

"LONDON WORKERS' BROADSHEET"  
THEORETICAL SUPPLEMENT.      No. 1.

1/-

THE CRISIS OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

AND TASKS FACING

MARXIST LENINISTS      IN BRITAIN. °

by

Jim Strong.

PUBLISHED BY:-

LONDON WORKERS' COMMITTEE & "WORKERS' BROADSHEET".  
c/o JIM STRONG, Correspondence Secretary.  
115 Huddleston Road, London. N. 7.

# ° The Crisis of British Imperialism and Tasks facing Marxist Leninists in Britain. °

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

The coming period is a crucial one for the class struggle in Britain. The British monopolists hit by increasing competition with their monopolist rivals in USA, Germany, France, Japan etc. are in serious economic difficulties. They hope to overcome these difficulties by improving their 'competitive power' at the expense, primarily, of the British working class. To this end they are, through their 'Labour' government, launching an offensive against working class living standards in the shape of a wage freeze, the boosting of exports with a cut-back on consumer imports, the cut back in the provision of already inadequate welfare services and housing etc. At the same time they prepare to resist the workers' defensive counterattacks by outlawing unofficial trade union action, by curbing legal trade union rights and by victimising shop floor representatives. A further development has been the wholesale sackings and shut-downs at factories where shop steward organisations are strong - in a bid to undermine the whole shop stewards' movement and to 'discipline' the more militant workers. Thus BMC has resorted to mass sackings while Fords (where the shop stewards' movement was effectively smashed two years ago) continues much as before. Thus ENV workers in North west London are 'locked out' in spite of full order books, so that the ruling class can try and smash the shop stewards there, who are leading militants among engineering workers. More examples will occur as the struggle grows.

As part of the campaign against working class organisations, the ruling class mass media continue to unleash a flood of brain-washing material designed to camouflage the monopolists' attacks and mould 'public opinion' in advance against individual acts of resistance by workers against state and/or monopoly pressure. (e.g. look at the way the seamen's strike and the ENV struggle were handled). Appeals to the 'national interest' as opposed to class interests are constantly being made. The monopolists, by building up the atmosphere of a 'national crisis' (calling for the return of the 'Dunkirk Spirit') hope to promote class collaboration, between the various middle class groups and the monopolists, and most of all between the working class and the monopolists.

Moreover, the monopolists and their henchmen are quite prepared to divide the workers on racial, religious and national grounds, as part of a deliberate policy, so as to break up working class resistance, turn anger and militancy in on itself and so continue to rule. The Labour Govt.'s White Paper on immigration has served to encourage all racialist and fascist groups, open and covert.

Unfortunately at this time the working class movement is fragmented, opposition is spontaneous and without links between different parts of a particular field of struggle ( e.g. links between workers in the same industry in different parts of the country, or workers in different industries) or links between workers in different fields of struggle ( e.g. the peace & anti-imperialist movement and the industrial movement; or the wages front and the tenants front.) Certain sections ( e.g. engineers and car workers) are organised powerfully at shop-floor level on an economic basis only, but other sections are weak and vulnerable placing reliance in Trade Union bureaucrats; while peace, anti-racialist and anti-imperialist broad organisations are chaotically organised and largely under the leadership of middle class persons and political 'liberals'.

There is no political party which represents the independent, political interests of the working class as a whole and organised towards achieving socialism in Britain. This is the sad result of the revisionist degeneration of the Communist Party in the post-war period and its decline into a left-social-democratic 'ginger group'.

Nevertheless there are various groups of serious Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary militants emerging throughout the country from the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Labour Party and the various working class broad movements, and although certain erroneous



ideas and sects flourish in the prevailing ideological confusion, the prospects are becoming brighter of a revolutionary, workers', vanguard, Marxist Leninist Party being reconstituted before long to lead the working masses in their political struggle for final emancipation and socialism.

The following is an analysis of our society which might help to clarify our line and our tasks as Marxist Leninists in Britain.

## 2. IMPERIALISM

In 1916 Lenin outlined the main features of Monopoly Capitalism-Imperialism. These were:

1. Industrial Monopoly - the emergence of huge industrial firms by the process of amalgamation and take-over, dominating manufacture.

2. Banking Monopoly - the emergence of a few dominating banks and trusts controlling the field of finance.

3. The development of FINANCE CAPITAL - the fusion of industrial and banking capital, with the major holders of shares, the monopolists, sitting on the boards of directors of banks and industrial monopolies. This oligarchy "subjugates all strata of the propertied classes".

4. The EXPORT OF CAPITAL and the economic and political subdivision of the world by the internationally operating monopolies. These monopolies, having largely divided up the home market, turn outwards to invest overseas where there is a higher rate of profit on investments: this happens precisely in the colonial countries where labour and raw materials are cheap. This overseas investment is concentrated particularly in producing cheap and abundant raw materials for the home market so as to reduce costs of production and strengthen competitive power. The export of capital takes precedence over the export of goods and the latter is encouraged in order to make possible the export of capital.

The monopolies of the various imperialist countries divide up the world into spheres of influence but intense rivalry continues and flares up into local and general wars from time to time for possession of these colonies and spheres of influence.

5. Imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism in a state of decay. The metropolitan economy is distorted by the concentration on export of capital, by the development of a huge arms industry to 'protect' overseas investments, and retarded from developing by the growing contradiction between the increasing socialisation of production & distribution and the private relations of property.

6. Lenin also developed the idea of the 'labour aristocracy' which explained the strength of social-democratic, reformist ideology in the ranks of the metropolitan working class. The monopolists, because they are reaping such vast profits in the colonies and spheres of influence, are able to give ground to the industrial strength of the metropolitan workers when pressed and can be forced into ceding some welfare services and into lessening their degree of exploitation at a given time in certain circumstances.

There have been some major events since Lenin's time, including two world wars, a world slump and most significantly the development of socialism in the Soviet Union under Cd. Stalin's leadership, only for revisionism to develop rapidly after the second world war and gain control of the CPSU at the present time. But socialism is also being built in People's China, Albania and other countries; and more recently with the unfolding of the Great Socialist Cultural Revolution in China, the world revolution enters a new phase in its history. All of this has helped to stimulate the growth of the national liberation struggles throughout the world in the colonies and neo-colonies. This has weakened world imperialism greatly.



The imperialists have been forced by and large to give ground and grant at least nominal independence to former direct colonies: however neo-colonialism has emerged as a dominant new form whereby the imperialists seek to retain economic control of 'spheres of influence' via a 'front' of local stooges. If possible the imperialists establish stooge regimes ( e.g. Nigeria ) or else they carry on an uneasy compromise with the national bourgeoisie in trying to share the loot. (e.g. Egypt.)

### 3. BRITISH IMPERIALISM TODAY.

#### Increasing Industrial Monopoly:

Since Lenin's time, monopoly control over all sectors of the economy has increased. Not only the basic industries of metal manufacture, chemicals etc are dominated by a few monopolies, but increasingly 'traditionally' 'free-enterprise' business-fields such as civil engineering & textiles are following the same pattern of merger and monopoly formation. Moreover the consumer goods and retail industries are becoming increasingly controlled by a few monopolies - Unilever, Marks & Spencers, the big Brewery combines, Clore's British Shoe Corporation, the supermarket chains. In many instances the state is intervening to speed this process up: in 1960 Sandys, then Minister of Aviation pushed the aircraft industry into a number of mergers; the textile industry was likewise 'streamlined'; more recently both the shipbuilding & dock industries have been pushed into similar mergers; while the restrictive practises act (against price-fixing agreements), the abolition of resale price maintenance, the imposition of the selective payroll tax, all help to push the weaker firms to the wall and squeeze out the little man while the monopolies 'rationalise'.

