

THE DIFFERENCES IN THE JCC  
AND CAMDEN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

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The split that took place in the JCC last weekend (Nov. 17) reflects a deep difference that has existed within the JCC and the CCM for quite a long time. Two lines, one in essence Marxist-Leninist and the other in essence revisionist, have been contending on questions of internal development towards a Marxist-Leninist Party and on questions concerning mass work. If the movement is to draw correct lessons from this split and to continue to advance it must concentrate on this difference and not on the technicalities of whether or not custom had established the principle that the host group takes the chair at JCC meetings.

Two lines on mass work

Marxist-Leninists have faith in the masses. Backwardness, which due to the deficiencies of the Marxist-Leninist movement certainly exists among sections of the working class and people, is a temporary and superficial phenomenon. What is fundamental is that they are increasingly oppressed by the ruling class and that they will certainly rebel. Consequently our task is boldly and fearlessly to arouse the masses. In our propaganda we must expose the entire monopoly capitalist state system; we must show how the oppressor class is a capitalist class which lives by extracting surplus value from workers, how it controls the state machine and rules by dual tactics, using the "parliamentary process," the press, the schools, etc. to deceive the people while simultaneously holding the army, the police and the system of "justice" in reserve to bludgeon the people into submission whenever necessary; we must show how the struggles of the people in Britain are linked with the struggles of all peoples throughout the world by a common enemy, imperialism, headed by the United States and the Soviet social-imperialists; and we must show how their struggles must all be aimed at the violent destruction of the reactionary state machine and its replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Revisionists often pay lip service to these principles but in their propaganda they omit them, usually on the grounds that people are "too backward" to be told these basic truths. Likewise in the CCM we have heard over and over again about the "bad subjective condition of tenants," as revealed in the fact that our campaigns have been

unsuccessful, but never a word of criticism of ourselves and of the ways in which these campaigns have been carried out. This reached its ultimate when a leaflet was produced by a section of the Central Committee that was intended by the writers to be a model for the whole movement in how propaganda should be done. This leaflet was based on an appeal to petty-bourgeois indignation about waste of taxpayers' money. Instead of opposing these petty-bourgeois illusions it played up to them. It then spread false ideas about the role of the police on the Oct. 27th Vietnam demonstration, claiming that they "played it cool." In addition, it said nothing about the political aims of the demonstration nor about its successes. The one point it did make was about press distortion -- and even here it failed to mention the subordination of the press to the ruling class. In sum, it was a leaflet that might have met with agreement from any petty-bourgeois social democrat. This type of propaganda is in practice revisionist, whatever the intentions of its authors. Instead of boldly arousing the masses, it spoon feeds them, and with poisoned food. Instead of raising their consciousness it reinforces their illusions. Instead of giving them leadership it tails along behind them.

The same two lines have contended over our practice in united fronts. Marxist-Leninists hold that a clear line of demarcation must be drawn between ourselves and all people who attempt to mislead the masses, especially revisionists and Trotskyites. We have faith that eventually the masses will see that a straight choice is offered them and that they will take the side of those who genuinely serve their interests. This approach is based on our analysis of all these misleaders as essentially paper tigers -- fundamentally weak though tactically we must take them seriously. The closer we unite with these agents of the bourgeoisie the more important it becomes to keep the line of demarcation clear by preserving our independence and sticking to our principles. It is essential to struggle with them, to seize the leadership whenever possible, and hold the initiative at all times.

Revisionists within our movement, however, hold that the enemy is very strong and we as yet are very weak.

Therefore we must be prepared to subordinate ourselves to the revisionists and Trotskyites and make small gains where we can. Until very recently some people in the JCC have argued that the split in VSC (Vietnam Solidarity Campaign) should never have taken place and the EVSF (Britain-Vietnam Solidarity Front) should not have been founded. Others have maintained that it was incorrect to part company with the revisionists over the July 21st demonstration and with the Trotskyites over the October 27th demonstration, although in both cases clear issues of principle were involved. Most recently the South West London group and a section of the CCM tried to insist that on no account would our forces walk out of the RSSF Conference (Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation), thereby depriving us of what might have proved a very important political weapon. "To tie one's hands beforehand", says Lenin, writing about tactical flexibility in Left Wing Communism, "is stupidity and not revolutionariness." The people who took this position were basing themselves on a false analysis of the revolutionary potential of the masses and on a false estimate of relative strength of the enemy and ourselves. As a result they did not preserve a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and us. One person even argued that some of the Trotskyites in IS (International Socialists) and NLR (New Left Review) were "good people" with whom some kind of long-term unity could be forged.

