated a thorough-going polemic amongst its membership on the whole question. Following a prolonged and principled debate a General Meeting was held on May 18th and 19th. The following motions were passed and form the basis of CFB policy on Ireland. The first was passed with an overwhelming majority, the second unanimously.

RESOLUTION (1)

Progressive people in Britain are faced with two movements in British-annexed Northern Ireland. The minority community in the region has renewed its opposition to continued British rule there, starting with a movement of democratic civil rights in 1969. It is fighting the British state politically and militarily. The majority community, consisting of descendants of colonial planters and led by comprador capitalists and landed gentry, stands for the British Crown in opposition to the minority.

These two struggles in Northern Ireland are a product of British imperialism's age-old policy in Ireland. The relationship between Britain and Ireland has been between an exploiter and the exploited for the last 800 years. Imperialist exploitation has kept Ireland industrially backward, creating rival bourgeois groups and deep sectarian divisions amongst the people. In the North, industry has developed only in and around Belfast and these too are declining. Separated from the indigenous raw materials of this country new foreign penetration in industry is on the increase. The ownership of the means of production in the North is almost exclusively in the hands of British big business. In the South, industry is proportionately less developed and the domination of foreign capital is continually increasing.

The uneven development of industrialisation in the north east and in the rest of Ireland which is a by-product of imperialist agrarian policy necessitated a dual tactic in exploiting the geologic economic and manpower resources of Ireland. Aided by the British imperial market, certain industries were found to be advantageous through capital investment.

North and South Ireland combined is Britain's third largest market in the world. In recent times 74% of the imports and 87% of the exports of Northern Ireland have been with Britain. In the Republic the respective figures are 53% and 82%.

Due to geographical proximity the close links of the economy of both parts of Ireland with the British imperial market often take the appearance of a single economy. In essence the basic nature of British exploitation is neo-colonialist bearing witness in puppet government, in the backward economy dominated by agriculture in the decline in traditional industries in the North and in devastated population. The so-called subsidies for Northern Ireland are a form of neo-colonial aid.

The competing bourgeois groups in Ireland were divided before the present administrative partition. The insistence by the British on a united Ireland would have resulted in Britain losing the north completely to the propertied classes there. A partitioned Ireland ensured that the major political and economic control over both parts, but at the same time the imperialist 'solution' of a divided Ireland continues to obstruct the industrial development of the whole country keeping the country's resources split into two. In this situation, the democratic movement that has continued since 1793 has been rejuvenated with a new and last phase in the conditions created by imperialism's new global crisis in the late 1960s.

The consequences of such a movement in the era of the complete collapse of British imperialism are not unknown to the British bourgeoisie. Britain's exploitative interests can be prolonged only with a united bourgeoisie in Ireland. Such unification is not desired by the northern propertied classes as they fear to lose their dominating political power. Britain is attempting to resolve the contradiction between North and South exploiting classes through the proposed council of Ireland.

CFB realises that the divisions that have been created amongst the Irish working class constitute the main obstacle to progressive political advance within Ireland. Of prime concern is the opposition of many workers in the north east part of the country to the forces in the vanguard of the present struggles against British imperialism. To help overcome these divisions the CFB as part of the international working class movement will work to develop links with the working class forces throughout Ireland in the fight to throw off the domination of all foreign imperialism and to help achieve a socialist republic as advocated by the Irish revolutionary forces.

The enslavement of Ireland is the enslavement of the British working people as well. We demand that the British state sever all imperialist connections with both parts of Ireland.

British troops out of Northern Ireland!!

Solidarity with all forces in Ireland fighting British imperialism!!

#### RESOLUTION (2)

Centuries of oppression and repression of basic democratic rights will breed reactions that at times impair the necessary development of unified class action to overthrow imperialism and move on towards socialism, such as worker killing worker for no other reason than difference of religion, and must therefore be opposed!

Where this happens it is regrettable, but at all times and on all occasions the prime responsibility for all acts of violence that lead to the death of innocent workers lies with the forces of British imperialism.

ON THE "USEFULNESS" OF "ECONOMICS OF PARTITION"

To comrades who are trying to construct a coherent, scientific analysis of the Irish situation, perhaps one of the most influential publications proposing the 'two nations' line is the revised edition of ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, produced by the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO), now an openly revisionist organisation, since the recent domination of Nina Stead's sophisticated 'British Road to Socialism' (THE COMMUNIST, No. 59). On the face of it, this document has a wealth of 'fact' (Norman Mailer would use the term 'factoid'), is well-argued and is in the definitive style of one B. Clifford.

Comrade EK, in his article 'Ireland and the Colonial Question' (MLQ 5, p. 30, note 7), even infers that it is a most useful work.

I therefore intend to show that the document is, characteristically of BICO revisionism, selective in the use of quotations offered for our consumption; that the B. Clifford school of argument ignores any statement in their own references running contrary to their basic ideological position on Ireland; and consequently, that the document is not at all scientific. It is a pity that comrade EK himself did not see fit to investigate this matter before pronouncing on its worthiness.

Two of the most basic ideological rocks on which ECONOMICS OF PARTITION is founded concern 1. The rise of the Linen Industry in Ulster, and 2. Ulster Tenant Right.

In ECONOMICS OF PARTITION the BICO quote a large number of bourgeois historians on Ireland as a means by which to prove their 'two nations' thesis. While not being averse to quoting bourgeois historians, in principle, it is nevertheless a gross distortion to present their views which support one's position whilst blithely ignoring their views which run contrary to one's basic ideological position. Wherein is the 'usefulness' of that?

In ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, Ulster Tenant Right and the rise of the Ulster Linen Industry are paramount in the BICO's claim that indigenous Ulster petty-capitalism was the basis of the uneven economic development in Ireland rather than this uneven economic development being due to 'external' influences by the British bourgeoisie in the 18th and 19th centuries.

'The development of the Linen trade in Ulster in the 18th century created a mass petty-bourgeois basis for the development of capitalism and in the course of the 19th century large scale industry arose on that basis'

(ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, p. 25)

The BICO attempt to show that only the Ulsterman was capable of generating a petty-bourgeois market while the catholic Irish peasantry was incapable of doing so, this being due more to 'indigenous' characteristics within the Ulster protestant population rather than this capitalism developing as a result of British policy. Comrade EK echoes this theme :

'The Plantations were made up largely of Lowland Scots; they brought to Ireland a new bourgeois democratic political outlook, which expressed itself ideologically as presbyterianism. Significantly, they established (not without prolonged struggle) a new form of land tenure (The Ulster Custom) which was bourgeois democratic in essence as opposed to the feudal relations of production which predominated throughout the rest of Ireland'. (MLQ 5, p.26)

As I have already said, the BICO extensively quote from bourgeois historians, especially Gill and Black, to prove the above argument, which comrade EK supports. Therefore, these sources of information on the Ulster Linen Industry and Ulster Custom will now be reviewed to show that Black and Gill make a whole series of observations which tend to contradict the above BICO/EK thesis.