#### Financial-Industrial Oligarchy.

Money-capital (Credit) still remains in few hands. The joint stock banks (over £7,000 mn. at their disposal), the building societies (£3,000 mn.), the insurance companies (£4,000 mn.), the pension funds and investment trusts etc are in reality controlled by a small group of men. On their boards and the boards of the great industrial monopolies, the overseas mining and trading companies, sit the financial-industrial oligarchs ... Lord Kindersley, Lord Brand, Lord Bicester, Earl of Cromer, Lord Chandos, Lord Coleraine, Visct. Monckton, Earl Alexander, Marquis of Salisbury, the Hambros, the Rothschilds, the Samuels, D'Erlangers, Keswicks, Bartons, Birchs, Oppenheimer etc. etc. These men and a few hundred like them, control the great industrial and banking monopolies of this country, which still exploit the working people of Britain and half the world. Many of these men have acted directly and are still acting directly as members of the State machine - government officials, heads of services etc. Make no mistake, these oligarchs subjugate all other members of the propertied classes.

#### Export of Capital

In Britain the drive to export capital has increased. If the British monopolists do not continue to step up their exploitation of 'their' spheres of influence then their competitors will step in. As Sir Neville Glass, then BP chairman, said in 1960 to his shareholders: "We must therefore be prepared to continue to find large sums for capital expenditure; since to attempt to stand still would result in going backwards. This would be detrimental to our competitive position..." Moreover, this investment capital is not found from internal sources only but is increasingly obtained from money capital institutions. As Glass put it in his report: "Our group is in no way peculiar in having to find some of the money required for capital expenditure from third parties. The capital necessary to meet the growth of oil demand throughout the world has become so great that for some years the industry as a whole has ceased to be self-financing and nearly all the oil companies have



"from time to time had to have recourse to the capital markets. Indeed the expansion of the industry now depends upon the continued availability of large sums of money from outside the industry itself."

B.P.'s profits in 1964, according to the Exchange Telegraph Statistics Service, were over £217 million net: a 26% net return on capital employed!

The big oil companies are not alone in stepping up their export of capital to exploit overseas 'spheres of influence'. Nor are they alone in having to have recourse to the money-capital institutions for 'development' capital.

According to the "Economist" in Jan. '65: - in 1953 I.C.I. had £400 mn. total capital of which 1/5 was invested overseas. In 1963, 1/4 of a total £900 mn. was invested overseas; and it was estimated that in 1973, up to 1/2 of near £2,000 mn. would be invested overseas, in India, South Africa etc. Recently I.C.I. has had recourse (Sept. '66) to raising a 'public' loan of £60 mn. only a couple of years after a similar manouvre.

Since the last war it has been estimated that long term capital exports of some £4,500 mn. have been invested by British imperialists (Westminster Bank Review Aug. 1963): this is a very conservative estimate. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit in 1960, about £2,000 mn. were exported in the 5 year period 1954-58 alone, but as this report pointed out, there is always a veil of secrecy drawn over the actual figures involved and the revealed figures underestimate the real flow. It is worth noting that in the period 1956-60 Shell, the huge oil monopoly, alone spent £2,002 mn. on investment - a figure 1/9 as large as the total investment in Britain during those years. Much of this must have been spent in exploiting overseas oil 'concessions', especially in the Middle East and in the "Malaysian" area.

#### British Imperialist Looting.

The granting of nominal independence to former colonies has to some extent obscured the fact that British imperialism is as active as ever in its spheres of influence, second only to the U.S. imperialists in the scope of its looting. Bourgeois economists, 'left' Labourites, Trotskyists, syndicalists, the SPGB 'legal Marxists', and more disgustingly still, the revisionist leaders of the CPGB all go out of their way to deny the existence of British imperialism. They try to make out that it is something of the past. On top of this, certain 'anti-revisionists' in this country are playing down and trying to conceal British imperialism and are even urging a "united front" with those monopolist-imperialists who are most in conflict with their US imperialist rivals at the present time. It is important therefore, to point out a few examples of the extent and intensity of British imperialist looting in the modern world.

#### INDIA.

India is still a key territory in the workings of the British monopolies - a territory which obtained independence about 20 years ago. British imperialism remains the biggest foreign investor in India, accounting for about £450 mn. (book value) or 2/3 of total foreign investment (S. Times June 12 '66): the British monopolists have a stake in about 2,500 companies operating in India with a total labour force of over 2 million. British capital in India is divided into four segments - oil, plantations, services (banking, insurance etc) and manufacturing industry. The latter is now the largest and most rapidly growing sector.

The Tea plantations are not as profitable as once upon a time, but provide 'India' (ie. British monopolists) with 1/5 of its total export earnings.

Industrial investment in India is the expanding sector. Thus ICI had little investment in India in 'pre-independence' days, but now has assets there of book value £30 mn. ICI has majority shares in various 'Indian' firms, in chemicals, explosives, munitions, plastics, fertilisers and synthetic fibres. The Indian govt. has recently agreed to the new fertiliser plant at Kanpur which will be worth £30 mn.



- the biggest in Asia - and in which ICI will have a 51% holding.

Similarly Shell is busy in India, its subsidiary Burmah-Shell controlling 1/3 of the total oil products market. Most of the other big monopolies are active in India too. Dunlop, with a turnover of £30 mn. controls 1/3 of the tyre market. ABEI have begun developing a heavy electricals plant at Bhopal larger than their own Trafford Park complex in England.

Fisons, Glaxo, GKN, Bristol, Tube Investments, Pye, Babcock & Wilcox, Cadbury, Horlicks etc etc etc the list of British monopolies in India is long.

Why all this investment in India? As the S. Times article points out, "£1 of investment in India today will bring back £3 to Britain over the next 10 years, including dividends, shipping and insurance charges, technical fees and licences, equipment orders." Moreover there is a 10-20% net return annually after tax on invested capital, which as the article says, "is not at all bad." The Indian govt. is said to be "scrupulous" in permitting profits to be remitted.

Exports of British manufactured goods to India are falling, from £180 mn. worth per year 8 years ago, to an estimated £95 mn. this year: but the export of capital continues. To quote again, "in some booming industries the only brake on British expansion is the tightness of capital in their head office in London."

#### 'MALAYSIA'.

The British monopolists have a book value of some £350 mn. invested in this neo-colonial 'federation'. As A. Karim pointed out in 'Revolution' Vol. 1, No. 7. (Nov. '63), British imperialists control 75% and 65% of the Malayan rubber and tin industries respectively and 70% of the import-export trade in Malaya and Singapore. In Brunei, Shell extract 4½ mn. tons of oil annually, making a net profit of £26 mn. per annum. In Sarawak, British imperialists control 80% of the oil, gold and timber industries; and in Sabah, the corresponding figure is 85% for rubber, timber and copra industries.

#### AFRICA.

Some of British imperialism's heaviest investments are in Africa. In South Africa, in 1960 (according to the South Africa Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics) U.K. investments stood at £886 mn. (in mining, manufacturing, banking, insurance & electrical industry) while U.S., West German and others (including Netherlands and Japan) investment figures stood at £312½ mn., £234½ mn., & £6½ mn. each respectively. In 1962, British investments stood at book value £1,000 million (2/3 of total foreign investment). The trend is for higher investment and dividend returns - the latter standing at a disclosed net average of 12½%. The firms investing in South Africa include ICI, Tube Investments, Paton and Baldwins and other textile firms, Cyril Lord, the oil and insurance monopolies etc. However 'pride of place' must go to the mineral giants. Chief of these is Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation which includes the legendary De Beers. This massive corporation is international in its operations and its financial sources, but its chief shareholders are British (about 2/3 to 4/5 of total capital). In 1958 'Newsweek' estimated that this cartel had assets of over £1,000 mn. with reserves of £270 mn. and that it controlled production and sales of all the diamonds in the capitalist world, most of the gold, and 1/3 of all African copper and 1/5 of all African coal. De Beers' profits alone were £23 mn. for 1957 and in fact this side of the business has generated the bulk of the group's capital. De Beers has half shares with ICI in 'African Explosives and Chemical Industries' the largest producer of mining explosives in the world, but also producing fertilisers and plastics; and munitions for the S. African fascist govt.

Anglo-American extracts gold, diamonds, uranium, titanium and coal in South Africa; copper in Zambia; iron in Swaziland; copper & uranium in Katanga; diamonds in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Ghana etc etc. To understand politics in Africa and the relationship of British imperialism to Africa, one must understand the operations of Anglo-American and its subsidiaries.

