

ORGANIZATION AND PARTYBUILDING

"Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct party line, proclaim it for all to hear, state it in the form of general theses and resolutions, and have it voted for unanimously, for victory to come of itself, automatically as it were.....After the correct line has been laid down, after a correct solution to the problem has been found, success depends on how the work is organized; on the organization of the struggle for carrying out the party line; on the proper selection of personnel; on checking the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading bodies. Otherwise the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being seriously prejudiced.. More than that, after the correct political line has been laid down, organizational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its successes or failure."

(Stalin: REPORT TO THE 17th CONGRESS CPSU, Works, Vol.13,p.373)

Isn't this of some considerable relevance to us ?

Starting at the top, to what extent does the Secretariat, rather than the CC, initiate matters ? To what extent does the CC act as a "theoretical body", rather than as an executive, practical body ? If the CC is to function in a manner conducive to Party building, it MUST be an executive Body, which gives direction and leadership to the Party and all its branches and committees.

At the moment, the Party has been growing like an amoeba, shapelessly and unorganizedly. To continue the biological metaphor, we must evolve; we must develop a head, sensory organs -- and teeth. In this, the CC should be the head, collating our experiences, and organizing and directing our growth and movement.

The extent to which this is necessary can be seen if we examine the following questions honestly:

- To what extent do we "nurture" embryo branches, or direct the growth of the Party in areas where we are weak or non-existent ? (By areas, not just geographically, but also other areas of the class, areas of work.)
- To what extent do we ensure that the Party's name and politics are publicised as much as possible ? Do we not attempt rather to restrict ourselves to the chosen few, the "advanced" sections who can understand our jargon ?

We are fighting professionals on the propaganda front, and make a fetish of amateurism in our productions. We tend to put a distance between ourselves and the class even in our language. Certainly, "bourgeoisie" is a precise, scientific term. So is "dihydrogen oxide", but most of us prefer the term water. Let us use precision where scientific accuracy is called for, and the more common, accepted term where it is not.

In conclusion, we should take a critical and constructive look at the organization of our work and our attitudes to it. We should not respect the present just because it has the sanction of the past. It is to the future that we should look for approval! As Lenin said:

" In its struggle for power, the proletariat has no other weapon but its organization."

PARTY BUILDING.....PRACTICE AND THEORY

In face of the current crisis of capitalism and its counterpart, the political crisis of the working class, the crucial task which faces our Party is that of building our strength and influence so that we can effect the prerequisite for revolution.. "the ideological transformation of our class".

We have our line, developed from the practical struggle and experiences of our class and party. What is lacking is precisely that strength and influence necessary to fulfil the tasks we set ourselves, i.e. to implement the line. And until we do set our line into practice, we will find it difficult, if not impossible, to develop the line any further. Frequently, and correctly, we enjoin ourselves to study, to "theory". But is this theory always related to our practice? Theory is, after all, useful only as a guide to practice. To paraphrase Marx, if we only seek to "interpret our class and its politics" we fail in our duty — which is to change it!

Needless to say, previous parties have done neither — but that is no excuse for us to neglect the corollary of our interpretation.

Too often, study is seen as an end in itself, as if in some humanistic way it makes us better for it. It is only when study is related directly to our practice, and not regarded as something parallel to it, separate from and even superior to it, that we will be able to pride ourselves on our theoretical expertise.

Our job is not to study the classics in isolation. It is to use them as examples of Marxist Leninist thinking which must be related to and applied to our era, our situation, our revolution.

This may seem like stating the obvious. However, the obvious must be stated, for there is an attitude prevailing which seems to compartmentalize theory and practice separately, to consider them as almost in opposition to each other. There seems a disdain for discussion of organizational, practical details and a worship of "theory" to the point that comrades who raise such matters are liable to be accused of "empiricism" or "pragmatism". On the other hand, it is implied that if only we have the correct line, the correct theory, the class will fall in behind us. Nothing could be further from Marxism, from the truth. In our present weak state, faced with such tasks as we are, such an attitude represents an overweening self indulgence and

neglect of duty.

As Lenin said: " The fact that the organization of our work lags behind its content is our weak point..... the lame and underdeveloped character of the form makes any serious step in the further direction of the content impossible; it causes a shameful stagnation, leads to a waste of energy, to a discrepancy between word and deed. " (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back)

Our theory does need developing. We are woefully ignorant of the mechanics of the British economy, we are woefully inadequate in our analysis of the state machine in relation to our two-class line. ("Das Kapital" won't do this for us; it provides us with the tools to do the job ;the materials we must prospect for ourselves.) But our practice is equally lacking. Our organization for and implementation of the line is so lacking in relation to what needs to be done that we could easily become despondent and demoralized.

The only way to avoid such despondency is not to underestimate the magnitude of what has to be done, nor to overestimate what we have to do it with. It is seriously to develop our practice and organization along with our theory. This is why our Fourth Congress must above all be a Party-building Congress, one which consolidates our gains and utilizes our experiences of our successes and failures, our deficiencies and our resources so that we may achieve our ends.

PARTY - BUILDING AND WORK IN INDUSTRY.