#### 1. ULSTER TENANT RIGHT (OR ULSTER CUSTOM)

'ORIGIN: The historical origin of Ulster Custom, like everything else which relates to Partition, is the subject of dispute between the historians of the rival nationalisms . . . . The historical propoganda of Catholic nationalism cannot admit that anything good ever came to Ireland through Protestant Ulster! (ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, p.7)

Thus runs the BICO introduction to Ulster Tenant Right, and they further ask :

'How did it come about that tenant right got established in Protestant Ulster before it came into being in Gaelic, Catholic Ireland?' (ibid)

According to the BICO (and presumably comrade EK) the simple answer is :

'The Protestant tenant-farmers acquired coherence as a class, and forced the landlords to recognise (their rights) through class struggle, before the Catholic peasantry did so' (ibid)

And furthermore, they assert that it is Southern Catholic Nationalist propoganda to suggest that the Protestant settlers were in any way favoured over the Gaelic, Irish peasantry. Quite correctly, the BICO point out that in Ulster tenant right was maintained against encroachment from

the landlords by the use of force, if necessary. They quote extracts from the bourgeois historian, Lecky, extensively, to prove the point :

'The Oakboys (organised bands of Protestant tenant-farmers -GM) appear to have first arisen against the Road Act which ordered that all highways should be repaired by the personal labour of housekeepers. It was stated that the landed proprietors who constituted the grand juries had had many roads made which were of little or no use to the community at large, and were intended for the exclusive benefit of their own estates ..... In addition ..... the question of tithes had recently acquired in the North, as well as the South, a new prominence .....

(IRELAND IN THE 18TH CENTURY, Vol. 2)

'It was in the summer of 1763 that bodies of men, sometimes 400 or 500 strong, assembled to the sound of the horn, wearing oak boughs in their hats. They erected gallows, attacked houses, compelled clergymen to swear that they would not levy more than a specific proportion of tithe, and laymen that they would not assess the county at more than a stipulated rate, and assaulted all whom they found working on the roads. Dr. Clark (Episcopal Rector of Armagh) was seized and carried in derision through various parts of the county, and many of the clergy were compelled to take refuge within the walls of Derry. The flame spread through Armagh, Tyrone, Derry and Fermanagh.' (ibid)

And further :

'The conduct of Lord Donegal brought the misery of the Ulster peasantry to a climax, and in a short time many thousands of ejected tenants banded together under the name Steelboys, at first almost exclusively Protestant ..... They attacked many houses and were guilty of many kinds of violence, and they soon administered illegal oaths, and undertook the part of general reformers. One of their number being consigned at Belfast, a large number of Steelboys accompanied by many thousands of peasants who neither before nor after took any part in the insurrection, marched upon that town and succeeded in obtaining his release.' (ibid)

All of this is quoted by the BICO in an attempt to show the militancy of the Ulster tenant-farmer when confronted by the attempts of landlords to remove or restrict his tenant right, which is historically accurate as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Because of Ulster national-chauvinism, the BICO fail to objectively look at the efforts of the Catholic peasantry in the rest of Ireland in their attempts to achieve parity with the Ulsterman's security of land tenure. That the Catholic peasantry was not successful in this objective is not a reflection of their class passivity; of their alleged feudal outlook; of their alleged desire to maintain feudal relations of production, but was due to the fact that their oppression was sanctioned, as

a matter of policy by the British Crown, while repression and restriction of the land rights of the Ulsterman when it occurred was of a purely local character and not sanctioned by the British state apparatus.

Gill's views on the land question are not taken up by the BICO simply because his views do not accord with what the BICO would have us believe. He writes :

'Operation of Penal Laws. An obstacle which lasted through a great part of the 18th century was the existence of penal laws (applied by the British Crown since Cromwellian times to the Gaelic Irish-GM) against Roman Catholics. Without doubt the restriction on land tenure and the possession of property by Catholics, together with the exclusiveness of the guilds, made it very difficult for Catholics to acquire capital and so hindered them from taking up manufacture'

(THE RISE OF THE ULSTER LINEN INDUSTRY p.23)  
(my emphasis - GM)

According to Gill, the operation of these Penal Laws had an immensely important effect in removing any impetus towards petty-bourgeois production in the rest of Ireland.

'Land Tenure. The worst feature of the Penal Laws, from an economic point of view, was that they encouraged a bad system of land tenure, and there can be no doubt that the growth of industry in Ulster, and its comparative failure elsewhere, was due to the differences in land systems more than to any other cause..... The faulty and unfair methods in use over the rest of Ireland were a constant bar to private enterprise and public policy. (ibid, emphasis added)

In considering the comparative successes of petty-bourgeois production in Ulster, and its failure in the other parts of Ireland, Gill clearly and unequivocally states that the main cause of this was due to the difference in land systems in Ulster and the rest of Ireland. He said that the Penal Laws discouraged the growth of petty-bourgeois production in the rest of Ireland. In their attempts to persuade us that only the Protestants were successful at being petty-bourgeois because of their anti-feudal, petty-bourgeois ideology of Presbyterianism, the BICO dare not bring to the surface Gill's comments on Ulster Custom, the Linen Industry and Penal Laws with any great clarity.

How is it that when Gill is quoted extensively by them on other matters, they ignore his comments on land tenure and the Penal Laws? To make the matter even clearer we read in a footnote from Gill that



'If the Irish peasantry had had more security of tenure, the large undertakings in the South might quite well have given rise to widespread domestic industry. A development of this kind, from the trade of 'factory masters' to that of independent weavers and small manufacturers, took place in Russia during the first half of the 19th century.' (ibid, p.137)

One can only surmise from the non-appearance of these quotations in *ECONOMICS OF PARTITION* that the BICO are not interested in the effects of the Penal Laws on the Catholic population, and the subsequent deleterious effect on developing petty-capitalist production; instead, they prefer to pretend to us that the class cohesiveness of the Ulster tenant-farmers was the main reason for the rapidly expanding capitalist production in that province, while feudal relations of production still prevailed over the other provinces.

Which brings me to the second basic point that must be refuted, namely, the implication that the alleged feudal outlook of the inhabitants of the rest of Ireland prevented, as the main reason, the rise of bourgeois production. While we must undoubtedly recognise the ability of the Ulster Protestant tenant farmers to organise as a class in class struggle when local attempts were made to remove their bourgeois democratic rights, comrade EK must also recognise (but will he?) the ability of the Southern Irish peasantry to fight against oppressive feudal relations of production, which the BICO are not prepared to do. According to Robert Kee :

'..... under the permanent social persecution which crystallised as the land system of Ireland at the time of the Penal Laws and long outlasted them, the Irish poor (the Catholic population in the main -GM) resorted to primitive self-help in the one obvious form that was available. A rough justice of the common people's own making took the place of the law which gave so little.'  
(THE GREEN FLAG, p.24)

This 'rough justice' took the form of :

'... bands of men, with blackened faces and wearing white shirts over their clothes for easier mutual recognition at night, (who) started to roam the countryside mutilating cattle and carrying out their reprisals for the tyranny and rapacity of harsh landlords or the subservience of those who played along with them.....' (ibid, p.24)

And further, we read :