Unilever is also very actively looting Africa, through its United Africa Group and other subsidiaries in Nigeria, the Congo etc, where



agricultural raw materials are extracted - palm oil, cocoa etc. This is the real base of Unilever's vast financial empire.

#### MIDDLE EAST

Here the oil giants exploit crude oil resources in Oman, Kuwait, etc, creating fabulous profits. According to the Financial Times of Jan. 1959, 21 British oil firms, subsidiaries of the big giants (B.P. and Shell) made a total profit of £431 mn. in 1958. This was bigger than the total profits of 456 firms in the iron & steel, engineering and shipbuilding industries in this country.

#### CARIBBEAN

The US and Canadian imperialists are exploiting mineral resources in this area by and large. But the British monopolists are not idle and are actively exploiting agricultural products and various services such as retail trade, printing, banking and insurance. A few of the chief British monopolies based on exploiting the West Indies include Barclay's Bank; Tate and Lyle (sugar); Bookers (sugar, trading etc); Fyffes (bananas); Shell (oil in Surinam).

The British imperialists are still exploiting the peoples of half the world, drawing in the life-blood of superprofits from the colonies and neo-colonies. The most important British monopolies are chiefly concerned with imperialist exploitation. Thus the ruling class of Britain - the imperialist monopolists - are based on imperialist exploitation. They also have considerable investments 'east of Suez' which they feel need protecting by British armed forces east of Suez. This, in spite of any protest by spokesmen of the small domestic capitalists such as Woodrow Wyatt, the Labour 'Left' and Enoch Powell (the protagonist of 'Classical', 'pre-monopoly' capitalism.) This is also the chief reason why the British monopolists support US imperialist aggression in Vietnam. They know that success for the Vietnamese people would encourage the national liberation struggle in Malaya, Kalimantan and those parts where there are direct British investments.

Imperialism is the main source of economic imbalance, poverty, hunger, unemployment, ignorance and political reaction in the colonies and neo-colonies. But it is also a reactionary force in the metropolitan countries. By the export of capital and the failure to develop home resources, agriculture and industry to the full and in a rational manner beneficial to the working people, and by the constant preparation for war and the huge arms bill, the imperialists cause stagnation and distortion in the metropolitan economy and prevent the development of productive forces. They thus constitute at the present time the main obstacle to economic and social development in the world.

#### State Capitalism.

One striking feature of imperialism today is that in the metropolitan countries there is an increasing development of state monopoly capitalism - the 'corporate state'. The financial-industrial oligarchs are compelled to make use of the state machine ever increasingly, to tackle their problems, especially their problems of international competition, and of growing class contradictions. It is an expression of their growing weakness.

Thus state aid for scientific research is on the increase. In 1959 of £450 mn. spent in this way in Britain, about 2/3 came from the state either directly or indirectly. The moves by the state to drive out the small capitalist and petty-bourgeois small 'master' have already been mentioned. Nationalisation of the Bank of England, of the coal mines, gas and electric industries, railways etc have been carried out. In 1945 these basic industries - coal, power, transport - were in need of reorganising and re-equipping on a scale that could not be financed by private means, yet these industries are basic to the whole continued operation of industry in this country. Capitalist nationalisation (which incidentally sidetracked working class militancy with notions of 'socialism') allowed these industries to be modernised by state loans (which was and is good business for finance-capitalism anyway) and established a solid base for private monopolies to continue operating, subsidised by the state monopolies

and therefore by the British working people. Thus £800 mn. was spent on the coal Board between 1946-59, while £600 mn. was spent on the British Transport Commission between 1954-60.

For similar reasons steel is liable to be nationalised in the near future, to allow rationalisation, recapitalisation and planning. In this way the rest of heavy industry will be guaranteed a plentiful supply of cheap steel etc. Needless to say the bulk of the steel 'barons' do not want this to happen, but it is probable that the chemical, engineering & big banking interests will get their way, via their 'Labour' govt. Steel nationalisation will then be passed off as 'socialism' to bamboozle the militant workers, while steel workers, will find out like the miners and railwaymen and power workers before them, that the capitalist state is an even harder taskmaster than the 'private' monopolist. Meanwhile it has been announced that the new 'overlord' for nationalised steel is to be Lord Melchett, the old Etonian grandson of Mond (founder of ICI) who sits on the board of merchant bankers Hill-Samuel; who is a member of British Transport Docks Board and of the Advisory Council of Export Credits Guarantee Department. Of his Hill-Samuel partners, Mr. Keith holds a post on the government's National Economic Development Council, while Mr. Palmer is a special industrial adviser to the Department of Economic Affairs.

This all fits in with the final point, which is to observe the development of the corporate state in modern imperialist Britain - the fusion of Bankers, industrialists, civil service chiefs, government officials, heads of armed forces, landowners, aristocracy and last but not least, trade union leaders! Leading trade unionists sit on govt. commissions and 'planning' boards; leading trade unionists are given key jobs in the nationalised industries (Ld. Robens); leading trade unionists get govt. posts (Lately Cousins; also Gunter); and some even get onto the Board of Directors of the Bank of England (Sir William Carron and Lord Robens.).

#### 4. THE CRISIS FACING BRITISH IMPERIALISM.

British imperialism is beset with chronic difficulties, now moving towards crisis. The giant monopolies which dominate the economy and which work hand in hand with the big banks & trusts, insurance companies etc, are investing increasing amounts of capital overseas where the rate of profit is high and where control of cheap labour and cheap raw materials improves competitive power in the vicious world of inter-monopoly rivalry. This results in the chronic balance of payments difficulties. As P. Thorneycroft (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) said in 1957, "our problems arise not so much as a trader but as a banker and overseas investor."

To try and match the export of capital, British imperialism must seek to export goods on an increasing scale to earn foreign credits and stabilise the balance of payments position. Exports have increased 8 times in amount since before the last war, while imports have only increased by 5 times over the same period. Yet there was a balance of payments deficit of about £700 mn. in 1965 and in spite of fierce attacks on working class living standards, the 'Labour' government has so far failed to get into 'balance' this year (1966).

Immediately post-war, the British and US monopolists were able to dominate world export markets and monopolize the looting of the 'underdeveloped' world, following the temporary eclipse of their main imperialist rivals - Germany, France & Japan.

However these industrial rivals are now rapidly strengthening their economic positions and competition throughout the imperialist world is becoming more acute. Moreover with the growth of the national liberation movement in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the imperialists are finding it increasingly difficult to exploit the colonial and neo-colonial peoples.

The British monopolists share of world trade, standing at 21% in 1954, fell to 18% in 1958 and to 15% by 1964, according to the National Institute Economic Review (Nov '64). The volume of British manufactured goods exported was 29.9% in 1955 but only 29% in 1963: the Review worked out that exports would have to be 32% if the balance of payments deficit were to be made good. In the period '58-63 German exports increased 54%.



On top of all this, profit margins are falling generally at home and abroad. Thus at home, gross profits as a % of turnover in the engineering industry have fallen from an average 14.4% in 1954-55 to 12.5% in 1960-61 (Cliff: "Incomes Policy, Legislation & Shop Stewards") while in India about 5 years ago profits were averaging 20% net and more (S. Times article quoted), although this figure has been nearly halved in some instances. In the domestic motor industry, profit on invested capital has fallen from an average 34% in 1954 to only 16% in 1963.

Although British financiers and traders mint money out of the £1 sterling's position as a world-wide trading and reserve currency, nevertheless this means that when the £1 runs into trouble (as it constantly does with British imperialism weakening all the while), then this trouble is made worse by the flight of capital from the sterling area as overseas and British capitalists rush to convert their sterling holdings. This intensifies the balance of payments difficulties and forces successive British governments to take steps to 'protect' the pound by increasing Bank Rate etc. This all helps to depress economic growth in the metropolitan country and further adds to British imperialism's long term problems. Thus British economic growth only amounted to 1.6% between 1955-61 compared with West German growth of 3.5%, French growth of 3.5% and Italian growth of 4.1% in same period (incidentally US growth only amounted to 1.4% in the same time interval.).

