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6^d

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EDITORIAL

"Here one of those 'turns' was taken about which Marxists in the old days used to say in jest: 'A turn that is not so much historical as hysterical'." (Lenin. The Party Crisis. 1921)

Communists in Britain, who have come to realise that the C.P.G.B. is irretrievably revisionist, and that the interest of the working class required the formation of a new, anti-revisionist, Communist Party, are now faced in the anti-revisionist movement with a great array of organisations claiming that they are the new Communist Party, or that they are the sole nucleus of the new C.P.

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Workers Organisation (anti-rev.)

In the last quarter of 1967 three organisations with far reaching claims set themselves up. They are the Provisional Committee of the Marxist Leninist Organisation of Britain; the British Marxist-Leninist Organisation; and the October Organising Committee for the Working Peoples Party of England. The first is a continuation of the Editorial Board of "The Marxist"; the second is a new name for the ACMLU (Hammer or Anvil). The third has been set up by the London Workers Committee. A fourth group, the Committee To Defeat Revisionism For Marxist-Leninist Unity ("Vanguard") claims that it is the sole Marxist body.

Should Communists join any, or all, of these organisations, or should they join none of them? What should individual Communists do

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in this situation in order to contribute to the establishment of a real C.P.? If the supporters of "The Communist" were of the opinion that any of these groups had developed a position which met the requirements of the working class interest in the present situation, they would cease publication of "The Communist" and apply for membership of that group. We will try here to show why we do not intend to do that.

Provisional Cttee of the B.M.L.O.

Early in November a member of the CWO received a circular which said:

"If you think a British Marxist Leninist Party is Long Overdue, Celebrate With The British Marxist-Leninist Organisation, The 50th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution.... Issued by the Provisional Committee of the British Marxist Leninist Organisation".

The following reply was sent:

"...I have been active in the anti-revisionist movement in Britain for four years. Until last week I had never heard of the "Provisional Cttee". In view of the history of the anti-revisionist movement over the past few years, you will understand that I cannot support a new organisation of which I know nothing, and which as far as I know has published nothing of a political nature, merely on the strength of its name.

"On the other hand, if there is an organisation which has developed a Marxist-Leninist political programme for the British situation, I will of course support it no matter how new it is.

"I would be obliged if you would send me the political programme of the Provisional Cttee. and also the names of the members of the Cttee and any information which substantiates its claim to be, in fact, the Provisional Cttee."

No reply has been received. What is known about the body which says it is the "Prov. Cttee of the B.M.L.O.". It is known that certain of its adherents have distinguished themselves over the past couple of years by making public attacks on Stalin on S.A.C.U. platforms (in the name of friendship with China!) and then refusing to substantiate the attacks. It is known that Reg Birch was an Executive Cttee member of the revisionist CPGB up to 1935 and is known to have engaged in any struggle to expose the Party leadership until he was dropped from it. His most significant published work to date is an introduction to a trotskyist pamphlet by T. Cliff, which he recommends to the British workers. It is known that Wm. Ash, the intellectual, novelist, and philosopher, hailed a thoroughly rotten revisionist work (Phenomenon of Man by Adam Schaaf) as an anti-revisionist work in Marxism Today a couple of years ago. We know of nothing which entitles them to be regarded as the "Prov Cttee of the BMLLO".

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The M.L.O.B.

During the past year we have refuted certain propositions of the A. C.M.L.U. (of which MLOB is a continuation): for example its views that the objective basis for opportunism has disappeared in Britain and that the basis exists for the formation of a British national liberation front against US imperialism. We have also refuted its distortion of Marxism with regard to the national question in Britain, and shown that its denial of the need for all the workers oppressed by the United Kingdom state --the only "British" state that exists-- to build a common organisation for struggle against that state, is in conflict with a basic principle of Marxism. (Its "criticisms" of Stalin have been refuted by the ICO)

At a public meeting in December the MLOB modified its position somewhat on some of these questions, and put forward some new propositions (for example, that the capitalist market has now reached the absolute limits of expansion). We will wait for the publication of its new position before commenting on it.

* * *

The Prov Ctte of the BMLO has no programme. Nothing is known about it except that certain individuals known to be associated with it have not distinguished themselves by a principled approach over the past four years. The MLOB has something resembling a programme: but it is not a Marxist programme.

(At the MLOB public meeting in November M Baker (its 'first secretary') declared that Communists who did not support it in the very near future would become agents of the class enemy. We would suggest that if Cdes. Baker and Bland continue with their present approach they will only carry themselves farther and farther into illusion.)

Relations Between the MLOB and the BMLO

When "The Marxist" appeared in 1966 it claimed in its first Editorial to be the only Marxist journal in Britain. This claim was shown to be ridiculous by a number of comrades, including those who later began the publication of "The Communist". They pointed out that the anti-revisionist movement in Britain had already had a public existence of three years and numerous publications had appeared, each of which had a better claim to be considered Marxist than "The Marxist" had. "The Marxist" said very little. The little it did say had already been said, and said better, by many other magazines.

"The Marxist" had to be judged by its political content, its claim to be the only Marxist publication in Britain, and the history in the movement of the members of its Editorial Board (and of the Board behind the Board). It was by these standards that three organisations: Marxist Forum, the L.W.C. & the I.C.O. took an open and

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principled stand with regard to "The Marxist" on its first appearance in the movement.

(It was generally known that "The Marxist" was financed and effectively controlled by a group of import-export businessmen. But this, though it provided grounds for a healthy caution on the part of Communists, was not the primary thing. If the politics and approach were right, this money would be an asset to the working class movement, and vice versa. But the nature of the politics was the primary thing.)

