

MEMORANDUM

Baker's Theory of the Essence of Modern Revisionism

Baker holds that the essence of modern revisionism is not the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles to serve the needs of the capitalist class, but "failure to bring Marxism-Leninism up-to-date":

"MODERN REVISIONISM . . . is above all . . . the failure to analyse and encompass scientifically the new stage in the development of capitalism, . . . the stage of corporate state-monopoly capitalism".

(M. Baker: "Dialectical Materialism"; London; n.d.; p. iv).

It is, of course, axiomatic that the world changes, so that Marxist-Leninist tenets which were valid at one time may cease to be valid at a later time and need to be replaced by new tenets -- or, in other words, that Marxism-Leninism needs constantly to be brought up-to-date to conform with changing reality. An aspiring Marxist-Leninist who fails to bring Marxism-Leninism up-to-date to conform with changed reality is not a Marxist-Leninist, but a dogmatist.

Can it be said, however, that the essence of the revisionism of, say, the Communist Party of Great Britain is dogmatism, that it has clung to Marxist-Leninist tenets which have become no longer valid as a result of changing reality in Britain and the world?

On the contrary, the essence of the revisionism of the CPGB is that it has abandoned basic principles of Marxism-Leninism -- the principle that the capitalist state is an organ of dictatorship on the part of the capitalist class, that the working class needs to smash the capitalist state in order to abolish capitalism, that the working class needs its dictatorship in order to construct socialism. The essence of the revisionism of the CPGB is not that it has clung to the revolutionary tenets on which it based itself in the 1920s, but that it has abandoned Marxist-Leninist principles in order to revive what is essentially the revisionism of Bernstein.

Clearly, Baker's definition of revisionism has no validity.

What, then, is its purpose?

As is obvious from the quotation given above, the purpose of Baker's erroneous definition of revisionism is to "justify" him in classing as a "revisionist" anyone who rejects his theory that capitalism is entering a "third stage" of development, beyond imperialism. Its purpose is to "justify" him in classing as a "revisionist" anyone who continues to uphold Lenin's analysis to the effect that imperialism is the highest, i.e., the last stage of development of capitalism.

The Corporate State

Baker's concept of "corporate state-monopoly capitalism" is based on the concept of the "corporate state".

A corporate state is one which is based on "corporations", these being organisations consisting of representatives of the employers and "representatives of the workers" within each sector of the economy. The term was first widely used by sociologists linked with the Catholic Church, who presented them as a revival of the mediaeval guilds adapted to the conditions of modern capitalism:

"Corporations are composed of delegates of the unions of workers and employers of the same trade or profession".
(Pius XI: Encyclical Letter "Quadragesimo Anno"; London; 1960; p. 39).

The official aim of the campaign was to "abolish" class struggle while retaining an essentially capitalist society:

"You are aware, Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children, how strenuously Our Predecessor of happy memory (Leo XIII -- BC) defended the right of property against the teachings of the socialists of his time, showing that the abolition of private ownership would prove to be, not beneficial, but grievously harmful to the working-classes. . . .

Capital cannot do without labour, nor labour without capital. . . .

The aim of social policy must therefore be the re-establishment of vocational groups. Society today still remains in a strained and therefore unstable and uncertain state, because it is founded on classes with divergent aims and hence opposed to each other, and consequently prone to enmity and strife. . . .

As things are now, the wage-system divides men on what is called the labour-market into two sections, resembling armies, and the disputes between these sections transform this labour-market into an arena where the two armies are engaged in fierce combat. To this grave disorder, which is leading society to ruin, a remedy must evidently be applied as speedily as possible . . . : vocational groups, namely, claiming the allegiance of men not according to the position they occupy in the labour market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society".

(Pius XI: *ibid.*; p. 22, 26, 35-6).

A corporate state is, therefore, one in which the "representative" institutions are based, not on representatives of political parties elected by geographical constituencies, but on representatives of the corporations:

"The corporations are . . . true and genuine organs and institutions of the state. . . .

Strikes and lock-outs are forbidden. . . .

Little reflection is required to perceive the advantages of the institution thus summarily described: peaceful collaboration of various classes, repression of socialist organisations and efforts".

(Pius XI: *ibid.*; p. 39).

The fully developed fascist dictatorship in Italy took the form of a corporate state:

"The associations of employers and associations of workers engaged in the same industry are grouped together to form a corporation".

(J. S. Barnes: "A Survey of Fascism"; London; 1928; p. 93).