#### U.S. Imperialism - Alliance between Cannibals.

Even the British imperialist's metropolitan economy is being penetrated by their rivals, particularly the US monopolies. Thus a US monopoly controls half the computer market in this country (and its British rival has to get state aid to keep in business), US companies are also active in the fields of retail food, detergents (Procter & Gamble controlling 44% of this market) and drugs (17 US drug firms have cornered 50% of the NHS drug bill worth £76.4 mn. in 1961-62 remitting net profits of 33.6% according to the Cttee. of Public Accounts). The US monopolies have also penetrated the motor and engineering industries. General Motors have taken over Vauxhall, US Ford have acquired British Fords, Chrysler have acquired Rootes, while many of the motor component manufacturing firms are being taken over - e.g. Eaton & co. (US.) have bought out ENV.

In his 1966 Annual General Report to ICI shareholders, Paul Chambers asked for the Govt. to raise tariff barriers against US chemicals and allied goods to a similar level as that in operation against British goods in the USA. He also deplored US penetration in general into the British metropolitan economy.

This economic struggle between US and British imperialism takes place at an intense pitch in the spheres of influence. For in spite of their present alliance to divide the world - with British imperialism as the weaker, subordinate ("junior") partner - the US and British imperialists are nevertheless in acute contradiction and continually seeking to undercut one another. They try at present to show a united front against the national liberation movements and against the socialist workers' democracies, for Britain, no longer capable of stemming the liberation struggle in its spheres of influence, needs US support to attempt this task. Thus while US imperialism commits aggression in Vietnam and adjacent areas and takes over the role of propping up the Indian stooges, British imperialism is able to concentrate on trying to stave off the liberation struggles in 'Malaysia' and the Middle East.

Nevertheless the British imperialists find that this unholy alliance has its disadvantages, for it gives the stronger US imperialists more opportunity to muscle in on former British imperialist spheres of influence. So the basic contradiction deepens. In the Congo recently one saw a classic example of vicious inter-imperialist war, in which part of the US financial oligarchy (Morgan-Rockefeller) moved in on Belgian interests in Union Miniere and tried to wrest control of Katangan copper, uranium etc from Anglo-Belgian interests. The struggle between the stooges Tshombe & Kasavubu-Adoula was a manifestation of this economic clash and UNO was the camouflage the



US imperialists used to invade the Congo. Subsequently the imperialists partially and temporarily patched up their quarrel when the national liberation forces came close to evicting both and a combined operation was put into effect during the invasion of Stanleyville (Belgian troops, US planes, British base for staging operations) More recently the quarrel has sharpened again with Tshombe ousted by Mobutu (US puppet) and certain Anglo-Belgian stooges (like Kimba) hanged in public.

As the imperialist powers run into increasing economic difficulties, as productive forces generally increase more rapidly than markets, they will come increasingly into conflict. Hence the rifts appearing between France and the US imperialists - hence the differences within Europe between German and French imperialism. At present the US and British imperialists are largely aware of their own interdependence - if either has an economic recession of any magnitude then the other will suffer; if the £1 sterling crashes, the \$1 will follow. World imperialism is too weak to survive a major economic recession. But this uneasy harmony cannot obtain for long - the unequal alliance cannot last as economic conditions get tougher for the imperialists. This is one reason why some British monopolists favour entry to the European Economic Community - to build a European Imperialist bloc as rival to the US imperialists and the revisionist-controlled Soviet Union. Nevertheless there are considerable, sharp contradictions between British & French, and British & German imperialisms.

#### The Militancy of the 'Affluent' Workers.

The British monopolists are hoping to emulate the economic 'miracles' of Japan, Germany, France etc. In these countries fast rates of economic growth have been achieved - thus in Japan there was a 10% annual growth of gross national product between 1955-60. The reason for this 'miracle' was that while industrial productivity rose 55% in this period, real wages increased only 25%. This led to soaring profits, highly competitive manufactured goods for export markets, a high rate of investment in domestic industry. The Japanese monopolists were getting away with stepping up their exploitation of the Japanese working class.

In France between 1958-61, real wages fell by 1% while profits & productivity rose rapidly. The same pattern occurred in Germany and Italy throughout the fifties. Productivity and profits raced ahead of real wages in growth. That is, the exploitation of the working class in these countries increased sharply.

The British monopolists want a similar pattern here. This means that they must get the British working class to accept a cut in their living standards by imposing a freeze on real wages while prices are allowed to go on increasing, and even encouraged to do so through taxation of various sorts. But the British working class is organised powerfully to protect its economic interests in certain key sectors of the economy.

The truth is that the working class of this country in spite of the fact that they have a leadership bereft of correct political ideology, nevertheless have a very considerable defensive strength on the economic front. Through over a century and a half of trade union struggle, the working class has forced various hard-won concessions from the ruling class - 'such as the right to organise and strike and the right to vote etc. The monopolists try and curtail each freedom won or if possible try to turn today's reform into tomorrow's chain.

In the past few decades especially, the imperialists would rather cede wage increases and benefits when pressed than have a major clash with the workers. Their overseas profiteering allowed them room to manoeuvre. Because workers have been able to win concessions from the ruling class by economic action they have largely confirmed themselves in social-democratic, reformist ideas about capitalism. Nevertheless it has also led the better paid, more highly organised and militant sections of the working class to expect concessions from the employers when pressed by economic action. The working class is militant on the economic front and will not submit to pauperisation



before hitting back in anger. Paradoxically enough the 'better-paid' sections of the metropolitan working class (car workers and engineers etc) are the more militant precisely because of the concessions conceded by the employers over the years. These same militants believe in their 'democratic' rights too (what little they are) and will not submit without bitter struggle to the imposition of dictatorial rules by the ruling class.

It should be noted too that the imperialist economy with its large plants, high concentrations of workers, its increased division of labour, its economic intricacies etc is increasingly vulnerable to working class action. Over the past years one has seen evidence of this. A strike of a small group of skilled workers in the car, power, engineering industry etc can bring the whole industry grinding to a halt.

If, however, the British working class is to take advantage of its position and press for state power in the coming period - for workers' control and workers' democracy - then a Marxist Leninist Party must be built to spearhead the struggle. The political level of the British workers in spite of their economic militancy is low, and there is grave danger of fascist perversion of working class anger in the coming deepening crisis.

## 5. CLASS STRUCTURE.

There are three basic classes in capitalist society - the working class (proletariat); the middle class (petty-bourgeoisie); and the ruling class (bourgeoisie). It must be noted at this stage that the bourgeoisie, the ruling class in capitalist Britain, are often referred to as the 'middle class' and the petty-bourgeoisie as the 'lower middle class' in Marxist literature so as to distinguish them from the feudal ruling class - for in feudal society, the bourgeoisie constitutes the middle class. With the overthrow of feudalism however, and the establishment and development of capitalism, the middle class bourgeoisie comes to be the ruling class, eliminating the feudal ruling class. A new middle class emerges in capitalist society, between the ruling bourgeoisie and the working class. This is the petty-bourgeoisie. In common language too, the term 'middle class' is used to refer to the owners of small businessness, small landlords, shopowners, self-employed tradesmen, certain professional groups and military officers etc. These various groups are not in the same class (literally) as the big bourgeoisie - the monopolists, big landlords etc. To still refer to the latter as middle class (unless they are members of the peerage) nowadays is misleading as it creates the impression that they are not the ruling class and that they do not have basic antagonisms with the petty-bourgeoisie. Moreover it implies some sort of distinction between the aristocracy and the non-titled oligarchs. This is wholly superficial. The aristocracy in this country has nothing to do with a feudal nobility and has not had any similarity to such a nobility for about 400 years.

Thus it is proposed in this article to refer to the ruling class, the middle class and the working class or alternatively, the bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Each class is further subdivided into strata - these are significant yet non-essential differences. Thus in the working class one finds 'skilled, semi-skilled' & 'unskilled' strata or alternatively 'blue-collar' and 'white-collar' strata.

### Ruling Class (Bourgeoisie)

The ruling class consists of those who own most of and control the whole of industry, finance, the major part of land and property, the services and communications; they control the state apparatus - civil service, armed and police forces, legal system; they also control the church, the universities and major cultural organisations. They also dominate and effectively control the major part of the official trade union movement at national level.