The task which our Party has set itself is "nothing less than to change the ideology of our class". Indeed, we did not so much set ourselves this task as have it forced upon ourselves by our foundation of the CPB (M-L) as the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class. Such an ideological transformation is the prerequisite of our revolution. In other developments of theory as applied to the particular circumstances of Britain we have defined our potential area of work, the working class, the overwhelming majority of the population, and have, from the experience of the class in its struggles, drawn the theoretical conclusions as to the tactics to be adopted - "the guerrilla line".

Where we have not so far excelled ourselves is in the PRACTICAL, PARTICULAR implementation of that line. The class from which we draw the experience that led us to that "line" has indeed carried on without us more often than not, an economic, an industrial struggle for immediate trade union interests. What has been lacking is the voice of our party, supplying the ideological line, forcing the class to realisation of the inescapability of its historical role as the grave digger of capitalism.

We have defined our role:

"There can be no acceptance of our Party by the working class as a political leadership unless we show the working class from the standpoint of their own experience not only that we are the most advanced section of the working class in the day to day tactical struggle with capitalism but also the necessity to relate all struggles to the central issue of class power. Nobody else will persuade the workers that, as necessary as it is to fight the class enemy, the economic gains of all types of struggle are temporary and in the long run illusory. The true gains are political and consist in the ideological clarity that can be won in such struggle."

How far do we measure up to our brave words ?

"The Party line must be a mass line, or we are only posturing and phrasemongering."

If we accept that Social-Democracy is the ideology to which the working class adheres at the moment, we must also accept that, in order to effect the ideological transformation, we must combat social-democracy in all its manifestations.

As Stalin said to the Communist Party of Germany in 1925 and, indeed, as we said in a different way in "Guerrilla Struggle" :

" The Social Democrats must be pilloried not on the basis of 'planetary' questions, but on the basis of the day to day struggle of the working class for improving its material conditions; in this, questions concerning wages, laws, housing conditions, insurance, taxation, unemployment, high cost of living and so forth must play a most important, if not decisive, role.....

"... But that task would not be fully carried out if these everyday and practical questions were not linked up with the fundamental questions of Germany's international and internal situation, and if in all its work the Party failed to deal with all the everyday questions from the standpoint of revolution and the conquest of power by the Proletariat. "

(Stalin: Selected Works, Vol. 7, p.37)

Our pamphlet "Guerrilla Struggle" quite rightly emphasized the primacy of work at the place of work. This, naturally, was not just for practical organizational reasons, vz. that there are conveniently a lot of workers gathered in one place for us to work on - even though that aspect is important, as anyone who works in a small, one-horse place can appreciate! Above all, it was because that it is at the place of work that the day to day struggle on wages, conditions etc. is at its fiercest. Without getting metaphysical, in some sense, workers are only fully "working class" in the political sense at the place of work, engaging in social production (o.f. secret and postal ballots v. mass meetings etc.).

But while accepting that we have made gains in such a manner, how far have we related the struggle at our places of work to the fundamental questions, to the party line? From the results, we can only say that our practice has not kept up with our theory.

One cause of this was that some comrades interpreted "the place of work" far too strictly and rigorously. Not only did it seem that they did not realize that the place of work was necessarily a base to work from in organizational terms, there was also a tendency to restrict the ideological work to the particular work place.

If we are to recruit "those who lead", the most advanced workers, then we must not put such restrictions on ourselves. We must realize that the "most advanced" of our class, if indeed they are such, will be directly interested in the "planetary" questions and the "Fundamental" questions, internally and internationally, of Britain.

We can only do this by moving from the particular conditions of the locality, the workplace, the trade etc. to the general conclusions of the line, the theory. So far, so good. This is how our Party's line on a class-wide basis was developed.

Where we fail is in the application of our theory to practice. We have not organized to the extent whereby our line can be properly termed a mass line. We do not participate in the movements and trends within the class. There is a gaping chasm in between our individual application at the place of work and the overall application of the theory on a national basis.

"Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory."

(Stalin: The Foundations of Leninism)

We must use our base as precisely that - as bases from which to carry out overall struggle rather than as castles of ideological strength from which we survey the surrounding wasteland.

Until we have organized ourselves as a Party to do these tasks, we are in grave danger of falling into the trap of "positional" warfare, which we profess to abhor.

We make recruits in general by relating their concrete particular experience to Marxism-Leninism, the line, and to do this properly we must participate in and guide those experiences.

By experiences we do not mean simply strikes, industrial disputes etc. (we must broaden this to include the whole gamut of social experience) for such exclusivity not only facilitates economism, it also insults the working class, as if we were to say that they were not capable of seeing past their work-bench.

In the context of "industrial" work or "Trade-Union" work, such experiences must necessarily include all sorts of campaigns in combines, in unions, in industries: - pay policies, redundancies and unemployment, legal restrictions on trade-unions, Labour Party affiliation, Elections and democratization of unions. And all such experiences can be either virtually ignored or led. So far we have virtually ignored them. We must as a Party lead for to pretend they didn't happen is a far worse form of tailism than to recognize a struggle belatedly. The Industrial Bureau must be broadened to cover all trade union work. Its task must be overall direction of Party-building at place of work, of implementation of the guerrilla line.