"Each corporation united the local and national organisations of the three classes of producers -- employers, technicians and employees".

(G. Volpe: "Storia del Movimento Fascista" (History of the Fascist Movement), in: B. Mussolini: "La Dottrina del Fascismo" (The Doctrine of Fascism); Treves; 1933; p. 120).

"The Corporate State is a new type of constitutional system in which the employers and employed, grouped into mixed national corporations, play a predominant part in the government of the country".

(P. Einzig: "The Economic Foundations of Fascism"; London; 1933; p. 25).

"The Corporate State . . . is 'government by the people', for under the Corporate State they have a control of their own destinies, economic, social and political, by the method of electing representatives, not for their general popularity in geo-

graphical constituencies, but for their tried knowledge and experience in their particular trade or industry. It is 'government of the whole people' since the State and nation are identified without the intervention of political parties or the artificial division of classes".

(H. E. Goad & M. Currey: "The Working of the Corporate State"; London; 1933; p. 110).

The reality behind the picture drawn by the above apologists for fascism is that the corporate state is designed to provide a "democratic facade" to the terroristic dictatorship of monopoly capital similar to, although more restricted than, that which "parliamentary democracy" provides for the dictatorship of monopoly capital in contemporary Britain:

"In practice the corporations remained part of the machinery of authoritarian government. Their officers were not elected but appointed from above. Though the employers' representatives retained a limited degree of independence, those of the workers were merely bureaucratic agents of the state. The corporations served chiefly to regiment the working-class and . . . to facilitate the extension of state control over the economy. The addition of a corporative facade did nothing to modify the structure of dictatorial power".

(G. Seton-Watson: "Italy from Liberalism to Fascism: 1870-1925"; London; 1967; p. 699).

The role of the corporations as a "democratic facade" for a fascist dictatorship is illustrated by the fact that, although the dictatorship itself was established in October 1922, the Bill to establish corporations was not enacted until February 1934, and the first meeting of any of these corporations took place in January 1935.

"To secure greater durability, solidity and stability for their power, the bourgeoisie are to an increasing degree compelled to abandon the parliamentary system in favour of fascist methods of rule, which are independent of party relationships and combinations. Fascism is a method of directly exercising the bourgeois dictatorship, ideologically disguised under ideas of 'the national community' and representation according to occupation (i.e., in fact representation of the various groups of the ruling class".

(Programme of the Communist International, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents"; Volume 2; London; 1976; p. 484).

Baker's Concept of the "Corporate State"

Baker uses the term "corporate state" extensively in his writings, but, as with many of the scientific terms which flow from his pen, he appears to have no clear understanding of its meaning.

In one place, he simply equates the term with a Labour government within "parliamentary democracy", speaking of

". . . 'compromise with the Labour Government' (i.e., the corporate state)".

(M. Baker: "Workers' Control"; London; 1976; p. 21).

In another place, he appears to define a corporate state as one which imposes state control of wages:

"The imposition of state control over wages . . . is the cornerstone and economic raison d'etre of the corporate state".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 15).

"State control over wages and other aspects of the living standards of the working class . . . can be said to constitute the essence of the corporate state".
(M. Baker: Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front; London; 1974; p. 3).

Elsewhere again, he appears to define a corporate state as one which imposes state control of wages and nationalises the key sectors of the economy, speaking of

". . . the transformation of traditionally structured state monopoly capitalism . . . into corporate state monopoly capitalism, based on state control of wages and state capitalist ownership of the 'commanding heights of the economy'".

(M. Baker: "The Economics of Oil and the Falling Rate of Profit"; London; n.d.; p. 1).

None of the above "definitions" bears the remotest resemblance to the correct definition of a corporate state. All the functions which Baker appears to imply are the prerogatives of a corporate state -- the placing in office of a social-democratic government, state control of wages, nationalisation of the key sectors of the economy -- can be, and often are, practised by what Baker calls "traditionally structured" monopoly capitalist states.

In another place, however, Baker comes closer to a correct definition of a corporate state. He describes it as one in which the trade unions are absorbed into state "corporate organs"; one which brings about

". . . the elimination of the last vestiges of independent proletarian organisation through the incorporation of the fundamental base organs of struggle of the working class into the state framework. . . .

The strategic aim underlying the construction of the corporate state is . . . the absorption . . . within the state apparatus of the last vestiges of independent action, their absorption into corporate organs".