'It was in 1760 that the Whiteboys movement, as it came generally to be called, broke out on a large scale. Bodies of armed men,

numbering anything from half a dozen or so to five hundred, again took to riding about the countryside at night with white shirts over their clothes, tearing down fences which enclosed land for pasture rather than tillage, punishing those who collected tithes for the Protestant Church, preventing the payment of extortionate rents, intimidating would-be tenants from taking land from which another had been evicted, and generally asserting the existence of rough and ready justice to redress the grievances of the poor.' (ibid)

Many organisations of this type came into being, including the Rightboys, Whiteboys, Thrashers and later on in the 19th century, the Rockites and Ribbinmen, who were prepared to wage a class struggle with their overbearing landlords. In addition we should understand that these clashes in southern agrarian society did not simply occur on the basis of Protestant landowners versus Catholic peasantry. Robert Kee observes :

'(that when) discriminating legislation against Catholics was lifted, the Whiteboys and other organisations attacked the Catholic land-owning class with the same severity as they did the Protestant landowners' (emphasis added)

'The Penal Laws preventing Catholics from owing, leasing or inheriting land had been repealed in 1778 and 1782, and Catholics were landowners again on quite a considerable scale. All contemporary witnesses, including Daniel O'Donnell, agree that not only were attacks directed proportionately as much against Catholics as Protestants but also that the Catholic gentry were equally active in putting disturbances down.' (emphasis added)

'In the sphere that mattered most to the Irish peasantry, that of their economic status on the land, members of their own religion and blood were to be found in the 19th century increasingly on the other side of the fence, of the landlords wall, with the Protestant.' (THE GREEN FLAG, p.27, emphasis added)

These comments are more than adequate in showing the ability of the Catholic peasantry to wage class struggle as a class irrespective of whether their oppressor was Protestant or Catholic.

Will comrade EK please explain why rival 'nationalisms' did not deflect the Irish peasantry from vigorously opposing either section of the landlord class?

## 2. THE RISE OF THE ULSTER LINEN INDUSTRY

The Ulster Linen industry is of immense importance in the rise of petty-bourgeois production in Ireland. The growth of flax and its subsequent manufacture into linen provided tenant-cottiers with the opportunity of small-scale production which supplemented their income and ensured a small but continually growing basis for future large scale capitalist production. Therefore in terms of Irish industry the linen trade was at one time the only industry worth mentioning, and it is in this context that linen manufacture was important.

As we shall see, in all cases where it 'proves' the BICO's case that petty-capitalism in Ulster thrived on its own basis, quotations are offered from bourgeois historians as 'evidence'.

Comrade EK must stop placing faith in the objectivity and "usefulness" of his BICO mentors and do a little of his own investigating. Perhaps he should start with the part played by external forces in the rise of Irish Linen production.

Concerning the very important part played by Louis Crommelin, a French Huegonot who fled to Ulster to escape the persecution of Protestants in France, the BICO quote Robert Stephenson, a linen manufacturer, on Crommelin's handbook on Linen production :

'his (Crommelin's) last chapter contains his whole theory and practical knowledge of Bleaching, and by following the Directions he lays down in his Course of Operation, I will venture to say that it is impossible to make a white Piece of Linen; his scheme is the most expensive I have ever met with ..... nor indeed do I believe he ever made a white Piece of Linen or had any knowledge of this Part of the Mystery (as he terms it)' (ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, p.25).

Contrary to this point of view of the bourgeois, Stephenson, that Crommelin was almost entirely ignorant of how to make linen, Gill quotes the Linen Board of Ireland who in reviewing the progress of Crommelin's work in raising the technical ability of Ulster to produce Linen and in recommending the continuation of Crommelin's grant after 1712, wrote :

'The said Crommelin and colony (of Huegonots - GM) have been very serviceable and greatly instrumental in the improving and propagating the flaxon manufacture in the north part of this kingdom; and ..... the perfection to which the same is brought in that part of the country is very much owing to the skill and industry of the said Crommelin.' (THE RISE OF THE ULSTER LINEN INDUSTRY, p.19)

There we have it. Either we accept the criticism of Crommelin by Stephenson, in that the former had never made any linen at all by the method that he was trying to propagate, or we accept the view of the Irish Linen Board that Crommelin brought 'perfection',

'skill' and 'industry' to the manufacture of Ulster linen. If Crommelin's technique was as bad as Stephenson claimed why did the Irish Linnen Board waste its money continually providing him with a grant?

Looking at this in a broader context, it should be noted that the BICO's ECONOMICS OF PARTITION 'fails' to notice the praise lavished on Crommelin by agents of the Crown since this could possibly detract from the dynamic petty-capitalist image of the Ulsterman who did it all on his own. The indigenous dynamism of the Ulster petty-bourgeoisie must never be in doubt; anything such as Robert Stephenson's remarks which can be used to place doubt on the value of the contribution made by Crommelin in Linnen manufacture is dredged up. The BICO do not, of course, refer to the Irish Linnen Board's remarks.

Is comrade EK really satisfied with the one-sided, subjective approach shown in ECONOMICS OF PARTITION? If he is, then let us continue. Another bourgeois historian, DC Chart, suggested that Crommelin had administered a great impetus to the linen industry, the BICO merely point out that this viewpoint 'has somewhat more substance' than the assertion that the Earl of Stafford had more than a marginal effect on the industry.

Thus, the general approach of the BICO is to minimise the importance of Crommelin as an external influence.

One could also argue at length with the BICO statement that:

'There was no special legislation (concerning the Ulster linen trade -GM) What legislation there was, was designed to favour the southern organisation of the trade, and was unfavourable to Ulster! (ECONOMICS OF PARTITION, p.31)

Rather, one should say more correctly that irrespective of whether there was any special treatment of the South compared with the North or vice-versa, any legislation promulgated at a secondary level by the British Crown regarding the Linen trade had different effects in Ulster compared with the rest of Ireland, this being due to the non-existence of security of tenure in the South, thus ensuring the failure of policies designed to raise industrial production. As comrade EK himself said, one cannot legislate capitalism into existence, especially in a situation where feudal relations of production were reinforced by oppressive Penal Laws.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is an easy thing to show the Ulster chauvinism of the BICO by merely confronting them with little bits of history that 'just happen' to be left out of the general picture of industrialisation in Ireland.

It is a simple thing to show that the Catholic peasantry were able on many occasions to stand as a class in opposition to their class enemies, both Protestant and Catholic landlords. However, the BICO fail to show this historical fact and EK, in all his writings, has not yet done so. But then, he might not think it an important thing to show. However, it is an undeniable historical fact that as early as 1711 in the south, collective peasant action occurred which had clearly-defined class aims. Robert Kee records that :

'the Oakboys and Steelboys developed as Protestant counter-parts of the Whiteboys' (THE GREEN FLAG, p. 27, emphasis added)

To explain why the Catholic peasantry did not succeed as a class in the same period as the Ulster tenant-cottiers did in the creation of small-scale capitalist industry, we can say the following :

1. industry in Ulster initially advanced on the basis of tenant-right and the linen industry which, unlike later industry elsewhere, in Ireland complemented the British market in this type of commodity, and was not restricted by the Crown in its growth.
2. lack of tenant-right in the south, initially due to the Penal Laws, was a major factor in the inability of southern industry to implant itself.
3. 'the general absence of security of land tenure and of employment opportunities outside agriculture (excluding Ulster - GM) combined with a rapid growth of population, produced a system of social and economic relations widely differing from that known in Britain'

(DC Black, ECONOMIC THOUGHT & THE IRISH QUESTION, 1811-1870, p.7, emphasis added)

This, then, is a clear exposition of why industry did not develop in the rest of Ireland at the same rate as in Ulster.