Of course such a task is overwhelming - the multitude of trades, unions, and industries necessarily means we must have committees or groups wherever needed for industries, firms, unions where the basic task would be to understand the particular conditions of their "province", relate it to the general line and oversee the implementation of that line in terms of overall policy, recruitment, propaganda etc.

Of course such bodies must be under the rigorous supervision of the Industrial Bureau, which must ensure that such committees function

and are not merely time wasting cosmetic devices which take all the energy and time of productive work without delivering the goods.

If we do undertake such mass work within the Labour movement then we must not on any account lose contact with our bases, the places of work. We should use the two in a dialectical manner. Use the mass work to expand the bases quantitatively and qualitatively.

A party member should not be stuck in one locality as a guerrilla fighter, he should be

"encouraged to widen his field of activity, to spread it from one factory, to the whole industry, from one locality to the whole of the country"

(Lenin: What Is To Be Done, p.163)

His ideal should not be (to be) a trade union secretary but a tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class or the people it affects; he must be able to generalize all these manifestations to produce a simple picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation, he must be able to take advantage of every incident however small in order to explain his socialistic convictions and his democratic demands to all incidents, explain to everyone the world historic significance of the proletarian struggle for emancipation."

(Lenin: What Is To Be Done, p. 99)

Until we have reached this stage of practical mass application of our theory, our growth will not only be stunted organizationally in terms of numbers, influence etc., we will also be at an ideological and theoretical impasse. We develop our theory in order to direct our practice, and only our social practice, our implementation of the line will enable us to develop our theory further.

We must endeavour to avoid any one-sided emphasis on either theory or practice, for far from being in any way in opposition to each other, it is only by realizing their mutual interdependence that we will make any great strides on either front. We must avoid any zig-zag, spasmodic development ("Now our primary task is the development of our theory" or "Our practice is what we must concentrate on"). The two are inextricably bound in a dialectical relationship. Neither can develop without the other, but when both are paid due heed, then - and only then - are we on the road to success, to revolution.

"Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no significance. Knowledge begins with practice and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice."

(Mao Tse Tung: On Practice, p. 304,
Selected Works, Vol. 1)

MIKE H.

Here is the fourth of the preparatory documents intended to stimulate discussion and thought prior to Congress.

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THE ROLE OF THE PARTY IN THE CURRENT SITUATION.

The working class faces an ideological crisis. Its adherence to social-democracy since the Party declared a revolutionary situation has led to a reactionary change. Victories have been replaced by defeats. The class was not straining at the leash to smash capitalism but without knowing how; it kept to a strategy of defence. The source of its defeats was not tactical but ideological backwardness, a matter of political direction.

Defeats for the class are defeats for us, the Party. We must question our leadership therefore; not just organisational weaknesses, which are secondary, but our political direction. This questioning has always gone on, but has become sharper. Our last Congress, for example, was not devoted just to 'Organisation' after the 'Theory' of the 2nd. 'Guerrilla Struggle', 'The Struggle of Ideas', the line of National Liberation all show a continuous theoretical development since the adoption of our 2nd Programme.

More recently we have studied Philosophy and 'What is to be Done' We have discussed the redirection of the Party's line to bring out its revolutionary, strategic message. Under the pressure of events changing before our eyes, of class struggle turning from strength to weakness, victory to defeat, we had to jettison the theory that class practice leads directly to revolutionary consciousness. (This was not part of our line, but it was practised.) We had to rediscover the role of our Party which is to create and propagate revolutionary consciousness, to change the ideology of the class.

We must accept that the fate of the working class depends now on the Party and not vice-versa. This is not just because the Party is a special organisational instrument, a technique for seizing power but, above all, because it works out the political line which directs the class in action and develops the consciousness which is the basis for revolutionary struggle.

Is the revolutionary line a useful adjunct or the true source OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE?

As Marxists we know that social being determines social consciousness. However, this is not a mechanical relationship. Consciousness is a reflection of objective reality, which means that it reflects reality rather than God, not that it is passive or inert. It reflects reality in so far as it struggles to understand and change it, to become a material force. Consciousness is what enables us to act on the external world with purpose, to master its laws so that we are not slaves to events. Marxist theory has never belittled the rôle and significance of consciousness, of ideas and theories. On the contrary, we recognise its true importance since we alone understand its material basis and function.

Men make their own history and they make it consciously; "nothing happens without a conscious purpose, an intended aim." (Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach). Ideas and theories become a material force in history so far as they grip the masses. Correct ideas have a tremendous organising, mobilising and transforming power. They inspire and create struggle and political action - because they provide the analysis, orientation, direction and conviction

demanded political exposure and not just 'calls for action'; the propagation of a single correct idea can create innumerable calls for action and the fulfilment of those calls amongst those it reaches. We must endorse his view that there can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory -

'New social ideas and theories arise...because it is impossible to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organising, mobilising and transforming action.' (Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism").