The A.C.M.U. greeted "The Marxist" as follows:

"The first issue of "The Marxist" has just appeared. Although slim in size, it has a pleasing format; its contents are well-written and of a high theoretical level" The A.C.M.U. compared the appearance of "The Marxist" to the appearance of the first issue of Lenin's "Iskra" and expressed its admiration for the "talented band of comrades associated with the new magazine"; and hoped "that its high theoretical level will be applied to urgent political problems". -- "We wish "The Marxist" success. We urge all readers of "Hammer or Anvil" to subscribe to it and support it in every way." (Hammer or Anvil. Nov-Dec 1966)

P 16-18

In the same article the groups which adopted a principled critical approach to "The Marxist" were attacked. Marxist Forum and the Irish Communist Organisation were said to be "opportunists and sectarians posing as Marxist-Leninists...pursuing a consciously disruptive role" (P 17). The ICO, which had challenged the right of Reg Birch to be considered an anti-revisionist (at a meeting organised by the A.C.M.L.U. in conjunction with A. Manchanda of which Birch was invited to be chairman) on the grounds that there was no evidence that he had ever opposed revisionism, while there was evidence showing that he had actively supported trotskyism -- the ICO was branded as trotskyist by the ACMLU. The London Workers Committee ("Workers Broadsheet") which had also adopted a principled attitude towards "The Marxist", was denounced in the same issue of Hammer or Anvil.

During the following six months "The Marxist" continued as it had begun. There was no essential change in its politics. Yet in July-Aug (1967) issue of Hammer or Anvil we read that the setting up of "The Marxist" had been "part of a deliberate and calculated policy of diversion" (P 12). Those responsible for it were no longer a "talented band of comrades"; they had become "the clique in control of "The Marxist", " whose aim "was actually to build a united front with the trotskyists, the most dangerous enemies of the working class". Reg Birch was taken to task for writing an introduction to a trotskyist pamphlet (which had been published long before the ACMLU article welcoming "The Marxist".)

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YUGOSLAVIA

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PART TWO

In Part one it was shown that during the Second World War the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had united the widest sections of the population in the struggle against the fascist invader. Although the leadership of this fight was working class, the content of it was bourgeois, that is, the struggle against the German and Italian invader was part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The same class forces could also be united for the brief period of national reconstruction following the war. The turning point was reached after this period, for now the main bourgeois-democratic tasks (including the division of the land) had been completed. Now was the time for the working class and poor peasants to establish a socialist state and develop the struggle against the capitalist forces.

However, Tito and the leadership of the CPY, instead of initiating and using the state machine to develop proletarian struggle, encouraged the idea that national unity could be maintained during the socialist revolution, that the fighting and suffering shared with the bourgeois forces during the war had in some way made these forces socialist. In his life story told to Dedijer, Tito said that during the war

"'Communist' began to connote more and more 'patriot', fighter for national freedom'." (P 142)

The trouble was that this increasingly was all that it meant. In fact what was happening was that instead of winning petty bourgeois forces for socialism during the national struggle, socialist forces were being imbued with bourgeois nationalism. In countries oppressed by imperialism and fascism, communists naturally aim to lead the anti-imperialist, anti-fascist movement to success. However if they become merely patriots, then in fact they are deserting the working class camp and joining the bourgeois camp. The position of dropping the working class position during the national liberation struggle was pioneered by Tito and has since been adopted by revisionists all over the world.

(The 'proletarian brigades' in the partisan forces were merely a military device for collecting the most organised, disciplined and anti-fascist force into shock forces to bear the brunt of the fighting. It will be noted that neither in China in the anti-fascist war, nor in Vietnam today are proletarian brigades used.)

For Instance, the Connolly Association (an organisation for Irish

6. emigrants in England) during its non-revisionist days combined the struggle for Irish national freedom with the social struggle. At its highest point during the last war, it was an organisation of real value being both anti-imperialist and socialist. Under the influence of Khrushchevite revisionist elements, the social question was gradually eliminated, and the anti-imperialist question reduced to mere bourgeois patriotism. Those trotskyists who support Tito for his 'socialist' content had better think again, for in fact Tito pioneered bourgeois nationalist revisionism. The logical development of this position occurred in 1952 when Tito started openly spreading the idea of peaceful transition in countries oppressed by imperialism:

"In the spring of 1952, in one of his conversations with the Socialist Party of India, Tito pointed out that the Yugoslav revolution might have been almost bloodless had it not been carried out during the Second World War." (Tito Speaks. P 437-8)

The question that must be asked is why did not this opportunist outlook arouse sharp opposition amongst the proletarian forces in the CPY until after the first step in exposing Titoite revisionism had been taken by the International Communist Movement?

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia

In 1937 when Tito took over the leadership of the CPY its membership was 1,500 and its theoretical and political level was very low. Only the fact that the Comintern guarded it prevented it from being taken over by bourgeois forces. Whenever an opportunist trend developed which would take the CPY into the bourgeois camp the Comintern chopped it off. By dint of putting the emphasis entirely on practical work and the economic struggle, Tito doubled the membership by 1940. With the fascist threat the membership rose to 12,000. Then the invasion occurred, the partisan movement was developed and the membership rocketed to 141,066 by the end of the war. Of this number only 3,000 had joined before the war. In the immediate post-war period, when it became clear that the CPY would be running the country, its numbers more than doubled, reaching 360,000 members. It is not surprising that Tito could easily control such a 'communist' party.