(M. Baker: "Workers' Control"; London; 1976; p. 7, 9).

Nevertheless, although this state is described by Baker as one which has "eliminated the last vestiges of independent proletarian organisation", although it comprises

". . . modifications to the existing traditional state superstructure of monopoly capitalism . . . which embody intensified, integrated, 'totalitarian' forms of class dictatorship of monopoly capital over the working class and the working people: the corporate state",

(M. Baker: "The Economics of Oil and the Falling Rate of Profit"; London; n.d.; p. 7).

it is not a fascist dictatorship.-- nor, in fact, a corporate state -- since it preserves "parliamentary democracy". For within this state, "at the appropriate tactical moment",

". . . disgruntled politicians . . . will seek to end the parliamentary system of rule and to replace it by a fully-fledged corporate structure on to which will be grafted, as its ultimate expression and completion, the organisations and mass movements of political thuggery and brutality which constitute the mass base of the 'open, brutal and terrorist dictatorship of monopoly capital'",

(M. Baker: "Workers' Control"; London; 1976; p. 21).

which Baker defines a few lines before as

". . . fascism".

(M. Baker: ibid.; p. 21).

In other words, "at the appropriate tactical moment",

"... monopoly capital finds it necessary . . . to absorb into it (the "corporate state" -- BC) not only the trade unions, but also the political parties and other institutions of the monopoly capitalist constitutional framework".

(M. Baker: "Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front"; London; 1974; p. 3).

According to Baker, monopoly capital aims to construct this "not fully fledged corporate state", which is associated with "parliamentary democracy", relatively peacefully -- that is, without the aid of the violence of fascist organisations, through social-democracy:

"In the first instance, and to the degree that the organised working class movement permits this, the monopoly-capitalist ruling class seeks to achieve this aim (of establishing a "not fully fledged corporate state" -- BC) through relatively 'peaceful', constitutional means . . . without resorting to the building of a reactionary fascist mass movement and the unleashing of it against the organised working class! . . .

In the building of the corporate state, monopoly capital is compelled to rely primarily on the social democratic and reformist labour leaders, and the foundations of the corporate state are laid in the main by putting forward and winning acceptance for measures and institutions which, whilst being presented as reflecting inroads made by the working class into the monopoly capitalist state machinery, as 'extensions of working class democracy', as 'steps towards socialism', etc. . . in reality represent a diametrically opposite development".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 3).

Later, however, "at the appropriate tactical moment", and

"... only then does monopoly capital seek to extend the corporate state edifice by the imposition of complete, fascist, terroristic forms of dictatorship".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 7).

What is this "appropriate tactical moment" when, and "only when", monopoly capital seeks to impose fascist dictatorship?

It is reached when, and "only when", according to Baker,

firstly, the socialist revolutionary movement threatens to embrace a majority of the working class in revolutionary struggle; and,

secondly, a strong, steeled Marxist-Leninist Party has gained the leadership of a majority of the working class, so that the approach of socialist revolution is seen to be imminent:

"Only when the Red Front (i.e., the socialist revolutionary movement -- BC) has grown to the point at which it threatens to embrace a majority of the working class in one form of revolutionary or quasi-revolutionary struggle or another, . . . and, finally, when all these developments push forward . . . to the point of growth of a strong Marxist-Leninist vanguard party as the effective leadership of the Red Front and the Anti-Fascist United Front -- a steeled Leninist party . . ., so that the storm clouds of the approaching socialist revolution come to be recognised in the distance -- only then does monopoly capital seek to extend the corporate state edifice by the imposition of complete, fascist, terroristic forms of dictatorship".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 7).

The "not fully-fledged corporate state" envisaged by Baker is one which is

". . . designed effectively to deprive the working class and its mass organisations of their basic independence and the fundamental rights and liberties in which . . . that independence has been formally embodied: the freedom to engage in struggle on behalf of the most fundamental interests of the working class, the right to organise for struggle independently of the state or of organisations under the control of other classes; to withhold their labour, to express their solidarity with other sections of the working class engaged in struggle, etc."
(M. Baker: "The Economics of Oil and the Falling Rate of Profit"; London; n.d.; p. 15).

So, as Baker appears to admit, his "not fully-fledged corporate state" is designed to effect, so far as the working class is concerned, what is done by a "fully-fledged fascist dictatorship":

"In this way (by constructing a "not fully fledged corporate state -- BC) . . . the monopoly capitalist ruling class attempts to achieve, in the early stages of the developing crisis . . ., the same aim as that achieved -- and ultimately only achievable -- by a fully-fledged fascist dictatorship".