This problem has arisen again and again in the history of the JCC. The Leeds group broke from the JCC in the summer of 1967 essentially because they were unable to take an open stand against revisionist and Trotskyism. Subsequently their group dissolved, some members remaining in the YCL and others joining IS and SLL (Socialist Labour League) to "carry on the struggle," as they put it. The same issue came out with the Birmingham group who kept announcing that they were going to break once and for all with the CPGB but never found the courage to do so. This group eventually dissolved. More recently, the Glasgow Communist Movement, judging from a resolution they submitted to the JCC about the EVSF, had difficulty in drawing a clear demarcation line between themselves and the enemies of the Vietnamese people who masquerade as friends. They oppose "at this stage" the exposure of these enemies as "lackeys of imperialism", "police agents", "plotters" etc. But Barney Davis is a police agent; Tariq Ali is a lackey of imperialism.

At what "stage" do we reveal these truths to the masses? And at what regard "stage" would the masses have a right to/us as accomplices of the enemy for withholding this information? The CCM charge EVSF with waging a "comprehensive struggle against revisionism and Trotskyism instead of keeping to the Vietnam issue. To this we plead guilty. We are proud of the fact that at our instigation the October 27th Committee (an even broader organisation than the EVSF) arranged a meeting on the history of Trotskyism. It meant that many people who had observed the Trotskyite betrayals over the October 27th demonstration were able to place these betrayals in historical perspective and understand their political basis.

It is a fact that the mass work on the Vietnam issue done by the JCC has mostly been carried out by those people taking the Marxist-Leninist line. Has this work been effective? This is the acid test of which line is correct. On October 27th our forces led some 8,000 people to Grosvenor Square, indicating that taking a principled stand does not divorce one from the masses. Another measure of the success of this work is the attitude adopted by our enemies. We are now the target of violent abuse in the Trotskyite and revisionist journals as well as in the daily press and we had the honour of special mention by Home Secretary Callaghan in the House of Commons. All this may frighten some people but it is actually a testimony to our strength. As Chairman Mao says: "It is a good thing if we are attacked by the enemy, since it proves that we have drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves. It is still better if the enemy attacks us wildly and paints us as utterly black and without a single virtue; it demonstrates that we have not only drawn a clear line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves, but achieved a great deal in our work."

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(Note by RM/LCL): the EVSF was founded and built by the RM/LL, on the initiative of Comrade Manchanda, with the support of Comrade Henderson Brooks of Coventry.

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## TWO LINES ON PARTY BUILDING

Marxist-Leninists in the CCM and JCC have consistently maintained that conditions at present existing in the country and in the movement are such that a democratic centralist body on a national scale can be set up in the very near future as a hard core around which a Marxist-Leninist party can be built. As the class contradictions within the country intensify the objective need of the

masses for this kind of revolutionary leadership becomes more and more apparent. As a result a strong measure of subjective unity is developing among Marxist-Leninists. And this subjective unity is being tested in practice as struggles increasingly move out of the small group arena on to a national scale. The political tasks confronting the Marxist-Leninist movement cannot be carried out by small groups. In fact the existence of small groups today hinders the mass work and the development of the movement as a whole.

The revisionist line, however, while again paying lip service to the need for a party, argues that conditions are not ripe and that small groups must continue their separate existence for some time. This argument stems from the practice of those advocating it, which tends to be local in scope or confined to a single narrow field of activity. As a result these small groups, which once were a very positive feature of the movement, have developed a narrow outlook, have become conceited and have put their own selfish interests before the interests of the movement as a whole.

We are living today in the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism for world-wide victory. It is the era of Mao Tsetung Thought, the highest development of Marxism-Leninism of our time, which is increasingly uniting and guiding the revolutionary struggles of people throughout the world. In this era we have seen the all-round victory of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, resulting in the consolidation of People's China as the great red base for world revolution. In this era we are witnessing the victory of people's war over imperialism and the total exposure of Soviet modern revisionism as it degenerates into social-imperialism. And in this era is taking place a new revolutionary upsurge of people's movements in Western Europe and North America.

The situation in Britain cannot be divorced from the world situation, in which Marxist-Leninists recognise the prospects for revolution are excellent. In Britain too revolutionary prospects are excellent. British imperialism is on its deathbed. In its last desperate bid for survival it is selling Britain to United States monopoly capital and at the same time putting the screws on the working class, fomenting racialism and whipping up a reign of police terror. The people are beginning to rise up in revolt and are looking for Marxist-Leninist theory,

organisation and leadership. In this situation British Marxist-Leninists have three alternatives: "to march at their head and lead them, to trail behind them gesticulating and criticising, or to stand in their way and oppose them" (Mao's report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan). The only correct alternative is the first. This means having faith in the masses and in the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, boldly arousing the masses, carrying out a relentless struggle against revisionism and Trotskyism, and pushing ahead with courage and determination to form the Marxist-Leninist Party.

The two lines in the JCC and CCM are the line of Marxism-Leninism, forging ahead, daring to struggle and daring to win, on the one hand, and a line leading straight back to the bankruptcy of revisionism on the other. Every comrade is going to be called upon to make his choice.

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