While the BICO (and presumably their pupil, comrade EK) place the 'petty-bourgeois, Presbyterian outlook' of the Scots planters in Ulster in the primary position in attempting to explain the process of industrialisation of the province, bourgeois historians such as Black, Gill, Lecky and others consider that the cause was primarily due to objective causes such as the absence of Penal Laws and security of tenure combined with the introduction of experts such as Crommelin.

Does comrade EK still think that ECONOMICS OF PARTITION is useful?

June 3rd

To the Editor of MLQ

Dear Comrade,

I have recently read the article by GM entitled ON THE 'USEFULNESS' OF THE ECONOMICS OF PARTITION which is included in the present issue of MLQ. Since GM raises a number of criticisms of my article IRELAND AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION, I thought that it would save some unnecessary and lengthy debate if I were to clarify a number of points at issue.

Although I regard the ECONOMICS OF PARTITION as 'the most useful work of the .. B&ICO', this must be understood as a relative term which is immediately qualified by a reference to the pro-Imperialist line of the B&ICO. On this question there can be little doubt in anyone's mind. Starting from a basically Academicist standpoint, the B&ICO have consistently denigrated Irish nationalism and fanned Ulster Protestant chauvinism, with the result that they are now, as GM says, 'an openly revisionist organisation' and support, among other things, the role of the troops in Northern Ireland. It is thus frankly nonsense to speak of the B&ICO as my 'mentors' on this question.

Where the BICO have played an important role is in opening up the question of the internal contradictions in Ireland from the 18th century onwards, and the effect of those contradictions on later developments. Before the publication of works such as the ECONOMICS OF PARTITION there was a tacit acceptance on the Left that all developments in Irish history could be ascribed to the machinations of 'British Imperialism', and little or no consideration was given to the very real contradictions which developed within Ireland, in particular the contradiction between the northern Protestant community and the indigenous population. In this respect the ECONOMICS OF PARTITION is a useful (not correct but useful) work, and it has generally been recognised as such by its most outspoken opponents.

Having said this, I find that I am generally in agreement with the analysis presented by GM in the present article. He is quite correct to point out that by leaving out bits of history the BICO in fact support Ulster chauvinism and adopt a reactionary moralising position. They completely ignore the role played by the British ruling class in seeking to further their interests in Ireland. At the same time GM does not say that there was no objective internal basis for historical developments in Ireland. Throughout Irish history there have been two main factors in operation - the internal contradictions (class forces, development of productive forces) and the external influence of direct British intervention. Neither of these factors can be analysed in isolation from the other.

Although the nature of the internal contradictions and of British intervention has changed since the 18th century, these two factors remain of central importance. In developing our understanding of the present situation, which is clearly a more pressing priority

than making detailed analyses of the Linen Industry, we cannot ignore either one of them. If we ignore the internal contradictions; we will be making the leftist error of, for example, the IMG, and substituting romantic phraseology for scientific analysis. If we ignore the role of British Imperialism, we will be making the equally unscientific but far more reprehensible 'error' of taking an objectively pro-Imperialist and anti-working class line.

Yours fraternally,

EK

Origins of the Communist International.

'In March of this year of 1919, an international congress of Communists was held in Moscow. This congress founded the Third, Communist International, an association of workers of the whole world who are striving to achieve Soviet power in all countries.' (1)

Assessment of its principles and methods, besides the major policies pursued through to its dissolution in 1943, remains a major task of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Much experience has yet to be systematically applied. Consistent proletarian internationalism - the varied means by which it can be pursued by socialist countries and parties in power, and the question of priorities for Marxists-Leninists in capitalist countries - there exist numerous lessons from its 24 year history.

MLQ1 contained the CFB resolution 'Concerning Certain Aspects of the General Line of the Foreign Policies of Socialist Countries', where we outlined our view of the present world situation, basic communist principles governing the practice of proletarian internationalism and the concept of peaceful co-existence. It went on to call for closer links between Marxist-Leninist Parties and organisations 'based on full equality whatever the size of the organisation' developing on the basis of frank discussion, criticism and self-criticism. Such developments will aid 'understanding of the different tactical lines which have to be carried out by revolutionaries in different concrete situations. But above all it will help develop a common revolutionary strategy ....' If this process is to develop healthily, the movement must carry out a thoroughgoing analysis of its principles and practice over the years, as well as at present. An important feature will be our assessment of the Comintern's historical significance, its reasons for disbanding and subsequent influence on more recent events.

To this end I intend to trace the origins of the Communist International, linking it with the growth of bolshevism in Russia and the degeneration of the Second Socialist International. Obviously these, the two principle features of the pre-1914 Social Democratic movement, were interrelated, as was the degree to which principles of organisation and method later practised internationally were affected by factors originating in conditions peculiar to czarist Russia. The unevenness of the revolutionary process, finding expression ultimately in the October Revolution and the establishment of Soviet power in Russia, had a direct bearing on the infant Parties, who with the bolsheviks formed the Third International. How many of these factors were recognised and taken into account will be examined in future issues of MLQ.

This article is devoted to the emergence of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (forerunner of the CPSU) and its integration of Marxism with the immediate problems of the Russian democratic revolution, especially the struggle between bolshevik and menshevik wings of the Party and the involvement of the Socialist International.



Every turn of history sets new tasks; so it was with the onset of the 1914-18 war and the Second International. In the space of a few days 'respected' leaders of the German, French, British and most other Parties, had deserted internationalism for the jingoism with which they served their respective governments. To the very onset of the war the same parties carried on propaganda based on the principles of the Basle manifesto of 1912:

"in the event of war, socialists must take advantage of the 'economic and political crisis' it will cause so as to 'hasten the downfall of capitalism', i.e. take advantage of the governments wartime difficulties and the indignation of the masses, to advance the socialist revolution. " (2)

Acute imperialist conflict existed prior to the outbreak of war, indicating that such matters are not simply questions of the acceptance or rejection of a particular political line but rather that no undue significance should be seen in such agreements when the methods and outlook of the various elements involved are fundamentally different. This is not to say that agreements of this kind were of no consequence in the struggle against the opportunists and the slaughter they endorsed.