Furthermore the CPY had no revolutionary theory specific to its own concrete situation. There is no evidence that its leadership made any detailed analysis of the class forces cooperating in the partisan movement. During a similar period in China, Mao analysed the interests of all the class forces in the greatest of detail. These analyses were carried out from a working class point of view, and had the effect of preventing the bourgeois

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ideology of its allies from swamping the proletarian forces. By failing to make such analyses during the Yugoslav period of national front struggle, Tito and the CPY leadership left the working class unprepared and unarmed for the heightened class struggles that were to follow the war. By failing to develop the movement which was under their influence, the Titoites confirmed and developed the opportunist tendencies within their own ranks. From being partly opportunist they became wholly opportunist.

Stalin in defence of the working class

At the beginning of 1948 a series of letters were exchanged between the leadership of the CPSU and that of the CPY. In these letters can be seen Soviet criticisms of the Yugoslav leadership, and the attempts of that leadership to evade the issues raised. We will deal here only with some of the issues raised then. The CPSU complained that the CPY leaders were spreading malicious rumours about the CPSU, such as that it was "decadent"; that the USSR suffered from "Great Power Chauvinism" and that the Cominform "is a means of conquest of other parties" by the CPSU. The Titoite modern revisionists denied this outright. However judging by the fact that within a year things far worse than this were being said in public about the Soviet leadership by the same men, we can see who to believe here quite easily.

A second criticism was that too much emphasis was laid on the Yugoslav People's Front and not enough on the CPY; that the latter organisation was submerged in the People's Front; that it behaved almost as if it was still illegal, acting in a secretive manner; that activities were carried on through the People's Front all the time; that this policy deprived the working class of its leading role. We have seen the truth of this criticism in Part One. Tito and Kardelj replied:

"the National Front in Yugoslavia is not only equal, but even better in organisation and activity than some other Communist parties that accept into their ranks anybody who wants to join." (13-4-1948)

At that time the People's Front had 7 million members out of a population of 16 million, and did not even claim to represent the working class interest. This shows that Titoite revisionism clouded the distinction between the Communist Party as a weapon of the working class, and other popular organisations with which the CP associates itself. This criticism was connected with the Yugoslav policy of avoiding class struggle in the hope that the bourgeois forces would not be antagonised into defending their class interests. As the CPSU pointed out:

"Lenin has said that the party is the most important

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weapon of the working class. The task of the leaders consists in keeping this weapon in a state of preparedness for battle. Since the Yugoslav comrades are hiding the flag of the party and are avoiding to stress the leading role of the party in front of the people, they blunt this weapon of the working class, they reduce the role of the party, they disarm the working class. It is ridiculous to think that on account of a cheap trick of the Yugoslav comrades the enemy would desist from battle...

"The fact remains that in Yugoslavia on the political arena only the National Front has come to the fore; and that the party and its organisations do not come to the fore openly in its own name and in front of the people. This lessens the role of the party in the political life of the country... Comrades Tito and Kardelj have forgotten that the party is growing and it can only grow in open battle with the enemies, and that the cheap tricks and machinations of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPY can never replace this battle as a schooling for party cadres."
(4.5.1948)

That Tito really did have the view that if the working class tries to placate its enemies, they will not attack it is shown by Tito's comment on the formation of NATO:

"As a result of the rigid and unnecessarily threatening foreign policy of Stalin, the great powers in the West, seeing that they would not be able to achieve their aims by diplomatic means, took the view that they could only achieve those aims from a position of strength." (Report to the 7th Congress of CPY, 1958.)

If only Stalin and the working class would only be a little less uncompromising the "great" imperialists would not need to use force to "achieve their aims" and the petty bourgeoisie could sleep easy at night without fears for their safety!

As the Soviet leaders said:

"There is not noticeable any spirit of class struggle" in Yugoslavia.

This was due to the fact that the Yugoslavs denied that the class struggle becomes fiercer as socialism is being built. Today in the British anti-revisionist movement it is fashionable to accuse Stalin of not realising this fact. However the opposite is true. It was Stalin and the leadership of the CPSU that first pointed out that Tito was following Bukharin's line (as Liu Shao Chi in

China also is doing) of compromise with the bourgeois forces. 9.
They were following

"an opportunist policy according to which the class struggle in the transitory period from capitalism to socialism is alleged not to increase in fierceness, which is taught by Marxism-Leninism; but that the class struggle gets less and less as according to the opportunist school of the Bukharin type who preached the rotten theory about capitalist elements peacefully growing into socialism.

"Nobody could deny the profound nature of the social transformation in the USSR as a result of the socialist October revolution. Nevertheless the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) have never deduced from these facts that the class struggle had weakened in our country or that there does not exist a danger of capitalist elements growing in strength." (4.5.1948)

The final defence of the Titoites was that the CPSU had been wrongly informed of the situation in Yugoslavia. All defence was futile "even with facts".