Where does revolutionary consciousness come from? If we don't know, it will be difficult to create it. To put the question bluntly, does it come from the mass or the Party? From both of course, in a dialectical relationship with each other; but there will be no dialogue if one element does not know its role. Our chairman once said that the working class is the seed and the Party the fertiliser. We need to consider what this means.

We say that Marxism is derivative of the working class. Is class practice, then, sufficient material for developing Marxism? No, because Marxism was a fusion between science, the most advanced ideas of humanity (in philosophy, economics, history, etc...) and the experience of the working class. It was a synthesis of the lessons of class practice which could 'arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge.' (Kautsky) Marxism itself, therefore, is more than experience; it is the science corresponding to that experience.

If Marxism is derivative of the class, was Lenin wrong to say it was created by intellectuals (bourgeois in social origin, proletarian in politics), that it could be brought to workers only from without? He did not mean that it was the product of the 'intelligentsia' as an independent class force, their role is to be understood in terms of their relationship to, their acquaintance with, scientific theory, not their bourgeois class origin. He meant that it was a science, that it could be created and developed only by those, whatever their class origin, who took part as socialist, proletarian 'theoreticians' having mastered the advanced ideas of their time. The concept of a 'merger' between class practice and scientific theory is not quite apt, for it suggests the joining of two separate class elements, which is wrong. It is rather that the working class was a force whose revolutionary character was such that only the most advanced and profound scientific ideas could serve to accumulate its experience.

The point is that Marxism does not arise directly from a gradual summation of class practice. It is class experience at a higher, more rational and universal level, accumulated on the basis of advanced ideas, transformed into and needing to be pursued as a science. The Party, of worker intellectuals or intellectual workers, is the embodiment and vehicle of Marxist science in the working class. 'From without' does not mean from outside the class, from an intelligentsia', it means from the Party.

We say that the working class agree with us, but rejects Marxism-Leninism; it espouses social-democracy but does not believe in it. Furthermore, rejection is conscious act and implies understanding of Marxism-Leninism. The statement that workers reject Marxism was made to emphasise that they could and would accept it, It was a correct a view that the class were social democratic out of ignorance, as if their intellect and not their politics was the source of our difficulty.

But if workers reject and therefore understand Marxism, where did this understanding come from? Was it a 'spontaneous' development, after all, arising out of class experience directly? No science is understood, and certainly not created, 'spontaneously' - it is a contradiction in terms. It was not spontaneous for Marx himself, so how could it be so for the rest of us? Workers understand Marxism because this is 1975, when it has already been created, applied and has transformed the world. How could our literate and educated working class not have thought about what it means? Especially since it is a derivative of their own practice and class needs, which means that their experience must inevitably teach lessons that tend toward Marxist truths and, in essence, are Marxist. If we thought our class was ignorant of Marxism, we should be like the Economists that Lenin criticised for thinking that workers never looked outside the factory gates. The ruling class, too, would be extremely foolish to spend so much time attacking and distorting Communism if workers did not know what it was. Our chairman said once that the class does not disagree, it says 'not yet!'; similarly, how often have we heard 'it won't work' but never, 'I can't understand'.

Does this mean that workers can become committed to Marxism through the lessons of their own experience without the intervention of the Party? The answer must be that the most advanced can, and the proof is the Party itself. Some of our members became Marxists without knowing the Party and then came looking for it. Others who came before, the most advanced, had already founded the Party, the first in Britain. Our Party could not have been the first in the world to be founded by industrial workers, if our class were ignorant of Marxism - it would be a blatant contradiction.

But the answer must also be no, for to accept the Marxist doctrine does not inevitably make us Marxists in the sense that counts. Many of us soon discovered, having joined the Party, that our views were completely wrong on many important practical issues for the class. This does not mean that before we were not committed to the Marxist ideology, it illustrates the distinction between doctrine and 'the living soul' of Marxism, its application, 'the concrete analysis of concrete conditions'. There is a sense in which real Marxist truth is the capacity to seize power and establish proletarian dictatorship, and nothing less will do; this is not guaranteed by adherence to general principles. We are truly Marxist when we have mastered both its universal laws and their application to the concrete particularities of our class and country. This is to say that we must really create a line which correctly embodies the application of doctrine to reality.

This task, the development of a revolutionary line that directs and builds the revolutionary movement, cannot be done by the mass, but only by the Party. It is a new scientific task, demanding a further synthesis of class experience and knowledge with Marxism. It requires collective practice and thought by the most advanced, in constant dialogue with and learning from the mass, based on mastery of general principles and concrete facts. The Party, the collective embodiment of the best in the class, devoted and linked to the class, is the ideological and material basis necessary for solving this task. This is what is meant by the idea of the Genius of the Party, 'its ability to accumulate the the wisdom of the masses in struggle'. To think that it could be done without a party or by a few, which is the same thing, is to promote passivity and accept the idealist theory of individual genius.

To say that the class rejects Marxism does not allow us to wait in the belief that revolutionary consciousness will emerge fully-formed from the head of the class as soon as it admits its mistake. Such a view attacks the necessity of the Party. The consciousness that enables the class to act with revolutionary success can only come from without, from the revolutionary line of the Party.

The Theoretical Struggle.