With their families, the members of the ruling class number at most a few hundred thousand - no more than 1% of the population.

Most of them lead a life completely hidden from the vast mass of the population (including the petty-bourgeoisie) and their names are often virtually unknown in ordinary households. These families lead a life of luxury and abundance. Country estates and luxurious town houses; frequent sojourning abroad often with property and resources in many countries; private education (Eton, Winchester, Harrow etc) and private medicine (employing the most celebrated medical men, including foreign specialists); ease of access to university (Oxford & Cambridge - and at that only certain special colleges at those places) and to military academies; ease of entry to the civil service and diplomatic corps at the top level; to political parties at top level; to government posts; to controlling positions within industry and finance. The whole political, social, economic, academic, cultural world is at their feet. They move through this world with the arrogance and assurance of those brought up to believe in their own 'divine right to rule'; of those trained from the cradle to assume as 'natural' their own social and individual 'superiority'.

The composition of this class is fairly constant and today consists of the grandchildren of those who exploited our grandfathers. It includes the aristocracy, the untitled big business chiefs and big financiers, big property owners, highest clergy, top military, leading civil servants etc. Occasionally someone from a lower social group will gain entry to the ruling class, usually those from the middle class who exhibit particular aptitudes in the business, political, academic or cultural/entertainment spheres. There are occasional members of the ruling class who suffer a fall - especially among the smaller capitalists, but the turnover is not great.

There are antagonisms within this class between various groups with rival economic interests. Thus there is a growing argument between those sections who favour entry into the European Economic Community (such as those with the main interests in ICI) who know that their interests will thrive at the expense of continental rivals, while there are certain sections who oppose it, because they need protection from foreign competitors. Again there are sections who favour nationalisation of steel and those who oppose it, depending upon how it affects their own economic interests. Moreover there are sections (including the main imperialists) who favour continuing the alliance with the US imperialists in dividing up the world; but there are other sections, who suffering from US competition in their own field (at home or overseas) are in favour of a less close alliance or even of a Gaullist-type of policy.

Nevertheless the main stratum of the ruling class which predominates at all times, and which rules through the main two political parties (as tactics demand) is the financial-industrial oligarchy of the banks, finance-houses, oil, chemical, engineering, trading, mining monopolies - those who control the decisive share of capital, property and industry. Those who are inextricably bound up with imperialist exploitation over half the world. Those who depend for their continued existence as a class on imperialism. These oligarchs only number around 600. They are the elite of the ruling class.

#### Middle Class (Petty-Bourgeoisie)

This is a more numerous class of various strata, of a more fluid and changing character, perhaps accounting for about 5 million persons (less than 10% of the population). The main bulk of this class is made up of the small masters, the small businessmen, small landlords and small shop-owners. Perhaps self-employed, perhaps employing a few workers - no more than a score or two. These small business firms which wax and wane individually, are chiefly to be found in the clothing, engineering and building, retail food and consumer goods firms. There are also small farmers and market gardening firms to be taken into account. In May 1960, the World Marxist Review published an article which tried to estimate the numbers of people involved from the figures of the total numbers of units registered for profit assessment. A figure of over 2 million was obtained.

Another group of people who can be characterised as petty-bourgeois or 'semi-proletarian', are those workers whose job entails supervising and managing the work of others. These people are



essential to the capitalists' system insofar as they smooth out the antagonism between capital and labour. They help the capitalist consume the labour power of his workers. At the same time they often perform a semi-productive job. They thus have a dual relationship with both the capitalist class and the working class proper. As Comrade McCreery said, they are the NCO's of the capitalists. They receive monetary recognition from their masters for their services.

Moreover with their higher salaries these people are often able to occupy a petty rentier status with small amounts of shares (unit trusts etc); to own small amounts of property; to enjoy a comfortable life - with private medicine, private education etc; and with better opportunities for their children (entrance to university, to civil service, the professions) than the working class proper. Also from their ranks emerge many of the leading cultural figures in bourgeois society.

According to the 1951 Census there were 748,000 managers of various kinds (works, banks, offices, shops, labour etc); there were 320,000 foremen, inspectors etc in the transport, mining, manufacturing & building industries; there were 50,000 military and police officers; 100,000 persons in the executive, higher clerical & administrative grades of the civil service, social services, education etc. One would also have to include in this group most university professors, heads of departments, most consultant doctors and general practitioners, most headmasters of primary and secondary schools; most principals of technical colleges etc. This middle class cannot be won (excepting certain individual members perhaps) for a lasting alliance against capitalism and their ranks ceaselessly generate ideas of utopian socialism and class compromise. They can, however, be won on certain issues for some of the time. Without their loyal NCO's, on the other hand, the ruling class cannot maintain their tyranny. Thus it is important in the tactics of the class struggle for the working class Party to achieve the neutralisation (at least) of the middle class - or at least significant sections of it - where this is possible.

### Working Class (Proletariat).

The working class of Britain constitutes about 90% of the population. This is an objective fact whether or not working people think of themselves as working class. It must be realised that the working class consists of more than industrial and manual workers; it also includes all those people who have to sell their labour power to the capitalist in order to earn their bread, clothe & house themselves, and bring up their families. 90% of the British population have no choice but to work for their living whether they want to or not; they have no other security to rely on apart from their physical strength and good health and their working skills.

Of course the working class has its strata, like any class has. These strata have significance for revolutionary socialists insofar as different sections have different amounts of revolutionary potential depending on circumstances at a given time. Some sections of the working class have histories of more intense class struggle than others. Nevertheless, given correct methods of work, all sections can be won for the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

Of course the hard core of the working class consists of the industrial workers - engineers, car workers, miners, shipyard workers, iron & steel production workers, dockers, seamen and transport workers, who with their families account for 25 - 30 million people. These sections are throwing up now the important, though limited and fragmented unofficial movement & shop stewards movement.

White collar workers also make up a considerable proportion of the working class: there are about 1 million shop assistants and salesmen; over 2 mill. clerical workers - whose conditions are worsening with mechanisation of their work, increasing division of labour, the spread of public secondary education. The same points apply for the 235,000 nurses, the 12,000 junior hospital doctors, the 300,000 primary & secondary school teachers; to the draughtsmen, lower ranks of civil servants etc. Moreover these groups have been showing increasing militancy on the economic front and an increasing awareness of their position as workers in this society. Thus the non-manual trade unions

(Nalco, Data etc) have all been increasing rapidly in membership in the past 20 years. Many of these white-collar unions have affiliated to the TUC thus showing solidarity with manual workers' unions.

There are also other badly exploited and badly organised sections of the working class such as catering workers, workers in the garment industry, ancillary grades in hospitals, cleaners, various services etc.

There is often loose talk about the affluence of British workers. But the facts are that out of a total working force of 25 million, 10 million actually earn less than £10 p.w. More than 4 million workers have to find additional jobs or work overtime averaging 12 hrs. per week. Unemployment stands presently at  $\frac{1}{2}$  million and is rising sharply as the government's deflationary policy takes effect. Mr. Wilson recently predicted the unemployment figure reaching as much as 2 to 3 million!

There are hundreds of thousands of reported accidents every year in worn out industries and where the employers force speed-ups. There are 3,000 deaths in Britain every year from accidents at work alone. This is the casualty figure from the continued capitalist aggression against working people. There are  $6\frac{1}{2}$  million pensioners subsisting on a mere £4 p.w. or £6-10 for a couple. This is the 'affluence' which according to some so-called Marxists is sapping the revolutionary fervour of the British working class. There is no doubt that where relative economic comfort exists among working class families it stems from full family employment - a tenuously based 'security'. Moreover a number of families need two wage earners to even make ends meet for a very humble kind of life. This is bound to be the case where rent alone accounts for  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the man's wage (£3-£7 or more for one to two or three rooms is not uncommon in London). Any kind of lasting economic recession will bring terrible hardship to the great majority of working people.

## 6. THE DEGENERATION OF THE C.P.G.B.

The history of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has never been written and at some stage a detailed account of this history must be undertaken. Nevertheless some salient features emerge.