Reactions of Central Committee of CPY

When the Soviet leaders began to criticise the leaders of the CPY in early 1948 a number of CC meetings were held, whose proceedings were top secret at the time. In these Tito made an all-out effort to retain the loyalty of the C.C. The way he approached the problem was quite simple: he dismissed all the Soviet criticisms as "ideological". The real issue was whether Yugoslav independence was being threatened, whether the Soviet Union was interfering in the internal affairs of a smaller country. The S.U. was accused of eventually wanting one CP and one state for all Eastern Europe (an outrageous lie). Thus the working class question of the best way of achieving socialism was thrust aside --what mattered was whether bourgeois diplomatic conventions were being encroached upon. Starting discussion at the meeting of 12th April 1948 Tito said:

"Comrades, remember that it is not a matter here of any theoretical discussions, it is not a question of errors committed by the CPY, of ideological deviation on our part. We must not allow ourselves to be forced into a discussion of these things. Comrades, the issue here, first and foremost, is the relationship between one state and another. It seems to me that they are using ideological questions in order to justify their pressure on us, on our state." (Tito Speaks. P 349)

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One of the Soviet criticisms of the CPY was that there was no inner-party democracy. This was dismissed as a wicked lie by "Hero-Tito" (as he was called). Now on this most important issue one member of the Central Committee dared to raise his voice against Tito's assessment. In "Tito Speaks" the scene is described. Zujovic appeals to the CC to reconsider:

"Comrades, I appeal to your revolutionary conscience. I am against sending such a letter to the Soviet Party. Do not forget the tremendous matter involved. I am against such an attitude to the Soviet Union and the Soviet Party'.

"Dead silence prevailed in the library of the old Palace. Only Tito rose to his feet while Zujovic spoke and began to pace up and down the library, whispering to himself: 'This is treason to the people, the State and the Party'..." (P 349)

Zujovic was sentenced for treason, and sent to prison, where he remained until he was broken down. So much for Tito's inner party democracy. The same fate befell all members of the CPY who dared to criticise the CPY leadership.

The Cominform

In June 1948 the Cominform published a resolution on the situation in the CPY. In essence this resolution contained the same criticisms as those of the Soviet leadership, but in a systemised form. The Cominform resolution was the verdict of the international Communist movement on events in Yugoslavia. It was only published after the Yugoslav leaders had blankly refused to attend the meeting of the Cominform to discuss criticisms of it. Although the Yugoslav leaders had only been too willing to deliver scathing criticisms of the French and Italian Communist Parties at previous meetings of the Cominform, they refused to face the criticisms of these and other parties in return. Relations were not to be of equality. The Comintern condemned this position. The Yugoslavs replied:

"The Central Committee of the CPY does not consider that by refusing to discuss the mistakes for which it is not to blame, it has in any way injured the unity of the communist front... The CC of the CPY can never agree to a discussion about its policy on the basis of inventions and uncomradely behaviour without mutual confidence." (29.6.48. Plenum of CC, CPY)

The following are some conclusions and analyses made by the Cominform. These have never been publicly denied by the international communist movement, not even by the Soviet revisionists.

These analyses are therefore still in force today.

"The Information Bureau considers that... the CC of the CPY has placed itself and the Yugoslav Party outside the family of the fraternal Communist Parties, outside the united Communist front and consequently outside the ranks of the Information Bureau.

"The Information Bureau considers that the basis of these mistakes made by the leadership of the CPY lies in the undoubted fact that nationalist elements, which previously existed in a disguised form, managed in the course of the past 5 or 6 months to reach a dominant position in the leadership of the CPY, and that consequently the leadership of the Yugoslav CP has broken with the international traditions of the CPY and has taken the road of nationalism...

"Showing their poor understanding of the international situation and their intimidation by the blackmailing threats of the imperialists, the Yugoslav leaders think that by making concessions they can curry favour with the Imperialist states. They think they will be able to bargain with them for Yugoslav independence, and, gradually, fet the people of Yugoslavia orientated on these states, that is, on capitalism. In this they proceed tacitly from the well-known bourgeois-nationalist thesis that 'capitalist states are a lesser danger to the independence of Yugoslavia than the Soviet Union!

"The Yugoslav leaders do not understand, or probably, pretend they do not understand, that such a nationalist line can only lead to Yugoslavia's degeneration into an ordinary bourgeois republic, to the loss of its independence and to its transformation into a colony of the imperialist countries."

The Cominform then called on "healthy" elements in the CPY to replace the present leaders with "a new internationalist leadership."

Angela Clifford

(Next month: Economic Reforms and further relations with the Cominform.)

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The 'Politics Trick'

THE TROTSKYISTS.

The 'Politics Trick', is in fact one of the many misinterpretations made by the trotskyist movement in Britain today, and this applies to most trotskyist groups ranging from the Socialist Labour League to the International Socialism group. This misinterpretation of the class struggle in Britain takes the form of a claim that the present wave of strikes are not economic strikes, but political strikes, because of the intervention of the capitalist government on the side of the various employers involved.

This misinterpretation is a consequence of the general tendency of trotskyism to exaggerate and overestimate the level of the class struggle in Britain in recent years. A glaring example of this is the type of headlines that have appeared in the 'Newsletter' organ of the S.L.L. in recent years. They have went something like this: 'British capitalism is on the verge of another Crisis', or 'British capitalism is on the verge of another Crisis', and then 'British capitalism is on the verge of yet another Crisis'!

As has been said, the trotskyists, including T.Cliff, of the I.S. group, claim that the intervention of the capitalist state in economic affairs, and in the economic struggle against the working class, is the new phenoma which has made the economic struggle, political. But after only a brief investigation into the development of capitalism in England, this standpoint is proven incorrect. The intervention of the state in economic affairs is neither a new phenoma, nor does it transform economic strikes into political strikes.

Even before the bourgeoisie took state power, the monarchy played a role in developing early forms of capitalism in England,

" But at a time when the bourgeoisie, though rising, had not yet risen, and the aristocracy, though weakened, was still a factor of considerable importance, the monarchy, by holding the balance of power between both, could play a dominant role; and the Tudors and Stuarts were thus able to breathe some life into a system already on the verge of collapse".

(D.W.Petegorsky, Left-wing Democracy in the English Civil War. Page 29).