The consequences of revisionism, the collapse of the major parties of the Socialist International into mere appendages of their respective bourgeoisie, stemmed from the inability of most West European social democrats to keep abreast of contemporary realities, particularly the emergence of a systemised framework of imperialist relationships over the entire globe. Stagnation would be an accurate political assessment of the Social-Democratic movement of the time. Lenin placed matters in perspective when summarising the forerunners of the Comintern and its own place in history:

"The First International (1864-72) laid the foundation of an international organisation of the workers for the preparation for their revolutionary attack on capital." (3)

"The Second International existed from 1889 to 1914, up to the war. This was the period of the most calm and peaceful development of capitalism, a period without great revolutions. During this period the working class gained strength and matured in a number of countries. But the workers' leaders in most of the parties had become accustomed to peaceful conditions and had lost the ability to wage a revolutionary struggle. When, in 1914, there began the war that drenched the earth with blood for four years, the war between the capitalists over the division of profits, the war for their supremacy over small and weak nations; these leaders deserted to the side of their respective governments . . . . The old word socialism had been desecrated by the traitors to socialism." (4)

It can be seen, even from a cursory knowledge of the struggle to consolidate Bolshevism prior to 1914, that it was in conflict with the general tendency of the Socialist International. On a whole series of questions the bolsheviks refuted 'current' alternatives and 're-interpretations' of Marxism with clear militant expositions of dialectical analysis such as 'Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution', a pamphlet examining the lessons of 1905 with its prospects of building a worker-peasant alliance. However, Bolshevism was not limited to simply reasserting basic principles, in fact dialectics are to be found in the particularity of contradiction, by which I mean Marxism is nothing if it is not a living critical study of specific conditions.

Lenin's involvement with the Russian social-democratic movement was distinctive in that he recognised doctrinairism as the source of opportunism. The integration of Marxism with the peculiar conditions of Tsarist Russia combined with a world view that took account of contemporary international conditions - these, the two principal features of Lenin's early work, were to prove the theoretical basis for the movement. Stalin noted: "We cannot regard it as accidental that as early as 1902, when the Russian revolution was still in its embryonic stage, Lenin wrote the prophetic words in his pamphlet WHAT IS TO BE DONE? :

'History has now confronted us (i.e. the Russian Marxists - J.St.) with an immediate task which is the most revolutionary of all the immediate tasks that confront the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European but also (it may be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat.'

In other words, the centre of the revolutionary movement was bound to shift to Russia." (5)

Below, I will attempt to trace developments in Russian Social-democracy during the period of the Party's establishment and consolidation, with particular reference to relations with the Socialist International. Historically, there are several parallels. Since the revolutionary process is uneven, the question of what principles govern relations between revolutionary organisations of different countries remains crucial. Vast contrasts characterise the movement internationally, an illustration being comparison between China and Britain, yet internationalism is meaningful only when it is integrated with our specific conditions. Until this is seen by the majority of Marxists-Leninists in Britain, nothing can be achieved. Providing the context is understood, much can be done towards establishing such principles through examining the emergence of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party at a similar juncture.

#### THE FOUNDATION OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY

Following the collapse of the first initiatives at forming

the Party centred around the First Congress in 1898, a different approach was adopted. This tendency was developed by the Iskra organisation in its struggle against economism and parochialism, which ultimately convened the Second Congress in 1903. It was at this point that the Iskra tendency split into Bolshevik and Menshevik wings, a fact familiar enough, yet it is my opinion that many comrades pass over its essential features - the methods and organisational structures adopted by the respective groupings. (6)

Events dominating Congress evolved from the origins and significance of the struggle, differences primarily of organisation rather than problems of programme or tactics. In its preparations for the Second Congress, Iskra (7) had formulated a draft programme, an organisational plan and a tactical line which were its basis (the 'Party' up to now had no programme or rules). The split occurred during the session on Party rules. It was at this point that an alliance between Menshevik Iskra-ists and economist and federalist elements achieved a majority. The Bolshevik draft read:

"A member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts its programme and who supports the Party both financially and by personal participation in one of the Party organisations."

Whereas Congress replaced the underlined section with:

"work under the control and direction of one of the Party organisations." (8)

Congress thus confused the concepts of party and class, failing to distinguish the practice of the vanguard organisation from the day-to-day restrictions experienced by the working class under capitalism, logically the open-ended policy would reduce the Party to reflecting the average consciousness of the proletariat. The Bolsheviks argued that membership had to be narrowed to embrace only active party workers. This itself was accepted since the Bolsheviks insisted that all decisions were actively binding on all members. In Lenin's words:

"I by no means consider our differences so vital as to be a matter of life or death to the Party . . . . Every little difference may assume tremendous importance if it serves as the starting-point for a swing towards definite mistaken views, and if these mistaken views are combined, by virtue of new and additional divergences, with anarchistic actions which bring the Party to the point of a split" (9)

Clearly, actions of this kind represent divergence in method as well as ideology. All through Congress Menshevik speakers rebuked anti-Iskra-ists for refusing to participate in decision making, that is with the above exception. Soon after the split among the Iskra-ists, delegates from the Jewish Bund left, reversing the balance of votes in favour of the Bolsheviks. Only the composition of the central Party bodies remained to be determined. A Menshevik list was submitted, seeking a majority of their people for these positions. The Bolsheviks in their list

submitted names representing elements still at Congress while naturally seeking the majority of positions. Much, you might say, to be expected. However, on defeat Martov, Trotsky and the other Mensheviks took to boycott. This persisted for several months.

The boycott ended with Plekhanov's conciliatory policy. As this changed matters in their favour, it was not surprising that they pursued supremacy through the Iskra editorial board, the Party council to the central committee by co-option. The Mensheviks proceeded to deny Bolshevik demands for a Congress to settle the crisis.

It was at this point where the leaders of the Socialist International and the German Party became involved in both polemics and organisational initiatives aimed at various settlements. Rosa Luxemburg, in her article 'Organisational Issues in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement' took the Bolsheviks to task for their 'intransigence'. There was a 'pitiless centralism'. Although the article was written in response to Lenin's 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back' - itself a methodical account of the Second Congress - Luxemburg ignored the decisions of that Congress. Lenin's reply was not published in NEUE ZEIT. (10)

Examination of material written after the end of the boycott demonstrates that continuous attempts were made to suppress Bolshevik agitation in the official Party press. In contrast, Congress decisions guaranteed minority representation in all Party institutions and decision making. The methods employed by Menshevik and several German Social-Democrats amounted to denial of the entire party concept, since within an overall framework of agreement - the party programme and rules - the minority must always actively execute the majority line. An elementary point for all but the prejudiced. Paradoxically, in defeating Bernstein's rightist line the German Party developed a similar formula for party membership, arguing that it was central to its defeat.

With the Menshevik takeover of the Party's central bodies and their subsequent denial of agitation for a further congress to settle matters, the Bolsheviks formed the Bureau of Majority Committees for the purpose of organising the Third Party Congress. Soon after the crisis had reached this level there came proposals from German and Swiss Social-Democrats that the dispute be settled through the Socialist International. Shortly before the Third (April) Congress the Bolsheviks rejected proposals by Bebel (a founder of the German Party) offering his services, of those of the Party's executive committee, as arbitrators to the dispute. Their decision was hardly surprising considering the partiality of the German Party leadership. More basically, there seems to have been a rejection of anything more than conciliatory mediation from social-democrats outside the RSDLP. (11)

The third Congress was eventually convened in London with the support of the central committee (the Menshevik centre in

Russia) and the Bureau of Majority Committees in April 1905, after consistent efforts failed to gain the support of the Party Council and the ISKRA editors, the Geneva-based Mensheviks. Three major questions stood before the Party: the Party crisis; more seriously, the organisational form of the Party in general; and finally, the pressing question of what tactics in the democratic revolution. In Lenin's words:

"the Party crisis solved itself by the mere fact that the Congress was convened."