(M. Baker: Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front; London; 1974; p. 3).

In other words, so great is Baker's contempt for the working class, so devoid of any semblance of class consciousness does he regard it, that he puts forward the theory that it is likely to surrender all the fundamental rights and liberties it has won by more than a hundred years of struggle, without the slightest resistance, that it will meekly assist social-democracy in destroying its trade unions -- in gagging and binding itself!

While the revisionist CPGB preaches the illusion of "peaceful transition to socialism", Baker preaches the illusion of "peaceful transition to fascism".

History, of course, proves the opposite. Both in Italy and in Germany the "corporate state" was erected after the violent destruction of the working class organisations by fascist bands, after (in the case of Italy, long after) the establishment of the fascist dictatorship.

Even Palmiro Togliatti is compelled to say:

"Corporativism is not conceivable, is inconceivable, without the fascist state; corporativism is inconceivable without the Fascist Party; it is inconceivable without the dismantling of the whole system of democratic liberties. You will find clear, forth-right affirmations on this point in the documents of fascism. . . ."

In Italy corporativism was organised only after all the democratic liberties had been liquidated, when the workers had been deprived of all representation, when all the political parties had been destroyed, when trade union freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, had been liquidated, when every possibility of expressing oneself had been eliminated. This was the political premise of corporativism. Corporativism is inconceivable without the existence of fascism as a political dictatorship".

(P. Togliatti: "Lectures on Fascism"; London; 1976; p. 97).

Baker's concept^{is} that monopoly capitalism unleashes fascist violence "only when" social revolution appears imminent. In Italy, when fascist violence was unleashed in 1920-22, the working class had suffered a severe defeat in the sabotage of the occupation movement, and had not recovered from its resultant demoralisation. The "appropriate tactical moment" when monopoly capital unleashes fascist violence, strives to replace "parliamentary democracy" by fascist dictatorship, occurs when

for any reason -- and not merely because of the imminence of socialist revolution -- "parliamentary democracy" has become, at least temporarily, unworkable in the interests of monopoly capital.

What, then, is the political effect of Baker's erroneous concepts concerning the "corporate state"?

The political policy which must logically follow from these erroneous concepts is:

1) that it is unnecessary for the working class to build up an effective movement to resist fascism until the movement for socialist revolution has become well advanced; and

2) that until this stage is reached the main blows of the working class must be orientated against social-democracy ("social-fascism") since it is social-democracy which is allotted the task of building the "semi-fascist not fully-fledged corporate state" envisaged by Baker.

Baker's erroneous concept of the "corporate state" thus serves as a new "theoretical framework" that seeks to justify a policy of sabotaging the building of a genuine anti-fascist united front at the earliest possible moment.

Baker's Theory of "The Third Stage"

Baker presents the advent of a "corporate state" -- whether in its "earlier" form of the semi-fascist "not fully-fledged corporate state" or in its "later" form of the full fascist dictatorship -- as

"... the emergence of the new stage in the development of capitalism which we have termed corporate state-monopoly capitalism".

(M. Baker: "Dialectical Materialism"; London; 1975; p. iii).

Lenin, on the other hand, characterises two stages in the development of capitalism: firstly, the stage of competitive capitalism; secondly, the stage of monopoly capitalism or imperialism, which he characterises as

"... the highest historical stage of development"

(V. I. Lenin: "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", in: "Selected Works", Volume 5; London; 1935; p. 11).

of capitalism, that is, as its last stage of development:

"Imperialism is the eve of the proletarian social revolution".
(V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 12).

In putting his "theory" of a "third stage" in the development of capitalism, a stage beyond imperialism, Baker is magnanimously prepared to excuse

"... the subsequently established scientific inaccuracy"
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. iii)

of Lenin's definition, the result of his

"... revolutionary optimism".
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. iv).

Now, of course, Marxist-Leninists do not regard the writings of Marx, Lenin, etc. as some kind of "holy writ". As has been said, they accept that as the world changes certain tenets of Marxism-Leninism lose their validity and must be replaced by new tenets.

Nevertheless, Marxist-Leninists do not discard long-established tenets of Marxism-Leninism without incontrovertible evidence that they are not -- or are no longer -- valid.