Therefore, as Engels said, there is a theoretical struggle. We cannot just call for an ideological army, we must build it. Trade unionism, although the birth of dignity for our class, is still ideological enslavement if undirected by Marxism. We must develop the theory that enables the class to break out of its present danger through providing the how and why. We have the basics already in our Programme and Party documents. Now that line needs to be rounded out and deepened.

Our line requires to be based on the strategic concept of revolution but that concept must be related to the current situation so as to direct present action and take it forward. There is a weakness that in many spheres there is a divorce or the beginnings of a divorce between working class practice and our strategic concept. The divorce itself is a sign of progress for it shows that we advance our strategic concept, which was not always the case. Now we must work to overcome it through creating the new concrete practical synthesis.

One sign of this divorce is that when we talk of action in the here and now, we sometimes forget our strategic concept again. To illustrate the point (not just to criticise 'The Worker') consider the headline from Issue 17, 'Fight or Perish'. Is it not tailist? This was the slogan appropriate for the first stage of working class history, the struggle for survival. Does the class not know that it must fight to survive? Where is the imprint of revolution on the call to fight, how does it direct the class to active and not passive defence?

Perhaps it is revolutionary to fight at all in this present situation, when we are being attacked. This may be true objectively, but our task is to change the political basis of struggle, the line on which it is conducted. If we say that the struggle based on a defensive concept is now offensive because of an objective change and rest content with that, then we are back to waiting for the class to do our job for us, to become subjectively revolutionary without the intervention of the Party.

The lesson of the current situation is that an objectively revolutionary situation has not and is not directly determining a revolutionary consciousness. To fight on a defensive concept when reality demands a revolutionary strategy is ultimately to invite defeat which is what has happened - our defeats arose from the failure of our class to advance ideologically from its defensive victories. 'Fight or perish' describes the alternatives, but it does not intervene to make a political change and that is our role.

The same issue calls correctly for a guerrilla offensive on a concerted class front. It then states that if the representatives of the labour movement will not lead this campaign, they will be swept aside and 'our class will find its own leaders in struggle.' Why is there not yet a general guerrilla offensive? Because its a policy nobody thought of, or because there is not the ideological basis, the

offensive concept for it? These leaders, then, if they are to lead an offensive, and not just a more subtle General Strike (in its politics, but tactically more ingenious) can only be Marxists or acting on a Marxist line. There is no need for a Party if the class will find such leaders in struggle. Of course, the role of the Party is taken for granted but it should not be because those leaders will be created by the Party's line, not directly by the class in struggle.

Now it will be said: but the Party's line is 'From Defence to Attack'. We are putting the line in calling for a general guerrilla offensive. This is true, from defence to attack is a good slogan. It summarises in a general way all the diverse and concrete theoretical links that have to be made between immediate class issues and events and the strategic objective. But the slogan itself does not make those links. We don't have to change it, rather, in addition, we must take it back into practice and deepen it through developing all the particular theoretical links that will make it a direction for action.

We call for example, for a general offensive on all fronts, guerrilla in form. What is the difference between offensive and defensive guerrilla action? The class has already employed guerrilla action on a defensive basis. What should we tell fellow workers in a particular place that would make it different, offensive? If there were no difference, our strategy would be a dogma with no relevance to actual practice. We cannot draw up a list of tactics which are strategically offensive rather than defensive in every case nor invent a formula which mechanically distinguishes between the two. The difference is in the political basis of struggle, which must influence tactics (demands, forms of organisation and struggle, etc.) but is not the same as tactics,

What is the difference between offensive and defensive ideas? It cannot be just the idea of a general offensive, that we fight with the idea in our minds, for then we should be in a vicious circle. We should be saying: there must be a general offensive and its significance for practice, the difference it implies from previous action, is the difference implied by knowing there has to be such an offensive. Which may be true, but is vacuous and circular, until the particular, theoretical difference applicable in each concrete situation is grasped and advocated by us. To direct concretely, our general slogans must have their particular forms, differing according to the situation..

Guerrilla struggle was advanced initially because of the unevenness of political consciousness amongst the mass. If now we call for a general offensive without building the unity of the class on our line, we shall not lead it even if it comes. Conducted through the trade unions but undirected by us, its ideological basis would be passive defence and no matter that the class or sections of it might stage an insurrection. To call for revolt does not guarantee that it must be on the basis of a Marxist line. Class revolt on the basis of Trade Unionism alone is syndicalism and will fail. If we merely advocate a strategic concept or change without relating it in the particular to each concrete question, not mechanically adding it but relating it, it will become a dogma and will still be tailist because because it leaves the actual class movement to develop unaided. Class unity for revolution can only be built through creating the line in each place that explains the need for immediate action in terms of ideas

that promote a forward movement objectively and subjectively, that directs action which tends to unite the class actually and lays the basis, theoretically, for higher forms of struggle and unity.

To try to illustrate this point, we can consider two positive examples of where the Party has led, the theories of "Two Classes" and "Right to Work". Consider in particular the impact of Two Classes in the student sector. We know that both lines have not always been successfully implemented, but let us consider why they are correct for revolution and the partial success they have had in terms of the mass.