The Party rules were substantially revised affecting "three main points: a) the amendment of clause one of the rules; b) the precise definition of the rights of the central committee and the autonomy of the (regional - JB) committees, with the extension of the scope of this autonomy; and c) the creation of a single centre." (12)

1905 marked the upsurge of revolutionary activity in Russia. Amid the ferment, major differences became all the more apparent. The question of armed insurrection, its minimum aims and leadership, confirmed that other questions before Congress were merely symptoms of an underlying ideological split. Congress, as best it could, detailed its answers, emphasising the need for leadership from the proletariat, the vacillating nature of the liberal bourgeoisie, plus the necessity of participating in a provisional revolutionary government backed by an armed people, assuring the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. These decisions were spelt out in Lenin's 'Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution'.

At the same time 'The First All-Russian Conference of Party Functionaries' was convened by the Geneva Mensheviks. Menshevik delegates from Russia, attending Congress on the instructions of their organisations, arrived instead at the Conference. (13) Fresh rules were agreed together with a decision not to recognise the Third Congress. Lenin compared their new organisational structure with a six-decker bus, arguing that it was an expression of political confusion. The Mensheviks continued to make sole use of the Party printing press and money received from the German Social-Democratic Party, the split was complete at every level.

The Third Congress implicitly endorsed the Majority Bureau's rejection of previous initiatives at settling the crisis by making no decision on them. Characteristically, Kautsky reported the Congress as 'attacks by Lenin and his friends against Plekhanov and his friends', proposing a boycott of the German translation of the Third Congress resolutions. Furthermore, they refused to publish the RSDLP's reply. (14) To summarise, two methods of struggle clearly emerged: one resting on the denial of full information, combined with suitable interpretations amounting to arrogant interference in the affairs of a fraternal party, while the minority pursued the inner party struggle through boycott, manipulation and dictate; in contrast, the Bolsheviks urged full information based on documentary material, such work being 'one of the most important duties of all social-democrats living abroad'. (15)

However, 'only full understanding between comrades in Russia can guarantee lasting reconciliation' (16) rejecting, at an international level, anything more than an exchange of views and conciliatory mediation. There are obviously parallels in the International Communist movement. Contemporary struggles still divide into these two opposing methods. The British Marxist-Leninist movement has yet to develop such an approach in practice, itself a sign of the movement's immaturity.

By the end of 1905 Russia was experiencing the 'thrilling scenes of one of the greatest civil wars, wars for liberty, mankind has ever experienced' (17); the huge growth of the all-Russian political strike swept aside the diversionary concessions of the autocracy. Events in Russia were creating conditions for momentary unity in the Russian social-democratic movement. An important contributory factor seems to have been the International Socialist Bureau which organised a conference in November between the Bolshevik and Menshevik organisations, after issuing assurances that its role would be limited to 'moral suasion'. Conditions inside Russia remained the decisive consideration in these moves toward re-unification. The general strike saw the emergence of the soviets, largely being organised by social-democrats acting, in Lenin's words, as an embryonic provisional revolutionary government. Many tens of thousands of workers were gaining experience as active organisers, swelling the ranks of social-democracy in the process. It is only within this context that an assessment can begin of the next period in the RSDLP's development, especially the function of the Fourth (Unity) Congress.

#### THE FOURTH (UNITY) CONGRESS

In December, the Bolsheviks convened a conference, originally planned as a congress before the above initiatives came to fruition. It was here that the decision to unite both organisational centres into a joint central committee was taken as a preparatory measure for the convention of the 'Unity' Congress. Policy was also agreed on the agrarian question as well as the immediate matter of the Bolshevik attitude to the First Duma elections. Essentially this rested on what analysis was made of the events in 1905. Despite the downturn in the mass struggle, the Bolsheviks argued that this represented only a temporary feature, the revolution was still on the upgrade strategically. Furthermore the autocracy was seeking to establish an advisory (Duma) parliament with controlled electoral campaigning for good measure. In such circumstances a policy of boycott was agreed as the most suitable measure for continuing the mass movement. Significantly this question proved a vivid illustration of the ideological divergencies in the RSDLP during Congress itself.

One hundred and forty delegates, representing some 33,000 members, attended the Fourth Congress. Menshevik control extended over all questions. Opportunely, the amalgamation of the various national social-democratic parties was deferred to the end of the agenda. (18) A lengthy session on the agrarian question was followed by a revealing debate appraising 'the Revolutionary Situation and the Class Tasks of the Proletariat'. This evolved around two assessments of the First Duma (i.e. the constitutional, legal struggle) and the revolutionary movement of the

masses at that particular juncture. Despite their majority, the Mensheviks withdrew their resolution, while rejecting that of the Bolsheviks, being unwilling to define their general principles, thinking 'it would undermine their practical resolutions.' (19) The question was left open. Typically in the subsequent debate dealing with the State Duma, Axelrod, the Menshevik speaker, "soared entirely into the realm of abstractions, in the lofty sphere of platitudes ... applicable to all times, to all nations and to all periods of history in general: but which owing to their abstract character, were useless in dealing with the concrete features of the concrete matter in hand." (20)

Logically enough, Congress refrained from any concrete analysis of Russian conditions, the Bolshevik resolutions apart, contenting itself with endorsing the Socialist International's resolution on bourgeois parties, a resolution which was mandatory. Real differences were obscured. No evaluation was made of the three major trends as represented by the various bourgeois parties. In effect, this ignored the historic role of bourgeois parties in the democratic revolution, especially that of the peasantry. The First Duma was conceded by the autocracy in the midst of a revolutionary upswing, hopefully syphoning off opposition into manageable activities. Predominantly consisting of Cadet deputies, the assembly was overtaken by events. The Cadets were keen to compromise, yet faced an unbending senior partner, indicating the spurious nature of the concessions. Menshevik dilatoriness carried the day, leaving the Party's tactical electoral attitude to the decisions of regional conferences. In fact in the larger industrial areas, there was virtually a total boycott.