In analysing the relationship of different forms of state to society, Marxist-Leninists distinguish the economic basis of society, which is primary, from the superstructure of society, which is secondary and determined by the requirements of the economic basis:

"The economic structure of society always furnishes the real basis, starting from which we can alone work out the ultimate explanation of the whole superstructure of juridical and political institutions as well as of the religious, philosophical and other ideas of a given historical period".
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 41).

"The basis is the economic structure of society at the given stage of its development. The superstructure is the political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical views of society and the political, legal and other institutions corresponding to them.

Every basis has its own corresponding superstructure.

The superstructure is created by the basis precisely in order to serve it, to actively help it to take shape and consolidate itself".

(J. V. Stalin: "Concerning Marxism and Linguistics"; London; 1968; p. 3, 4).

Now, the transition from the first stage of development of capitalism, that of competitive capitalism, to the second stage of development, that of monopoly capitalism, represents a change in the economic basis of society.

But a change in the form of the state within capitalism is a change, not in the economic basis of capitalism, but of its superstructure, as Baker admits when he refers to

". . . modifications to the existing traditional superstructures of monopoly capitalism .-.: the corporate state".

(M. Baker: "The Economics of Oil and the Falling Rate of Profit"; London; n.d.; p. 7).

But such a change of the state superstructure, unlike a change in the economic basis, does not represent the transition to a new stage in the development of capitalism.

Of course, the development of the economic basis of capitalism from the stage of competitive capitalism to that of monopoly capitalism brings about a modification of the state superstructure. Lenin analysed state-monopoly capitalism as an inevitable development of capitalism, a stage of development of imperialism, characterised by the facts that:

firstly, the state had ceased to be the machinery of rule of the capitalist class as a whole and had become that of the most powerful monopoly capitalist groups:

"The monstrous oppression of the masses of the toilers by the state -- which is becoming more and more merged with the all-powerful capitalist combines -- is becoming ever more monstrous".
(V. I. Lenin: Preface to the First Edition of "The State and Revolution", in: "Selected Works", Volume 7; London; 1946; p. 5).

secondly, by the fact that there had been a great expansion of the apparatus and role of the state:

"Imperialism -- . . . the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism -- has particularly witnessed an unprecedented strengthening of the 'state machine' and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus".

(V. I. Lenin: "The State and Revolution", in: *ibid.*; p. 32).

True, Lenin speaks of "the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism"? Could it be that he means that state-monopoly capitalism is a stage in the development of capitalism beyond monopoly capitalism?

This interpretation is not possible, since Lenin describes imperialism as "the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism", and uses everywhere "imperialism" as a synonym for monopoly capitalism:

"Imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism".
(V. I. Lenin: "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", in: "Selected Works", Volume 5; London; 1935; p. 80-1).

Clearly, Lenin's meaning is not that state-monopoly capitalism is a new stage in the development of capitalism beyond monopoly capitalism, beyond imperialism, but that within monopoly capitalism, within imperialism, "free enterprise" monopoly capitalism develops into state-monopoly capitalism.

Does Baker's concept of "corporate state-monopoly capitalism", with its modified state superstructure, -- whether in its imaginary "not full-fledged" form or in its real form of a fascist dictatorship -- contain qualitatively new features in its economic basis which distinguish it from the state-monopoly capitalism analysed by Lenin? Clearly, it does not.

Baker's concept of "corporate state monopoly capitalism" as a new "third stage" in the development of capitalism -- a concept which has real meaning only as a fascist dictatorship -- involves such absurdities as requiring one to believe that, with the imposition of fascist dictatorships in Italy in 1922 and in Germany in 1933, these monopoly capitalist societies advanced to a new "third stage" in the development of capitalism -- only to revert to the "second stage" with the restoration of "parliamentary democracy" in these countries following World War II.

It would, however, be a mistake to dismiss Baker's anti-Leninist concept of the "third stage" as a pathetic and unsuccessful attempt to establish himself as "a greater Marxist-Leninist than Lenin".

For what are the conclusions which logically and incontrovertibly flow from Baker's "theory" that "corporative state-monopoly capitalism" represents a new "third stage" in the development of capitalism, so that it (i.e., the fascist dictatorship) and not imperialism (monopoly capitalism) is the "last" stage in the development of imperialism and "the eve of the socialist revolution"?

The conclusions which flow from it -- conclusions which Baker has not dared, at least as yet, to put on paper although he has implied them verbally in discussions within the MLOB -- are that the replacement of "parliamentary democracy" is historically progressive, since it advances capitalist society to its "final" stage, to "the eve of the socialist revolution", and, consequently, resistance to fascism is fundamentally reactionary!