The Party was founded in 1920 by the coming together of various social-democratic, revolutionary and 'left' parties and groups under the influence of the successful Russian revolution, the 3rd. International & Lenin's theoretical writings. Although influenced by Lenin's writings on organisation & revolutionary theory, the CPGB leadership by and large was never able to adapt the general truths of Marxism-Leninism to the particular needs of the British working class. On certain issues some leaders were able to do this (e.g. Cde. John McLean on the National Question in Scotland) but on the whole the CPGB obtained its ideas and analysis of the national and international situation from fraternal parties (especially the CPSU) and used the language of those parties which only helped to alienate it from the broad masses of the British working class. At various times this lack of self-reliance and maturity and the inability to apply general Marxist Leninist principles to concrete conditions, led to ideological confusion and even to class collaboration, as for example most notoriously during the 2nd. World War when Joint Productivity Councils were formed between workers shop floor representatives and 'management' - with the support of the CPGB. (While leading in the fight against Fascism, the CPGB leadership should have also led the fight to defend and advance the working class's independent interests.) This trend of class collaboration and sell-out of strikes continued in the post war period with the capitalist 'Labour' government in power.

Since its formation, the CPGB had kept certain social-democratic, petty-bourgeois notions about the revolutionary struggle for socialism. Thus the Party was organised on a mass basis with no real cadre training - anyone being allowed to enrol anytime. The Party was constructed along residential (electoral) lines principally. The local branches lacked all initiative and democratic centralism operated with too much centralism and too little real democracy. All ideas for



activity came from the centre and the local branches were unable to interpret the general programme of the Party for local action.

Because of their lack of mastery of Marxism Leninism, the CPGB theorists, proapagandists & agitators by and large were unable to put scientific socialism into language that meant something relevant to the working masses of Britain. Second-hand slogans were peddled and low level abuse shouted at social-democrats. There was a complete underestimating of the intelligence of the workers (a petty-bourgeois error too). Workers need facts and figures - clear evidence - before they accept what you say. Facts and logic speak louder than crude dogmatic assertions and repetitive polemics.

**WORKERS MUST REALISE THAT SOCIALISM IS SOMETHING WHICH THEY WORK FOR ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN ASPIRATIONS & EXPERIENCE AND NOT AN EXPORT FROM OVERSEAS REVOLUTIONS.**

Thus even prior to the 2nd. World War, as Cd. Michael McCreery said, "(the Party was unable) to shake free from social-democratic traditions and methods of work; (it was unable) to master Marxism-Leninism so as to be able to apply it in practice."

The Comintern continually exerted some influence to keep the CPGB leadership from plunging into serious theoretical errors - but in 1943 with its final dissolution, the petty-bourgeois tendencies within the CPGB began to take firm hold.

In 1951 the leadership of the CPGB completely abandoned revolutionary theory and a revolutionary programme and pushed the out and out revisionist document 'The British Road to Socialism' on the Party without effective discussion among rank and file branch members. This document, although expressed in Marxist terminology, is essentially anti-Marxist in content. The revolutionary road to socialism is thrown out and in its place is substituted the delusion that the working class can win socialism by peaceful parliamentary & trade union struggle within the confines of the laws and rules (the constitution) laid down by the capitalist ruling class.

The CPGB theorists excused this betrayal by asserting that the existence and growing strength of the 'socialist camp' weakened world imperialism to the extent that socialism could be gained and consolidated by peaceful struggle, by the transformation of the capitalist state and its institutions.

The CPGB leadership claimed that while the Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1917 had to contend with autocracy and a police state, this had no relevance to Britain now because of the strength of 'democratic' traditions in this country (as though the class war is some kind of football match.) The growth of the police and armed forces, of the whole state apparatus, of the whole anti-democratic trend towards monopoly throughout the country was ignored. The changes since Lenin's time only served to emphasise the correctness today of Lenin's theories on Party organisation and revolution. To achieve socialism the working class under the leadership of their vanguard Party will have to seriously prepare for and overthrow the whole state apparatus of the ruling class. Socialism will be achieved by smashing not by capturing the existing state machine.

Other serious revisionist errors were perpetrated by the CPGB leadership. Thus organisationally, the Party concentrated on residential branches (for electoral reasons) and progressively abandoned factory branches. Moreover, trade union strategy became the capture of official positions - and to capture and maintain these positions the Party had to become 'responsible' and court 'left Labour' opinion. In short, the Party generally had to court 'left Labour' opinion and this led to 'tail-endism' behind all 'left Labour' led movements like CND, British Peace in Vietnam Ctte., supporting 'left Labour' MPs at election time etc., etc. The CPGB became an appendage of the Labour Party - a mere left-social democratic 'ginger group', objectively no different to the host of Trotskyist, anarchist and syndicalist 'ginger groups' also intent on pressurising and 'transforming' the Labour Party.

The CPGB always avoided tackling the National Question in Britain - but obviously a most vital matter for Irish, Scottish & Welsh working people. The Peace Movement was orientated along pacifist instead of being directed into anti-imperialist channels.



As for the National Liberation struggles in the colonial and neo-colonial territories, the CPGB leadership perpetrated a complete 'sell-out'. First of all, the Party theoreticians have played down Britain's imperialist position and tried to make out that British monopolists no longer loot the 'underdeveloped' countries. They avoid analysis of neo-colonialism and equate the independence granted under its terms by an imperialist government with real economic and political independence. The CPGB leaders also pretend that the reason for poverty in the 'underdeveloped' countries is unrelated to imperialist looting, but simply a gap in economic development which can be bridged by so-called 'material aid'.

As a result, the CPGB leaders have the impertinence to try and patronise colonial comrades and idiotically suggest that armed struggle is unnecessary for national liberation (and in fact undesirable as it might 'spark off nuclear war') but that what is needed is a 'Communist - Labour' majority in parliament here which will 'grant' independence to the colonies etc. and give 'development aid' to colonies and ex-colonies - a revisionist line in neo-colonialism. This line is contained in the 'British Road to Socialism' where it is averred that a CPGB government would maintain the 'special ties' of the commonwealth and build an economic interdependence: to quote, "The enemies of Communism declare that the Communist Party, by underhand subversive means, is aiming at the destruction of Britain and the British Empire. This is a lie. On the contrary it is precisely the Tories and the Labour leaders who are doing this by their policy of armed repression and colonial exploitation." The CPGB in power (with monopoly capitalist state intact!) would aim at "a new, close, voluntary and fraternal association of the British people and the liberated peoples of the present Empire to promote mutually beneficial economic exchange and co-operation, and to defend their freedom against American imperialist aggression."

In essence this is the policy of neo-colonialism which the British ruling class is putting into effect. There is no doubt that the 'little Englanders' of the CPGB have thrown out international proletarianism along with all other revolutionary principles.

## 7. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTI-REVISIONIST MOVEMENT.

Of course throughout the years and especially since 1951, the CPGB leaders have had their rebels and dissidents to deal with. And here it should be emphasised that right opportunist deviants are not being considered - such as those who left the Party in 1956 because of their counter-revolutionary sympathies. The Marxist Leninist opposition within the Party to the leadership's revisionist trend was always conducted within the Party or on individualistic terms. There was never the attempt to build a revolutionary organisation to oppose the revisionist-controlled CPGB in public and to put forward a mass line of revolutionary advance, until 1963, 12 years after the CPGB ceased to have any claim to being a revolutionary, Leninist Party.

The chief reason for this time lag and for the slow, confused building up of revolutionary forces since then, is the abysmally low level of political consciousness even among so-called militants. The Party had failed to carry out any kind of systematic political education among its rank and file. On top of this the capitalist class encourage anti-communist and anti-Marxist literature of all kinds, from the most crude (for the broad masses) to the most sophisticated (for political militants). This ceaseless bombardment of propaganda, unmatched by Party education, must of necessity lead to ignorance and confusion. Nevertheless in spite of this, there had been a general sense of empirical discontent developing among many comrades who realised that revolutionary theory and practice was being abandoned yet could not clarify their analysis of the overall situation or of what needed to be done.