Despite Menshevik domination, the Fourth Congress achieved significant gains for the RSDLP, proving a necessary preliminary for extending Marxist influence through all sections of the working class. The basis was laid for the amalgamation of the various national social-democratic parties into the RSDLP. The organisational split had been stopped. "The Social-Democratic proletariat and its Party must be united ... We must work hard to build-up an organisation that will include all the class-conscious Social-Democratic workers, and will live its own independent life..." Lenin called for "really united Party organisations, in which there will only be purely ideological struggle between different trends" of Marxist thought. (21) Clarification of disagreements was seen to be vital to the development of the Party and the education of the proletariat, contrary to the elitist concept which sought to shelter the masses from polemic, presenting a lifeless policy, undergoing unexplained changes from time to time, amounting to mystification of both the Party and the role of leadership. Although the concept of democratic-centralism was accepted in principle, Congress insisted (i.e. the mensheviks) on appointing the editorial committee of the Party publications as well as the central committee itself, creating two centres; the specific conditions of the Second Congress which elected both committees and a Party council had long passed. The RSDLP was now consolidated in Russia. The dual power of both committees presented a picture in many ways similar to the mensheviks' six decker bus, with equal limitations to its progress. Mensheviks only on the editorial committee, with seven of the ten central committee members, demonstrated a preference for organisational exclusion as opposed to principled political struggle. Congress resolutions and discussions brought forth a large amount of material on the tactical prob-

lems facing the RSDLP - material invaluable in the light of revolutionary practice for distinguishing and summarising correct policy conclusions in the bourgeois democratic revolution. Finally, it affirmed 'that the immediate task of the movement was to wrest power from the autocratic government' - Lenin. Rejecting Plekhanov's view denying the importance of the current movement, as it did the rightist policy of failing to recognise, that only the proletariat can lead the bourgeois democratic revolution to complete victory.

#### GERMAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS AND RUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONALISM

The autocracy dissolved, constitutionally, the First Duma in mid-1906, recognising even the minimal liberties it had granted the previous year were proving to be of much greater use to the revolutionary movement than to the timid bourgeoisie. The subsequent response of the movement failed to develop into the coordinated uprising, envisaged by the bolsheviks, due, primarily to the unrestrainable zeal displayed in the Svenborg mutiny, forcing a premature naval mutiny at Kronstadt, both being crushed within three days, despite spreading to other towns in the area. The St. Petersburg Committee of the RSDLP responded with the decision to carry out a general strike before receiving news of the defeats, causing the call to be withdrawn the following day. Many hundreds were imprisoned, seventy nine being executed.

The bolshevik dominated committees of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Poland, the Central Industrial and Baltic regions had all persistently worked for an all-Russian uprising to fight for power, rather than demonstrations or anything less than an all out general strike - emphasising the dangers of spontaneous, localised actions in existing conditions. (22)

New conditions called for new forms of struggle. The revolution, though in decline after the July/August defeat, had immeasurably strengthened the RSDLP, which, with the amalgamated national Parties, contained approaching one hundred and fifty thousand members. However, reaction's counter-offensive was both broad and penetrating - liberal Cadet and bolshevik alike were suppressed, bringing all legal activity to an end - the autocracy's ultimate coup de grace, aimed at disorientating the already disorganised democratic forces; elections for a Second Duma.

While the zsarist government carefully avoided committing itself as to the character and timing of the Second Duma elections, the RSDLP entered into a fierce polemic evaluating the experience of the last 12 months, particularly the relative roles of the mass revolutionary movement - the general strike, peasant insurrections as led by the Soviets - and the results of the First Duma. The left insisted that given the reality of last December - the developing revolution, the impasse of the autocracy - boycott was correct at the time and had subsequently been proved the most effective means to destroy constitutional illusions among the masses, immeasurably expanding the revolutionary movement. The right, especially Plekhanov, regretted their 'errors', characterising the boycott as anarchistic. Although at the time, the differences that existed were only over at what stage boycott was to be resorted to,



no menshevik raised the proposal of actually entering the First Duma. Subsequently, it proved impossible to utilise the elections as a means for mass agitation; "the Duma alone provided certain opportunities for carrying on agitation among the masses." (23). The debate assumed various forms, embracing the whole question of parliamentarism (i.e. the substitution of a legal, opportunist perspective for Marxism), the independence of working class Party in the class struggle, specifically the question of electoral agreements with other parties, culminating with the Second Duma elections in January 1907.

Lenin saw the question of participation or boycott as a matter of expediency, governed by actual conditions at the time. A matter of the most effective and direct route to mass revolutionary consciousness. Bolshevik analysis was supported in particular by Karl Kautsky, who wrote several pamphlets on the Russian revolution during this period. Perhaps the episode proves the more interesting, when it is seen how the RSDLP reacts to his contribution. Lenin, when writing the preface to Kautsky's 'The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution' noted:

"The working class, which all over the world is waging a hard and persistent struggle for complete emancipation, needs authorities, but, of course, only in the way that young workers need the experience of veteran fighters against oppression and exploitation, of those who have organised many strikes, have taken part in a number of revolutions, who are wise in revolutionary traditions, and have a broad political outlook."

Further on, Lenin explicitly states where final authority rests: "... it would be impermissible in the workers' party to claim that the practical and concrete questions of its immediate policy can be solved by those standing a long way off. The collective spirit of the progressive class-conscious workers immediately engaged in the struggle in each country will always remain the highest authority on all such questions." (24)

These comrades who mistake 'international recognition' for proletarian internationalism, drawing prestige from various authorities, mistake in a self-satisfied way, universal principles of Marxism-Leninism as truths without particular historical features. Such dogmatists, in Mao's words, "do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice." (25) No national Communist movement can develop until this is recognised by the majority of its workers. This remains the distinguishing feature of the RSDLP during this period. "It is altogether self-evident that, to be able to fight at all, the working class must organise itself at home as a class and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle. In so far as its class struggle is national, not in substance, but, as the Communist Manifesto says, 'in form'..." "The international activity of the working class does not in any way depend on the existence of the International Working Men's Association. This was only the first attempt to create a central organ for that activity, an attempt which was a lasting success on account of the impulse it gave but which was no longer realisable in its first

historical form after the fall of the Paris Commune." (26)

To summarise. The early experiences of the RSDLP embraced both positive and negative features of proletarian internationalism as expressed in the activities of the Socialist International and its most influential party, the German SDP. The RSDLP matured only through correctly appraising the significance of its own particular practice in conditions peculiar to Russia at that time. The basis for genuine internationalism was seen to be the integration of Marxism with the Russian revolution. Within its national practice, the RSDLP developed the theory of the party and its fundamental concept of democratic centralism - 'unity of action, freedom of discussion and criticism'. Differences were not glossed over, the Party was seen as the means of resolving everything through practice, as opposed to organisational exclusion. While membership was narrowed to embrace only active party workers, Lenin called for 'really united Party organisations, ... with only purely ideological struggle between different trends' of Marxist thought, embracing all class conscious social-democratic workers. These were essential features of Bolshevik work at the 'Unity' Congress and Lenin's devotion to the concept of unity through struggle. At present two essential lessons can be drawn: the methods adopted by the Bolsheviks during inner Party struggles as well as an uncompromising practice towards political independence. Comparison remains to be made of this period with the activity of the Third International, although certain principles certainly clarify similar problems facing the Marxist-Leninist movement today.

J.B.