Feudalism in England was always, at least since the time of William I, a centralised system, with the state playing a dominant role, and this continued as early forms of capitalism began to develop. The feudal monarchy succeeded in playing a dual role, i.e. supporting the landowners and the up and coming merchants and manufacturers (the bourgeoisie), but it was always biased towards the landowners, which hampered and restrained commercial activity.

" Throughout almost all the social legislation of the Tudor period, we may see the England of the past erecting vain barriers against the England of the future". (G.Unwin, Studies in Economic History. Page 315).

The Bourgeoisie could no longer develop within the confines of the feudal state, to their own satisfaction.

" Above all, they had to capture political power in order to abolish the engines of repression and to establish in their stead the institutions that would give effect to their own purposes and ambitions". (D.W.Petegonsky, ibid. Page 29).

If the role of the bourgeois state is a new phenoma, why the English Civil War? Why did the bourgeoisie take up so much time, and use so many resources in order to gain state power if it was going to prove useless to them? Or perhaps when Mr. Vliif asserts that the use of the bourgeois state is a new phenoma he is comparing this to the period, about which Lenin said that 'the chief organising force of anarchically built capitalist society is the spontaneously growing and expanding national and international market'.

This period of English capitalism covered approximately 150 years from 1700 until 1850, when English capitalism was continuously involved in Wars for markets, and after each war won a peice of this continent or a peice of that continent. But surely even during this period of 'spontaneously growing and expanding' markets, the state played a major role? The propaganda drives encouraging recruitment to the army were car ried out by the state, and the army itself was not an army of any particular capitalist but was part of the capitalist state machine. Such events as the 'Boston Tea-Party' were not acts against particular capitalists. They were acts against legislative measures imposed by the English state, and their are many such examples of this throughout this entire period.

Even though there was an element of spontaneity during the tremendous build of English capitalism the state played a major role. It is easy to be fooled into thinking that the state played a minor role. The reason is because during this period of capitalism the way in which profits were made was crude and uncomplicated, and therefore, a far less complex state machine was needed.

As to exposing the class nature of the state to the working class during this period, it would have been simple given the correct leadership. It could have been made obvious to the pitmen of this period who were evicted from their homes by the state police for striking, or to the shipyard workers, who saw their workmates hanged by the state hangmen for attempting to organise. And remember at this time, prior to the Chartist movement, the working class did not have the vote and were therefore not fooled by bourgeois democracy as many are today. The nature of the state today is far less obvious to the broad masses of the working-class, and the task of exposing it is far more difficult.

The present day struggles in Britain, even though the capitalist state intervenes in them as it always has done, are not political strikes but trade union or economic struggles. The economic struggle, which Lenin described as "the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms in the sale of their labour", has always attempted to improve conditions by demanding legislative and administrative measures from the capitalist government. These struggles are demands for concessions through political legislation.

When the workers lobby parliament (a political body) or demonstrate against trade union legislation (a political act on the part of the capitalists) these struggles are still not political i.e. if we mean by politics, communist politics, which is the only political expression of the working class, because:

" Revolutionary Social democracy subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for Socialism". (Lenin, 'What is to be Done, Selected Works, 2VOL. Edition, Vol. I. Part I Page 269)

Even though there are political lessons to be learnt from these struggles, they still take the form of:

" 'Economic struggles against the government!... which is ver, very far away from being trade Social-Democratic(Communist) politics". (Lenin, ibid).

The trotskyists, by claiming that the present wave of strikes are political because of state intervention, use this to account for dragging themselves on the 'tail-end' of the movement. They 'bow down to spontaneity' on the basis that state intervention is the 'new' (?) experience that will make the working class political, and therefore avoid theory. Obviously there would be no need to develop political consciousness among the working class if they were already involved in struggle on a political basis.

THE TROTSKYISTS and the C.P.G.B.

In last months 'COMMUNIST' an article on the Barbican established the fact that the C.P.G.B. exposed an absolute lack of desire on its part to develop revolutionary political consciousness among the workers involved on the Barbican. The trotskyists, who claim to have a desire to develop political consciousness among the working class (all too often in practice we find that they are as economist as the C.P.G.B.) cannot because of their false interpretation of the struggle in Britain, and especially because they confuse the economic struggle with the political struggle.

ECONOMISM and the ANTI-REVISIONIST MOVEMENT.

"...the indifference to theory...is one of the main reasons why the English working class moves along so slowly..." —Lenin.

The task of developing political consciousness among the working class, involved in the economic struggle has fallen to the anti-revisionist movement. But already many groups in the anti-revisionist movement have fallen into an economist position; again the 'politics trick' finds expression. We find that almost every economist idea peddled in the movement, by these groups, were refuted by Lenin over 60 years ago, in his pamphlet, "What is to be Done?".

When we have declared in our publications, or at discussion meetings with other sections of the anti-revisionist movement, that 'the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory' (Lenin) and that before the anti-revisionist movement can unite "we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation" (Lenin) we are told that "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes". While this quote from Marx may be true in general "to repeat these words in a period of theoretical chaos (only a madman would deny that this is the case in Britain) is like wishing mourners... 'many happy returns of the day.'" (Lenin).

Because we follow the pattern of Lenin, as outlined above, when he was struggling to build the movement in Russia, we are accused of being 'disrupters', of being 'too theoretical' and so on. Again we can turn to Lenin to determine the nature of the criticisms:

"No, the majority of the Economists quite sincerely disapprove (and by the very nature of Economism they they must disapprove) of all theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, etc." (Lenin, *ibid*, page 221).