- (a) Both direct present action in the here and now and have done so. They point the correctness or incorrectness of particular demands and tactics and solve problems of orientation (e.g. student unionism, the demands for grants and accomodation; our attitude to natural wastage, voluntary redundancy, work or full pay, etc.)
- (b) They organise, mobilise and transform action. Through conviction the Party has anticipated and led mass struggle on the basis of these lines (e.g. the transformation of the student sector before and after 2nd Congress.)
- (c) They tend to unite the class in actuality and promote the subjective basis for higher forms of struggle and wider unity (e.g. the combatting of sectional divisions university and polytechnic students, the employed and unemployed, between students and the whole class; both follow from the perspective of the common nature and interests of the whole class).
- (d) They strengthen the class practically and ideologically for revolution and take action forward concretely in that direction.
- (e) They are derivative of class practice and experience but are based on scientific knowledge and analysis. As slogans they summarise theories which derive from the concrete application of Marxism. One raises directly the Marxist concept of class and the task of ideological transformation; the other points to the essence of capitalism which generates unemployment. They combat bourgeois theories and raise the question of revolution.
- (f) The bourgeoisie has had to acknowledge them, either to combat them outright or pay lip-service. It could not ignore them because they have become a material force in particular situations. They have been accepted by the mass in practice to some degree, if only temporarily and partially. Likewise the most advanced have accepted them subjectively, which is not to say they have become fully Marxist.
- (g) There is nothing 'spontaneous' in their influence; it is the work and line of the Party. Only the Party does not pay them lip-service, as opposed to the social-democrats.

These points are illustrative, not a formula for creating good slogans. Both slogans have the imprint of revolution and are offensive. They are theories based on Marxist analysis that sum up a situation and direct the class forward. Neither actually mentions revolution and can be accepted in some degree without a formal commitment to revolution, yet each in practice moves us to that goal. This is not deception, it is the quantitative aspect of ideological and material change that will lead to the qualitative leap. The slogans are good because they can direct action now in terms that raise the revolutionary implications of that action. In a sense they are 'transitional' slogans, not like the Trotskyists 'transitional

demands', but because, although correct, they are not universal truths, we shall not always say them, and nor are they tactics. Moreover in the course of practice they too need to be deepened.

The task of the Party is to deepen its line through creating such theoretical links between actual reality and our strategic goal in every sphere. This is work which requires the collective practice and thought of the whole Party. What are our particular slogans relating revolution to the fight against cuts, the destruction of Britain, for national liberation, etc? Do we have the theories that demonstrate the inner connection between the fight against capitalism and the need to destroy it? Perhaps we do have some already, but certainly we need to know and need more. Inflation, for instance, - the ruling class line has not been "smash the working class" which is its aim, but "Attack Inflation", which summarises the theory it has been trying to put over and justifies its attack on us. What is our counter-slogan? At present we don't even seem to be consistent about what causes it; we say its capitalism when talking about prices and the class when talking about lack of investment. This may be true, but could most of us say why in clear accessible terms? The enslavement of the working class is being presented to them as their salvation. We must be so sharp and clear as to cut right through the lies and confusion. In brief, although it is still practice, theory, practice, we must be more active and organised about the creation of theory.

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THE PARTY IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

This document looks to the weaknesses of the Party rather than its strengths; its problems and failures rather than its successes. The emphasis is deliberate and the intent constructive.

The only true gauge of our capacity is our task. Our task is that which determines the nature, the structure and organisation of our Party. There should be no underestimation of that task, to bring about a successful socialist revolution in Britain; it is a momentous one. All previous revolutions - Russia, China, Vietnam or whatever - will pale in significance. The achievement of a socialist Britain will transform the world and truly put the seal on this epoch as that of revolution. It is in this light we should look at our Party.

Naturally we look to those parties who have successfully led revolutions, for example the Bolsheviks, The Communist Party of China and The Party of Labour of Albania. This is correct but we cannot use these as yardsticks to judge ourselves. These parties were successful because they developed from the reality of their own concrete situations. They reflected the feelings and aspirations of their respective peoples. We should do this also. The structure and organisation of a party are shaped by its line and priorities. The very nature of our situation dictates that we should be as different from these parties as much as is our situation.

For the above-named parties the central question facing them was that of the peasantry. It was their ability to treat with this that brought victory. We are not faced with such a problem. We have no peasantry and no intermediate classes. Our central question is the working class alone. But this in itself leads to problems. While accepting the "two class" line we can fail to appreciate that which follows from it. We can treat our class too glibly. We must remember that the British working class is not a homogenous political entity and we should have more regard for those contradictions internal to it. This is of paramount importance if we are serious about being the leadership of that class.

The present situation has been characterised as our "1905". This cannot be completely so, or one hopes it is not. We will not have the luxury of a dress rehearsal for our revolution. Given our opportunity we must grasp it and achieve victory. There will be no second chances. If we fail the consequences will be disastrous for the class and revolution would not be on the agenda for at least another generation. The ruling class and their state apparatus will ensure that.