On top of this, Party loyalty operated in the leadership's favour and kept opposition down to tolerable internal proportions.

But the development of the dispute in the International Communist Movement and the correct theoretical stand taken by the Parties of China, Albania, New Zealand, Vietnam etc against the revisionist



leadership of the USSR and its supporters, led to the resurgence of Marxist Leninist principles throughout the world. Revisionist trends had been gaining strength in the USSR since the second world war and with the deaths of Comrades Stalin, Zhdanov and other Marxist-Leninists, these revisionists were able to gain decisive control of the CPSU. Gradually they showed their hand and the intensified struggle began between Marxist Leninists and revisionists throughout the world.

Marxist Leninist Parties were reconstituted in Belgium, India, Brazil, Spain, Australia, Italy etc and anti-revisionist nuclei were thrown up in a number of countries including France, USA, Canada, the Netherlands etc and in Britain.

There were a considerable number of dissident members of the CPGB by 1963 and also a handful of ex-members expelled for voicing criticisms of Party policy. Some of these people were organised loosely together in an oppositional group. They included one or two leading party members, such as Cde. Michael McCreery, who were known to be in opposition to the leadership. As far as possible McCreery and the others had tried to develop cohesion between anti-revisionist comrades within and around the Party, but it was becoming increasingly clear that there was no possibility of transforming the Party from within. The caucus of revisionist leaders had a bureaucratic grip on the party and had closed all avenues to an anti-revisionist and revolutionary point of view. In particular Cde. McCreery's criticism of the "British Road to Socialism" (later published as "Destroy the Old to Build the New") and other such works had been repeatedly rejected for publication in the Party press.

In the autumn of 1963, Gollan, speaking as secretary of the CPGB intervened in the International Communist dispute. He feigned a 'neutral' position but in fact viciously slandered the Chinese C.P. leadership as being 'racialist' and 'warmongers' and generally put forward the line of 'peaceful coexistence and all-round cooperation' with world imperialism under the leadership of US imperialism. He asserted that the Peaceful Road to Socialism (via the ballot box) was not only practicable but the only possible solution for workers throughout the world including Britain, and that the 'non-peaceful' road was to be deprecated - because of the alleged risk of triggering off a nuclear war. In fact he put a completely capitulationist line of surrendering to imperialist bullying and blackmail - the exact line which increases the risk of war.

Such a dangerous, mendacious and wholly erroneous statement could not go unchallenged by British anti-revisionists. As the Party press was excluded to these comrades, the only road open to them was to come out in public opposition to the revisionist leadership - and when expulsion occurred to begin developing a mass revolutionary line of work and a revolutionary organisation so as to reconstitute a Marxist Leninist Party in this country as soon as possible.

Of course a tactic of this development would be the oppositional struggle within the CPGB - simply because this is where some of the militant workers could be found and where before them, revisionist theories and practice could be challenged.

Thus the Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity (CDRCU) was formed under the leadership of Cde. McCreery in November 1963 and began producing its paper 'Vanguard' in February 1964. CDRCU also produced pamphlets of a theoretical nature and agitational nature - most of them naturally exposed the revisionism of the CPGB leadership and the fallacies of its programme and deeds.

However certain anti-revisionist comrades were not 'ready' for the break with the CPGB, through ideological immaturity, and they vacillated. They did not understand the overdue need for the reconstitution of a Marxist Leninist Party (needed objectively since 1951 and the publication of the British Road to Socialism); they did not realise that this reconstitution could only occur through public, independent struggle. Instead they insisted that inner-party struggle was the key factor and that the CPGB could be transformed by such struggle from within, or at least a new party could be built by these inner-party activities.

Thus Seltsman and others like him, who were not 'ready' for the

public stand against revisionism drew back at the last moment and not content with their own 'inner-party activities' started a heated campaign against the CDRCU which mixed criticism with slander and bitterness. They accused McCreery of having a 'leader-complex' and said that he wanted to form a Marxist Leninist Party 'at once' - they degenerated so much that in public and in private they tried to make out that Cd McCreery was a 'police spy' and 'state agent' or 'trotskyist agent'. Some of these political charlatans are still doing their worst to try and obstruct the rebuilding of a Marxist Leninist Party.

The CDRCU developed for a time with groups and contacts all over England, in Scotland and Wales. Tremendous enthusiasm was generated. But the programme of action was never effectively organised to start building a movement of militant working people at grass roots level. In fact in spite of its overt assertions about a public struggle against revisionism, CDRCU remained chiefly concerned with the inner party CPGB struggle and directed its chief energies in this direction. It behaved as an oppositionist group rather than as a Marxist Leninist nucleus. And this happened in spite of Cde. McCreery's excellent analysis which pointed the way to organise and work ('The Way Forward', 'Organise at the Place of Work' etc.) The real trouble was that the bulk of CDRCU (just like 'Forum', the SACU group, and all the subsequent splinter groups which derived from them) were over-optimistic about the possibility of winning large chunks of the rank and file CPGB membership to the anti-revisionist cause by simply explaining things to them and engaging in polemics, rather than in developing a mass revolutionary line and in setting a Marxist Leninist example in practical work as well as putting forward correct ideas about the International Communist dispute.

As a result when overnight successes were not achieved, a substantial number of the membership became disillusioned and turned in on their comrades looking for scapegoats. Various theoretical weaknesses also became exposed in various comrades and this led to a number of splits.

However, until Michael McCreery died so tragically in April 1965, after a long debilitating illness, the CDRCU remained the only anti-revisionist organisation with any revolutionary potential.

The Scottish CDRCU was able to continue and develop the work in spite of all this dissension in England and recently these comrades were able to found the Workers Party of Scotland (Marxist-Leninist) based on a Marxist Leninist analysis of the national and class questions in Scotland. This was a development of the line first expounded by McLean and re-expounded by McCreery recently. The formation of the Workers Party of Scotland is a breakthrough in the revolutionary struggle of the British working class. It will be welcomed by all genuine Marxist Leninists and revolutionaries in the British isles.

Unfortunately in London differences arose over aims and methods of work and matured into differences of basic Marxist Leninist theory, on the nature of imperialism, on the relationship of theoretical and practical aspects of work, on the need for self-reliance especially in financial matters.

Certain comrades, dubbing themselves 'realists' insisted that objective conditions were not ripe for the development of a Marxist Leninist Party and that it was petty-bourgeois dreaming to consider that a Marxist Leninist Party could be built from grass roots at present. These left dogmatists had no faith at all in the working class in this country. Particularly ironic was the fact that the British ruling class were stepping up their attacks on the working class at this very time.

These differences within the London CDRCU and the obstacles to revolutionary work thrown up by the 'realists' and opportunists led to the setting up of the "London Workers Broadsheet" group, which has now been in existence about 9 months.

The 'Broadsheet' group has developed the analysis begun by Cde. McCreery and tried to translate this theory into practice. Already there have been some encouraging developments.



## 8. THE WAY FORWARD.

Because of his premature death, McCreery's theoretical work is small in volume, yet it does constitute a beginning for the development of Marxist Leninist theory in and for Britain. In all his writings McCreery emphasised the importance of understanding the nature and role of the capitalist state in Britain and pointed out how the social democrats and revisionists failed to understand the nature and role of the British state - treating it as though it were neutral in the class struggle. McCreery kept driving home the essential point that the working class will have to smash the capitalist state through a revolution based on their own organisations before socialism can be built in this country. He also wrote on the development of the British state and on the national question in Scotland and Wales, re-expounding the work of Stalin and McLean. He further showed how Lenin's analysis was still valid for British State Capitalism & Imperialism ('Vanguard' Sept. '64.) and wrote several pieces on British imperialism and the national liberation struggle (in 'The Patriots' & 'Vanguard' cited). Moreover, as those who attended the first Caribbean Organisation for Mass Political Education education course knew, he gave an excellent account of imperialism in all its aspects in these classes.

McCreery also wrote critiques of the CPGB, how it had gone wrong and the way forward for genuine Marxist Leninists in "Destroy the Old to Build the New", "The Way Forward" & "Organise at the Place of Work". He began to study the problems of class analysis in "Notes on the Lower Middle Class etc." This was the main part of his published work and covered the main issues facing British Marxist Leninists.