"All those who talk about 'overrating the importance of ideology' about exaggerating the conscious element, etc., imagine that the pure working class movement can work out, and will work out an independent ideology for itself... But this is a profound mistake". (Lenin, *ibid* page 242).

Another typical idea in the anti-revisionist movement is that we only need to involve ourselves in the economic struggle, and when, through some miracle, it becomes political we will be there to take the lead. M. Baker, '1st. Secretary of the M.L.O.B.' in a recent speech claimed that the economic struggle is the reservoir of the political struggle, and that as the economic struggle proved to be inadequate the workers would discover the need to replace the capitalist system. (This is parroting the 'Economists' who said that the workers involved in the economic struggle would become aware of their 'lack of political rights'). Lenin also criticised this. He criticised such "Catchwords like: we must not concentrate on the 'cream' of the workers, but on the 'average' mass worker; (an idea peddled consistently in the anti-revisionist movement) 'politics always obediently follow economics', etc." which were being peddled by the Economists at that time.

Further we are told that a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organisation, in this period of theoretical chaos, will only be built by comrades absorbed in the practical, which at this stage is the economic struggle. Again, again and again, Lenin refuted these ideas.

"The 'economic struggle against the employers and the government' does not in the least require-and therefore can never give rise to-an all-Russian (in our case British) centralised organisation that will combine in one general onslaught, all and every manifestation of political opposition, protest and indignation, an organisation that will consist of professional revolutionaries and be led by the real political leaders of the whole people." (Lenin *ibid*, page 300).

"..it denotes a narrow scope of activity... a good organisation of revolutionaries cannot be built up on the basis of such narrow activity..." (Lenin *ibid* Page 314).

One of the most disgusting economist ideas peddled in the movement is the idea that the British working class is a backward working class, too backward for politics, too backward for the so-called revolutionaries, who like the petty-bourgeois degenerates, drop out of the struggle. They claim that we must wait until the working class becomes advanced for our ideas and do not think that the working class can only become politically advanced under the influence of a communist vanguard. To 'blame' the working class in this way is to use the class as an excuse for being too weak-willed to join the struggle to build a theoretically solid communist party.

To blame the workers for the failure to advance the struggle on to the political level "...is to lay the blame where it does not belong, to blame the masses of the workers for ones own philistinism (which is also Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves our lagging behind the movement for being unable as yet to organise sufficiently wide, striking, rapid exposures..." (Lenin *ibid* page 278).

"YES, YES we have indeed lost all patience to 'wait' for the blessed time that has long been promised us by our diverse 'conciliators' when the Economists (in Britain our numerous 'revolutionary drop-outs') will stop throwing the blame for their own backwardness upon the workers, and stop justifying their own lack of energy by alleging that it is the workers who lack strength". (Lenin *ibid* page 300).

Finally, another major economist 'criticism' of our ideas is that we are unwilling to take part in the 'drab every day struggle' (this when we are forced to, because of our class position but do not acclaim it as the primary aspect of the struggle at the present time) because we want to be 'theorists'. (We have come to the conclusion that it is these petty-bourgeois elements who talk all of the time about 'practice', who want to be the 'theorists', because all they seem to do is writ pages of intellectual gibberish).

"As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, to hurl universal and fresh exposures among the masses of the workers. Many of us as yet do not appreciate the bounden duty that rests upon us, but spontaneously trail in the wake of the 'drab everyday struggle', in the narrow confines of factory life. Under such circumstances to say that the 'Iskra displays a tendency to minimise the significance of the forward march of the drab everyday struggle in comparison

with the propaganda of brilliant and complex ideas (Martynov)-means dragging the Party backward, defending and glorifying our unpreparedness and backwardness". (Lenin *ibid* page 279).

We think that Lenin's 'What is to be done?' is a confirmation of our position on the relationship of communist theory to practice in Britain at present, and have said so in numerous discussions with other sections of the anti-revisionist movement. All they have said in reply is that this pamphlet was written by Lenin over 60 years ago in relation to a different situation, and is therefore almost irrelevant to us in Britain today.

It is true that the situation which Lenin was dealing with was different to the situation in Britain today, but the similarities are also immense, making the pamphlet very relevant to us today. In fact there is no excuse for economism in Britain, or for theoretical backwardness. A much more reasonable, though still incorrect, case could have been made in Russia, because at that time the working class were a relatively small section of the population, the bourgeois stage of the revolution had not been completed, and also trade union organisation was very weak. None of these conditions exist in Britain. We therefore maintain that Lenin's general approach, which finds expression very clearly in 'What is to be Done', when he was struggling to build a revolutionary party should be followed by us in our struggle to build a revolutionary party.

Dave Laurie.

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B A C K I N G B R I T A I N

Letter from an Irish Comrade to a perplexed friend...

Dear Bill,

I am prompted to write to you tonight because I feel you will be wanting to opt out of this new "Back Britain -work half an hour for nothing" craze. In order to justify your action in the eyes of some of your fellow navvies, you will have to be able to explain your action in a rational, working class manner.

First expose the FALLACY of the whole idea. We are told it is an attempt to save Britain from an impending catastrophe. What is Britain? A collection of complacent capitalists and (on the whole) insecure workers. Right? These capitalists have a parliament and a prime minister named Wilson. Wilson's strategy has been and still is, to make British capitalism more competitive (necessary whether in or out of the Common Market). Capitalism in Britain is a bit of a dwarf in comparison with capitalism in the Common Market and America. (American worker produces 3 or 4 times more than his British counterpart --this is possible through monopolies, mass production and automation). However it doesn't mean that the Yankee worker is 3 or 4 times better off than his British counterpart --in fact he enjoys the same insecurity as yourself and worse social Welfare services.