In that our situation is unique we must seek to build a unique party. We are the first party to seek seriously to bring about a socialist revolution in an advanced industrial country. Given that, we must break new ground, establish new principles, build a British Communist Party.

In seeking to assess our strengths, weaknesses and way forward, three areas can be identified as worthy of study for the purposes of this document. These are interrelated, of course, but will be dealt with in turn.

A . DISCIPLINE

This heading covers a whole range of aspects of the Party and it is impossible to cover all in this section. But certain aspects should be looked at. For a communist party, discipline is the basis of all organisation and as such must be given the highest priority.

The greatest threat to discipline is factionalism. We say that as a party we do not suffer from this cancer but one must pause to consider why it is that it is given so much prominence in the classical writings. The great leaders, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Hoxha treat with it as a problem inherent to a party. They do not discuss its existence, rather its remedy:

"Disregard of organisational discipline in the Party organisation in the Fourth Army manifests itself as follows:

"A. Failure of the minority to submit to the majority. For example, when a minority finds its motion voted down, it does not sincerely carry out the Party decisions.

"The methods of correction are as follows:

"1. At meetings, all participants should be encouraged to voice their opinions as fully as possible. The rights and wrongs in any controversy should be clarified without compromise or glossing over. In order to reach a clear-cut conclusion, what cannot be settled at one meeting should be discussed at another, provided there is no interference with the work.

"2. One requirement of Party discipline is that the minority should submit to the majority. If the view of the minority has been rejected, it must support the decision passed by the majority. If necessary, it can bring up the matter for reconsideration at the next meeting, but apart from that it must not act against the decision in any way."

Mao - On Correcting Mistaken Ideas In The Party.

Do we seek to avoid the embarrassment of division by compromise?

The key to discipline is democratic centralism. Is our Party a democratic centralist organisation? It is no easy task to be so. Of course it is no problem to be centralist, any political organisation can achieve that. It is the workings of democracy that is the difficulty. How democratic is our Party?

It is interesting to note that all the successful parties developed in societies that had not reached the bourgeois democratic phase. It is also true that they valued party democracy highly. Perhaps we, living in a liberal democratic society, are somewhat cynical in our attitudes to democracy in terms of internal party organisation.

The effectiveness of our democracy, no, further, the success or failure of its operation depends on our Central Committee. Does the unity expressed in our CC truly reflect the unity in our Party or does it reflect a tendency to gloss over doubts and problems in the name of unity. Such a tendency does not serve unity, rather it allows division to grow and would ultimately destroy that essential uniformity of will. Meaningful democracy can only be built on honest exchange.

We say we are united on the line. What is the line? Does it mean the same thing to all members? Are there as many interpretations of the line as there are Party members? While acceptance of the line is a precondition of Party membership, such acceptance should never be taken for granted. The basics will always be discussed and such discussion will never be wasted. All debate within the Party ultimately comes back to the line and such debate serves to enrich that line and to raise constantly our level of understanding.

Criticism is the most valuable aspect of our democracy.

"B. Criticism made without regard to organisational discipline:

"1. Inner-Party criticism is a weapon for strengthening the Party organisation and increasing its fighting capacity. In the Party organisation of the Red Army, however, criticism is not always of this character, and sometimes turns into personal attack. As a result, it damages the Party organisation as well as individuals. This is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois individualism. The method of correction is to help Party members understand that the purpose of criticism is to increase the Party's fighting capacity in order to achieve victory in the class struggle and that it should not be used as a means of personal attack.

"2. Many Party members make their criticisms not inside, but outside, the Party. The reason is that the general membership has not yet grasped the importance of the Party organisation (its meetings and so forth), and sees no difference between criticism inside and outside the organisation and make their criticism of Party committees or comrades at Party meetings."

How appropriate are these criticisms to our own Party?

"The 'employee' mentality. Some comrades do not understand that the Party and the Red Army, of which they are members, are both instruments for carrying out the tasks of the revolution. They do not realise that they themselves are makers of the revolution, but think that their responsibility is merely to their individual superiors and not to the revolution. This passive mentality of an 'employee' of the revolution is also a manifestation of individualism. It explains why there are not very many activists who work unconditionally for the revolution. Unless it is eliminated, the number of activists will not grow and the heavy burden of the revolution will remain on the shoulders of a small number of people, much to the detriment of the struggle."

Mao - On Correcting Mistaken Ideas In The Party

Criticism and its correct application is one of our weak points. Have we learned to criticise in a communist fashion or rather do we understand what the fashion is? Have we sacrificed that criticism in an attempt to ensure "unity". Our Party does not need such spurious "Unity".

B. LEADERSHIP

This again is basic to the role of the Party and is its prime function. Sometimes one senses a particularly "British" approach to leadership within the Party; a sense of "its not the winning but the taking part that matters". This is a very communist approach to competition but hardly appropriate to class struggle. We must learn that winning is what it is all about. The capitalist state will not hand out prizes to good losers.

One also senses a liberal approach to leadership of the class. How often has the phrase "when the class looks to us for leadership" been uttered? If we wait for the class to "look" we could wait forever. We do not have forever.