NOTES

1. Lenin Collected Works (English translation of fourth (enlarged) Russian edition), Volume 29, page 240.
  2. Lenin CW 21, p.307-8. 'Socialism and War'.
  3. Lenin CW 29, p. 306. 'The Third International and its Place in History'.
  4. Lenin CW 29, p. 241-2. 'The Third Communist International'.
  5. Stalin, 'Foundations of Leninism' FLPH (Peking) 1970, p.10-11.
  6. The organisational split which developed during the post-Congress period was seen by Lenin as an expression of ideological immaturity on the part of menshevik Social-Democrats, finding form in an incorrect style of work. In his 'Draft Resolution on Measures to Restore Peace in the Party' (January 1904), Lenin wrote: 'The Party Council, as the supreme institution of the Party vigorously condemns all disruptive moves, no matter on whose part, all refusals to work, all withdrawals of financial support for the central Party treasury, all boycotts, which are calculated to lower a purely ideological struggle of opinions, views and shades to the level of gross mechanical pressure, the level of an unseemly scuffle.' (CW 7, p.148 - my emphasis - J.B.). As for dissatisfaction with the Party leadership, its composition, certain features of its line, these were seen as inevitable. If the party was to develop, such differences should be stated in a comradely exchange of opinions outlining the causes and nature of the disagreement, 'or by controversy in the columns of the Party press'. Congress decisions could only be changed by the next Party Congress. All Party members were duty bound to support 'in every way they can the positive work co-ordinated and directed by both the central Party bodies.' In other words, the RSDLP could only function as a Marxist Party on the basis of democratic-centralism.
- The particular conditions under which the Second Congress was convened - i.e. through the initiative of the 'Iskra' organisation which prepared Russian social-democracy for what was the inaugural congress of the Party - the first Congress left no programme or Party rules. It failed primarily because of totally inadequate preparatory work among Russian Social-Democrats, preferring declarations to political struggle. The organising role of the 'Iskra' board was recognised as a continuing task. Congress saw the newspaper as the ideological leader of the Party, developing revolutionary theory, tactical and general organisational ideas, as well as the general tasks of the Party at the time. 'But only a special central group (let us call it the Central Committee say) can be the direct practical leader of the movement!' - Lenin 'A Letter to a Comrade on our Organisational tasks'. Hence the two centres - the Central Organ and the Central Committee - elected by the Second Congress. The Party Council consisted of representatives of both bodies, being the supreme Party institution between congresses.
7. After the failure of the First Congress of the RSDLP - i.e. its attempt to create a Party through proclamation (see 'Revision-

ism and the British Anti-Revisionist Movement! - MLQ 3, p. 22-3. The author examines the foundation of the RSDLP, contrasting the two approaches expressed in the First and Second Congresses. The 'Iskra' organisation was established, preparing the movement ideologically and organisationally for the Party stage. The tendency 'Iskra'ists represented was most coherently expressed in Lenin's 'What is to be Done?', both the newspaper 'Iskra' and the scientific political journal, 'Zarya', were seen as the means by which all Russian Social-Democrats could discuss all questions; open polemics were seen as essential to the destruction of both economist and parochial trends in the movement and the formulation of a programme - the basis for ideological unity. Organisationally, the 'Iskra'ists established and maintained contact among all the centres of the movement. Only when such an organisation has been founded, only when a Russian socialist post has been established, will the Party possess a sound foundation and become a real fact, and, therefore, a mighty political force.' - Lenin: 'Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra' CW 4, p. 354. The original editorial board consisted of Plekhanov, Lenin, Martov, Zasluchich, Starover and Axelrod. The Second Congress made 'Iskra' the central Party organ, subsequently it came under the control of the mensheviks. Forty five issues of 'Iskra' were produced between its foundation in 1900 and the Congress of July-August 1903, as were four numbers of 'Zarya'.

8. Lenin CW 7, p. 27. 'Account of the Second Congress of the RSDLP.
9. Lenin CW 7, p. 255-6. 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back'.
10. Lenin CW 7, p. 474. 'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back - Reply by N. Lenin to Rosa Luxemborg'. Ironically, the German Social-Democrats moved toward greater centralism at both the Dresden and Jena Congresses, held during this period.
11. Lenin CW 9, p. 144-5. 'To the Secretariat of the International Socialist Bureau'. An extract from Lenin's reply: '2) In order to speed up the Central Committee's reply it would be very useful to obtain certain necessary explanations from the Bureau: a) should the term 'intervention' be taken to mean only conciliatory mediation and advice having merely moral, and not binding force; b) or does the Bureau have in mind a binding ruling by a court of arbitration; c) does the Bureau's Executive Committee propose to submit our differences to the general meeting of the International Socialist Bureau for final decision, without right of appeal?'
12. Lenin CW 8, p. 442 & 4. 'The Third Congress'. It can be seen the RSDLP was consolidating the lessons of the Second Congress period; the extension of regional committee's autonomy must be seen as a safe-guard against any repetition of the manipulative methods employed by the Menshevik controlled central Party institutions of the Second Congress. In fact, several regional committees had been split or dissolved as a result of their bolshevik line.

13. Lenin CW 8, p.545. 'A Third Step Back'. A concise review of the menshevik conference and its decisions.
14. Lenin CW 8, p.531. 'Open Letter to the Editorial Board of the Leipziger Volkszeitung'.
15. Lenin CE 9, p.227. 'Keeping International Social-Democracy Informed of our Party Affairs'.
16. Lenin CW 9, p.252. 'Letter to the International Socialist Bureau'. 16th Sept. 1900.
17. Lenin CW 9, p.393. 'The All-Russian Political Strike'.
18. Lenin, CW 10 p.327. 'Report on the Unity Congress of the RSDLP'.
19. ibid. p.354.
20. ibid. p.355.
21. ibid. p.376.
22. Lenin CW11, 'Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat' discusses in detail the prospects and dangers to an all-Russian insurrection. The menshevik dominated Central Committee favoured immediate action to restore the Duma as a vehicle for convening the envisaged constituent assembly, while the bolsheviks saw the Soviets as the embryonic provisional revolutionary government; at the time seen as the political and military centre for the uprising and the convention of the constituent assembly.
23. Lenin CW 11, p.144. 'The Boycott'.
24. Lenin CW 11, p.412-3. 'Preface to the Russian Translation of K. Kautsky's pamphlet: The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution'.
25. Mao Tse-Tung, 'On Contradiction' p.30. From 'Four Essays on Philosophy' FLP (Peking) 1968.
26. Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', FLPH (Peking) p. 20-1.

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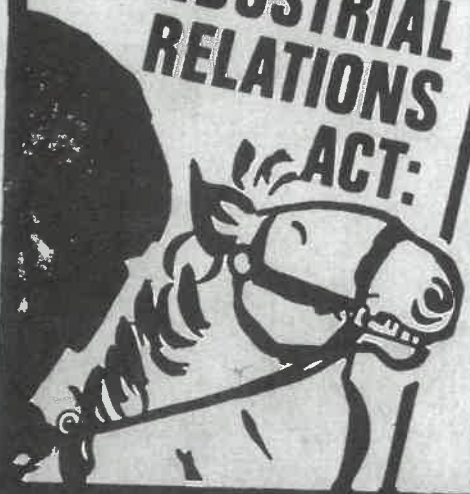
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