The simple way to get British capitalism more competitive is to reduce the work-force while at the same time increasing output per worker. Or stated in a working class way --greater unemployment and greater exploitation. There is bound to be working class reaction to this --strikes etc.-- and it has to be done in subtle ways and by stages. But the process is inevitable! Now to get back to the "free half hour idea". In practice then, what it does it to slow-down the inevitable process I have described above.

But the idea must serve some capitalist purpose, otherwise it wouldn't be getting such favourable publicity in the capitalist press, and television. In the long term, we have seen that the idea is more of a hindrance than a help to capitalism. The class conscious worker can come to only one conclusion: the "idea" serves a short-term capitalist goal by creating a diversion at a time of growing working class discontent and anger. Whip up patriotic fervour etc. and divert and dissipate the developing revolutionary and progressive content of this discontent of the workers, and so fool the masses for another while. The gimmick will wear off after a short time and all the effort will have come to NOUGHT (as far as the workers' material conditions are concerned). So much for the Diversion.

It may be easy to explain all this on the intellectual level, but not so easy on the practical, down on the job level. Your best argument may be this: You will be prepared to work the "free half hour" provided ONE British capitalist or aristocrat comes out and

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wields a pick and shovel side by side with you for the half hour. They did it before, remember, when their whole existence was threatened during the 1926 General Strike. They were BLACKLEG workers then. Lord Hailsham worked as an aristocratic blackleg dustman during that strike. Let him come out today and work alongside of you. Accepting 25% less in dividends is not enough!!

Remember there are thousands upon thousands of these parasites who have lived off the working class for years upon years, as speculators, landlords, shareholders, etc. (Have a look at the day's society columns in the Express or the Times.) A Half-hour's work a day is the least they should do. Agreed? And stop living off the working class until sunnier days (Anyway why should they live off the working class at all? If they are able to do half an hour's work a day they should be able to extend that in time to 3 hours a day.)

I hope I have given you some ammunition with which to fight your corner.

Your friend,

T o m

Three quarters of this article was taken up with a detailed Editorial account of the business ramification of the capitalists continued who set up "The Marxist", and the moral was drawn that from P. 4 "The connection between opportunism...and capitalist bribery has rarely been so blatantly clear." (P 18) But the politics as well as the business connections of "The Marxist" had been just as clear six months earlier: and a clear assessment of "the businessmen's" politics had been published in Marxist Forum" as early as June 1966 (in connection with S.A C.U). And Hammer and Anvil had to admit that "The businessmen" had been engaged in carrying on disruptive activities in the movement since 1963.

Even though its opportunist approach to the "Marxist" group in 1966 had come to nothing, the ACMLU did not learn the lesson and adopt a principled approach.

* * *

"Unity"

Is it not time the various groupings came together and attempted to eradicate, or at least to clarify, their political differences? Of course it has. We have supported every initiative towards this end. We look at the fortunes of one attempt at 'unifying' the movement.

In April 1966 the ACMLU called a series of "Discussion Meetings" with the following objects:

"a) the achievement of unity amongst the various Marxist-Leninist Groupings and individuals, and b), the consolidation of that unity on the basis of a programme which both

analyses the present situation..., and charts the way through the intense struggles which lie ahead... It is realised that the task will be a long and arduous one, requiring months and even years of intense study in the application of Marxist-Leninist theory to British conditions, and also of wide experience in actual class leadership in struggle...

"...The Cdes of the A.C.M.L.U. believe that the present serious situation in the Marxist-Leninist Movt., characterised by the organisational isolation of the various Groups and the duplication of work on particular issues, must now give place to common work and co-operation on the fundamental issues and perspectives which confront all Groups alike, and which it is the common responsibility of all to solve."

This very correct approach met with a good response. At the first meeting a real discussion took place (on the ACMLU Discussion Theses). Only those who wanted the meetings to be a rubber-stamping process could be disappointed. A second meeting was arranged. The Chairman, W. Bland of the ACMLU, undertook to arrange it. When the date came it was found that no arrangements had been made, and no member of the ACMLU was present. Other comrades, who gave their full support to the ACMLU initiative, made arrangements for a further meeting. The ACMLU attended, apologised for their failure to arrange the meeting, and gave no indication that they had changed their mind about the meetings. But they attended no further meetings and gave no explanations.

(Though they began a new series of 'unity conferences' some time later, to which the groups which they invited to the first series, which the ACMLU initiated and then boycotted without explanation, were not invited. This is characteristic of the kind of 'struggle' that has predominated in the movement since 1964: at the first hint of a disagreement, don't try to clarify and resolve it: go away and set up a new organisation or start a new series of 'unity' meetings. This certainly leads to a kind of 'unity': the unity of 'organisations' of one or two individuals who spend their time talking to themselves and congratulating themselves on being the only Marxists in Britain.)

Some comrades struggled to keep the meetings alive, since they were the only existing meeting ground for the various groups. The Finsbury Communist Assoc. did everything it could to obstruct the meetings, and eventually (in Jan. 1967) they gained a majority for a motion to abandon them, proposed by Ivor Kenna. From this we can judge the nature of the desire for unity on the part of the ACMLU and the F.C.A.

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What Should Be Done?

There are comrades who deplore the differences and contradictions that exist between the various anti-revisionist groups and who are not prepared to investigate them and to find out which are right (if any) and which are wrong. There are comrades who imagine that unity can be brought about by an appeal to the better instincts of the various groups, the controversial political issues being side-stepped.