Many members have been faced with an apparent dichotomy in our line. We seek to transform the ideology of the class to that of Marxism-Leninism. Question - when will they do so? Answer - When they accept our leadership. Question - When will they accept our leadership? Answer - When they have a Marxist-Leninist ideology. This apparent vicious circle is broken by our Party asserting its leadership. It is an accepted tenet of Marxism that it is the class that makes a revolution. This is not strictly true. The class alone can bring about an uprising. That section of the class, the Party, transforms this into revolution. The Party must assert itself at all times. It will not achieve leadership through short-cuts or putschism but through its aggression, confidence and conviction.

"One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete victory over opportunism within the working-class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Lenin - The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

That quote is not inserted so much for what is said, true though it is, but for how it is said. The spirit that is reflected in Lenin's writings must be reflected in our work. There is a tendency towards relaxation in the Party because we exist. Our existence should not necessarily be taken as a constant factor. Unless we adopt a more aggressive attitude, a Leninist ruthlessness, we will cease to exist, at least as a Marxist-Leninist Party.

C. MEMBERSHIP

The member is the effective basic unit of the Party. Wherever our member is, he or she is the Party. As Stalin wrote, "cadres decide everything". Ultimately it is the quality of our membership which is the deciding factor.

The Central Committee should seek to serve the members through its exchanges and work. It should seek to reflect and transmit their feelings. The members are the dynamic of the Party. If the CC pays too little regard to them the only result possible is stagnation. The Party is greater than the mere aggregation of its members. The bringing together of the experience and political understanding of all brings about something qualitatively superior.

The Central Committee must set an example to the rest of the Party by virtue of its position. We cannot expect our members to exercise leadership in their places of work unless the CC exercises real leadership within the Party. The CC must impart and develop the necessary spirit that seems to be lacking, that aggression previously mentioned.

D. OUR PARTY

In developing its line our Party made a new contribution to Marxist theory, We developed from what had gone before and in our practice developed something that was fresh and suitable to our own situation.

The great tasks ahead demand more contributions particularly in terms of the concept of Party. The classical theory was developed from the experience and struggle of the great parties. Our experience and struggle need not necessarily be the same. This does not mean that we disregard the classics, far from it. We must develop from them and develop further towards our own concept of Party. To rely solely on the writings of others is to deny our experience and to negate the value of our own struggle. It must be remembered that all parties in the West that call themselves communist degenerated. We must learn also from their negative example. As Lenin saw it as his task to build a Party of the New Type, we must see ours to build a Party of the New Type.

Our Party must always retain its independence while avoiding isolation. Isolationism springs from a lack of confidence expressed in sectarianism. We must seek to identify our enemies and our friends. It is precisely this ability that proved so vital in the successful revolutions. In that we look to no other class for support our task seems simpler but the nature of our class makes it harder. We must understand that it is not enough to dismiss all other political ideas as bourgeois. We must treat with them as expressions of the contradictions within the working class.

"And indeed, in the epoch of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are constantly subjected to exploitation and cannot develop their human faculties, the most characteristic feature of working-class political parties is that they can embrace only a minority of their class. A political party can comprise only a minority of the class, just as the really class-conscious workers in any capitalist society constitute only a minority of all the workers.

"What is an organised minority? If this minority is truly class conscious, if it is able to lead the masses, if it is capable of answering every question that comes up on the order of the day, then essentially it is a party. And if comrades like Tanner, whom we particularly reckon with as being representatives of a mass movement - a thing which cannot, without stretching a point, be said of the British Socialist Party representatives - if these comrades are in favour of a minority existing that will fight resolutely for the dictatorship of the proletariat and that will train the masses of the workers in this direction, then essentially such a minority is nothing but a party. Comrade Tanner says that this minority should organise and lead the whole mass of the workers. If Comrade Tanner and the other comrades of the Shop Stewards' group and of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) admit this - and in the conversations we have with them every day we see that they do - if they approve the proposition that the class-conscious communist minority of the working class must lead the proletariat, then they also have to agree that this is the sense of all our resolutions. And then the only difference that exists between us is their avoidance of the word 'party' because of a sort of prejudice held by British comrades towards political parties. They cannot conceive of a political party being anything else than a replica of the parties of Gompers and Henderson, of parliamentary bosses and traitors to the working class. And if they imagine parliamentarianism to be what it actually is in Britain and America today, then we too are opposed to such

parliamentarianism and such political parties. What we need is new parties, different parties. We need parties that will be in constant and real contact with the masses and that will be able to lead these masses."

Lenin - The Role of the Communist Party, a speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International (July 23, 1920)

This document has not sought to be flattering to the Party. It has not looked to its achievements and strengths, that can be done far better elsewhere. For the most part this document poses questions, its author does not pretend to have all the answers. They are for the Party, as such, to discover. They must be found. Our Party is in danger. It is threatened from without. The danger and threat can have serious repercussions internally. Our situation must not be allowed to cause us to turn in on ourselves, to look to each other for scapegoats or whatever. The call for greater discipline is intended to guard against this not as an excuse for it. We must build a monolithic party that is impervious to attack; a party that, come what may, will survive. A party that will lead the British working class to state power.

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