### The Way Forward.

As Comrade McCreery says in 'The Way Forward'. "(The CPGB) has ceased to be a Communist Party and those who wish to serve the working class must break with it, and establish a new and genuine political organisation of the working class which will operate democratic centralism, which will stand firm by the principles of Marxism Leninism and which will attempt to apply these principles to Great Britain today. A genuine Communist Party must be established in England, in Scotland and in Wales."

"Marxism Leninism will triumph in Britain; the English, the Scottish and the Welsh peoples, who have suffered longer from capitalist exploitation than any other people in the world, whose lives have been stunted by capitalism over many generations, have a deep ingrained hatred of capitalist society. They will finally succeed in smashing the ruling class which has exploited them for so long. But for this they demand a Party which can lead them in their struggle which will serve their interests, and theirs alone. To build this party involves the destruction of that social democracy whereby the ruling class attempts to divert the revolutionary energies of the working people and win acceptance of the capitalist system. Whether in its open form, as the Labour Party, or in its concealed form, as the Communist Party of Great Britain, social democracy must be exposed before the people so that they can be won for Marxism Leninism, which alone represents their interests."

What will be the basic principles of a Marxist Leninist Party in this country? Cde. McCreery gives the following answer. "It will be based firstly on the principle of PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM. Without firm alliance with all oppressed peoples of the capitalist world, and with those who have won their freedom from exploitation, in the struggle against imperialism, there can be no future for the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales. Neo-colonial "economic and political realities" will be ruthlessly exposed. All possible support will be given to those struggling for national liberation from the British and allied imperialists, and in particular those who have been forced to take to arms, as in Oman, and North Kalimantan. For us there can be no special 'associations' or 'relationships' between a Socialist Britain and the countries within the Empire and Commonwealth. All socialist lands will join hands without distinction."

"Secondly, the Party will fight to establish the DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT in Britain. This involves smashing the capitalist state machine in a socialist revolution which will be led by the workers' own organisations (soviets). Parliament, the instrument whereby the bourgeoisie maintains its rule can never be used to win working class power. The role of Communist MP's is to expose the capitalist system and the fraud of parliamentary democracy.

"Thirdly, the Party will relate the struggles on all immediate issues (wages and conditions of work, housing, against militarism, for all democratic rights) to this central and final goal, the establishment of working class power. The result of struggles on all immediate issues should be to increase the understanding of the masses for the need to take political power into their own hands.

"Fourthly, in the struggle for all immediate aims and for the final conquest of power, the main line of the Party will be to mobilise the mass of people for action. This demands organisation of the Party at the place of work. It is here that exploitation takes place, it is here that the workers are drawn together in common action against capital, it is here that agitation and propaganda can most effectively be organised.

"Fifthly, the Party will fight for positions, and progressive policies in all Trade Unions and Cooperatives, as a means of mobilising the mass of the people for action in defence of their own interests, but it will resolutely oppose the false idea that capturing of positions within the legal organisations of the labour movement, and the capitalist state within which they operate is the road to working class power.

"Finally, not bureaucratic but democratic centralism will operate within the new Party. Full discussions within the Party in order to reach agreement on policy in each new situation must be accompanied by united action to implement this agreed policy, with each basic unit itself translating this general policy into action within its own local field of work. Only when the Party as a whole is capable of understanding the principles of Marxism Leninism so as to apply them to conditions in Britain, and each unit of the Party is capable of understanding each policy and slogan so as to apply it to its own local conditions, can we give that leadership in the struggle against monopoly capital which the interests of the British people demand."

#### 9. CONCERNING METHODS OF WORK.

As all serious comrades know, the aim of the workers organising around the "Broadsheet", and the aim of all genuine Marxist Leninists, is to build a Marxist Leninist Party as soon as possible. A Party of cadres which moves, leads and influences decisively a mass movement of politically conscious and revolutionary workers.

How are we going to achieve this? That is the urgent question. To simply repeat slogans and statements of Marxist Leninist intent and international solidarity with anti-imperialist revolutionary movements is not enough. No matter how 'correct' these statements may be in themselves; this is verbal Marxism of which the British workers have had plenty. What is needed and urgently is for Marxist Leninists to begin relating the day to day problems of workers - the immediate struggle - to a revolutionary perspective and strategy. The workers including the militant sections are only going to arrive at a Marxist Leninist position politically, when they are able to understand their daily life, struggles and hardships in terms of a Marxist Leninist analysis of society. Marxist Leninists must be able to project this analysis to the workers in terms of the workers everyday problems and struggles.

Thus our work consists of two interrelated parts:

1. We must develop cadres and at the same time the basis for an organisation upon which the Marxist Leninist Workers Party which we all want can be reconstituted. We can only develop cadres in the true sense of the word as we develop our organisation - for we can only have cadres in a properly geared and disciplined organisation.
2. We must begin developing a 'mass line' for the English, Scottish and Welsh working people. This is a broad, popular line of political



advance based on a detailed Marxist Leninist analysis of Britain but interpreted in a way the working masses can understand and to which they can respond. In this way we can initiate and develop the working class struggle along correct political lines while systematically raising the political understanding of the masses.

In attempting (2.) by all the means at our disposal, i.e. developing the 'mass line' in practice, we are able to develop as cadres in theory and practice. We also develop fresh cadres from among the masses. Moreover those militants who at present are dubious of us for various reasons, will be attracted to us as we grow. As they see us winning successes, as they see us serving the real interests of the working people, doing what the revisionist party does not do and is refusing to do, they will become convinced of the relevance of our line. To sit round 'theorising', awaiting for 'objective' events to turn workers into Marxist Leninists is a form of left-dogmatic spontaneity, and in fact means surrendering the political initiative to revisionists, trotskvists and other petty-bourgeois militants.

Thus we must take the decisive political lead in seeking to create a broad anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist movement and at the same time we will be developing a Party organisation of cadres.

This is going to be a difficult task but it is the only way forward for us. We must develop the ability to translate correct theory into an immediate programme of struggle geared to the achievement of long term revolutionary aims.

At the present time it seems that the main broad issues facing us are the anti-wage freeze struggle, against limitation of our trade union rights and victimisation of shop stewards; against racialism & fascism; for peace and against imperialist aggression. There are no short cuts to building a Workers Revolutionary Organisation. We must start at grass roots level now. We must start in our own place of work, our own neighbourhood, our own T.U. branch, CPGB, YCL, YS, tenants association, MCF, CARD, Vietnam Ctte, branches etc - whatever is practicable. NOT that we want to win over or transform these organisations for Marxism Leninism. This is not feasible. Nor are we under any illusions about these organisations: they are not revolutionary organisations. But we must work wherever you find militant workers and workers in action for their rights; and where workers are suffering oppression and are not in action for their rights, then we must seek where possible (and this will usually be through broad organisations) to mobilise them for action.

We must organise at this grass roots level around our organs of propaganda, which must be eventually of two types. 1. A broad, educational, agitational paper for the working masses, written in popular language and dealing in facts and analysis rather than slogans and jargon. 2. We must also produce a theoretical, polemical paper for cadres and militants. Paralleling these organs of propaganda, we must undertake systematic political education of the masses and the cadres. By patient, painstaking work with the masses we shall learn (as long as we remain self-critical) and we shall build a revolutionary organisation capable of leading the masses to socialism.

#### A Positive Line of Advance.

In our struggle to put a positive mass line of political advance we must attack the ruling class, pointing out the bankruptcy of their imperialist policies, which have led to the distortion of the home economy and to their subordinate alliance with the fascist U.S. imperialists.

Socialism is the only alternative to imperialism - there is no third road. The monopolists will not be dispossessed and overthrown by constitutional means but only by force. If the working people, who constitute 90% of the population are united and mobilised under the leadership of their vanguard, trained party, they will be irresistible.

We must raise the slogans of working class unity and international proletarianism and of workers control of state power so that we can all build the just, democratic society of socialism - of peace, brotherhood and prosperity.

END.

= Nov '66. =