There are comrades who say that unity can be achieved on the basis of some very broad issue like opposition to social-democracy (or even Trotskyism). There are comrades who say that unity can be established on the basis of 'practice' --of blind practice with no theory to direct it. (The 'practice' which these comrades engage in --that is the few advocates of practice who actually engage in it-- lags far behind the level of practice achieved by militant trade unionists who make no pretensions to being Marxists.)

And there are comrades who say that we have 'no time' to engage in sorting out what they see as abstruse and academic points of theory. (Year after year passes: modern revisionism becomes more revisionist, trotskyism becomes more trotskyist, social democracy becomes more social-democratic, and the anti-revisionist movement on the whole loses what little political and organisational coherency it achieved in 1963: yet there is "no time" for us to concentrate for a short while on the elementary ground-work which would enable us to relate ourselves to, and develop a programme on the basis of, the most advanced practice in the working class movement. We have 'no time' to become anything more than the tail-enders and sloganisers which in essence is all we have been since 1964.)

The flourishing of "Parties" which is now happening is not a sign of political strength and vigour: it is only a reflection of the level of political chaos which we have achieved. Where two or three are gathered together with a few slogans to shout, there is a "Marxist-Leninist Party": That would now be a fair summing up of the situation.

The only approach which is now of the slightest positive value in the anti-revisionist movement is a strict, principled, scientific approach, which will thoroughly investigate every political question: an approach which will stop singing the praises of Mao Tse-tung at every turn while in every act displaying the liberalism which Mao exposed so thoroughly. The experience of the Soviet revolution should have taught us the uselessness, the dangerousness, to the working class interest, of 'Marxist' organisations which are mere liberal fan clubs for revolutionary working class movements

23.
abroad. To be in any real sense supporters of Mao we must in the first place become scientists with relation to the situation confronting us in Britain.

* * *

There are opportunists (many of them mere gossips) in the movement in Britain. The present situation is one which encourages opportunism. But if even twenty comrades adopted a scientific approach (and stopped either trying to be, or trying to find, Messiahs), and refused to accept slogans or gossip as answers to concrete questions, the situation would be changed radically. The various groups would have to try to justify themselves under scientific examination, or else be explained at once as sectarians. At the very least they would, if they are essentially opportunist, have to develop a higher form of opportunism.

Moral appeals to the various groups to come together and discuss their differences will get nowhere. Only a material force will do this. And a groups of even twenty people who saw the need for a scientific approach, and insisted on a thorough investigation of all issues, would in the present situation amount to a very powerful material force.

The C.W.O. is not interested in trying to represent itself as the "Marxist-Leninist Party of Britain" which it is not (but is no less so than those bodies which claim that they are). It is made up of a small group of workers who, through practice in the working class movement, have come to realise the need for the development of a political organisation which can only come about through the development of anti-revisionism.

We have supported every initiative towards developing a centralised democratic organisation --and seen the meaningless (except in terms of egoism) fragmentation continue. Now we say that the need is for centralised democratic discussion on a scientific basis; and that this can only come about if there is a substantial number of comrades who insist on it, and insist that it be thorough and democratic as well as centralised.

* * *

"It is the specific duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer understanding of the theoretical problems, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world, and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, having become a science, demands the same treatment as every other science --it must be studied. The task of the leaders will be to bring understanding, thus

acquired and clarified, to the working masses, to spread it with increased enthusiasm, close the ranks of the party organisations and of the labour unions with ever greater energy." (Preface to 2nd edition of The Peasant War in Germany, by F. Engels.)

"...The task of the youth in general...may be summed up in one word: learn... Naturally the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning communism means imbibing the sum⁺ knowledge~~that~~ that is contained in communist text-books... If the study of communism consisted entirely of imbibing what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, we would too easily become communist text jugglers or braggarts...

"One of the greatest evils and misfortunes bequeathed to us by the old capitalist society is the complete separation of books from practical life...mere routine absorption in books about communism would be extremely wrong... It would be still more dangerous if we began to learn only communist slogans... It would be a mistake to believe that it is sufficient to learn communist slogans, the conclusions of communist science, and that it is not necessary to acquire the sum knowledge of which communism itself is a consequence. Marxism is an example of how communism arose out of the sum total of human knowledge...

"...in place of the old system...we must put the ability to take for ourselves the sum total of human knowledge and to take it in such a way that communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something you yourselves have thought over, that it shall be an inevitable conclusion from the point of view of modern education. That is how we must present the main tasks when we speak of the task of learning communism." (Lenin "Tasks of the Youth Leagues" 1920)

P.S. We live in rapidly changing times, and few things change more rapidly than the British anti-revisionist movement whose lack of connection with the realities of the class struggle in Britain facilitates its fragmentation. Our criticisms of the MLOB given above is already out of date. It was adequate for the situation which existed at the time of the last public meeting of the MLOB on Dec 16th 1967. The January 1968 issue of Red Front makes it hopelessly inadequate --but is a striking confirmation of our criticisms of the views of the ACMLU/MLOB over the past year. From empty slogans,ing "support" for the Mao line (to give a socialist varnish to its own opportunism) the MLOB swings over to hysterical opposition to Mao, whom

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it describes as: "A traitor of a duplicity unparalleled in the history of the working class movement". The Red Guards become "the fascist storm troopers of the capitalist counter-revolution." (p10). The aim of the cultural revolution is to establish a "military fascist dictatorship". We will issue an analysis of M. Baker's latest hallucination shortly.