One recalls the words of the German revisionist Wilhelm Pieck at the 13th. Plenum of the ECCI in December 1933, in the days when he was still following a "leftist" course:

"The ten months of fascist dictatorship confirm the prediction of the Communist International that the establishment of a fascist dictatorship does not introduce a period of reaction. . . .

The ten months of fascist dictatorship show that Germany has more and more become the nodal point of the international proletarian revolution now maturing".

(W. Pieck: Speech at 13th. Plenum ECCI, in: "We Are Fighting for a Soviet Germany"; London; 1934; p. 31-2).

The Role of the Communist Party of Germany in 1929-33

In discussions within the MLOB, Baker not infrequently expressed the view that the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party of Germany in 1929-33 should be adopted as the model for Marxist-Leninist Parties in developed capitalist countries.

It is of significance that, although the CPG had in 1933 250,000 members (five times the membership of the Bolshevik Party at the time of the socialist revolution in Russia), a para-military organisation of 100,000, and more than 5 million supporters, there was virtually no resistance to the imposition of the fascist dictatorship in January of that year:

"With only the revolutionary vanguard, without the mass following of the decisive proletarian strata, it was impossible for the CPG to take up a hopeless struggle against the fascist dictatorship, condemned in advance to defeat".
(CC, CPG: Resolution of May 1933, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 3; Oxford; 1965; p. 254-5).

To Marxist-Leninists, who hold that the imposition of a fascist dictatorship represents a serious setback for the working class and the revolutionary socialist movement, it might seem from this that the strategy and/or tactics of the CPG in 1929-33 were seriously defective.

But to those who, like Baker, may regard the imposition of a fascist dictatorship as a historically progressive development, it is natural that the strategy and tactics of the CPG in 1929-33 should be regarded as highly successful, as the model which should be adopted by Marxist-Leninists in developed capitalist country.

a) The Question of Strategy and Tactics

In examining the strategy and tactics of the CPG in 1929-33, it is mainly with tactics that we are concerned. Not all the tactics adopted by the CPG in this period were originated in this period, some dating from an early period when socialist-revolution in Europe was regarded as imminent. But by 1925 it had become clear that the post-World War I revolutionary tide had subsided in Europe and that capitalism was entering a period of stabilisation:

"Instead of the period of flow of the revolutionary tide that we observed in Europe in the years of the post-war crisis, we now see a period of ebb. This means that the question of taking power . . . is not now on the order of the day in Europe."
(J. V. Stalin: Political Report of the Central Committee, 14th. Congress CPSU, December 1925, in: "Works", Volume 7; Moscow; 1954; p. 271).

And, of course, tactical principles which may be perfectly correct in a period of revolutionary upsurge may cease to be correct at a later period. Indeed, in introducing united front tactics in 1921, the Communist International made precisely this point.

It was long Baker's contention within the MLOB that, so long as fundamental strategy was correct, tactics -- even incorrect tactics, were of minor importance.

But the science of socialist revolution is made up of two parts: strategy and tactics:

"Strategy and tactics (is) the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat".
(J. V. Stalin: "The Foundations of Leninism", in: "Works", Volume 6; Moscow; 1953; p. 155).

Strategy

"... is the determination of the direction of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution". (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 157).

It

"... remains basically unchanged throughout a given stage". (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 159).

Tactics

"... are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement. ... While the object of strategy is to win the war ..., tactics pursue less important objects, for their aim is not the winning of the war as a whole, but the winning of some particular engagements or some particular battles". (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 159).

They

"... change according to flow and ebb. ...

During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow or ebb, the rise or decline, of the revolution".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 160, 161).

They

"... are a part of strategy, subordinate to it and serving it".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 160).

Correct tactics can only be determined on the basis of accurate knowledge of, and scientific analysis of, the concrete objective conditions -- especially the relation of class forces -- existing at the particular time in the particular country:

"In determining its line of tactics, each Communist Party must take into account the concrete internal and external situation, the correlation of class forces, the degree of stability and strength of the bourgeoisie, the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, the position taken up by the various intermediary strata, etc., in its country".

(Programme of the Communist International; London; 1932; p. 61).

It will be noted that Stalin states that tactics "pursue less important objects" than strategy. Does this mean that, as Baker holds, tactics are of less importance than strategy, so that Marxist-Leninists need play less attention to tactics than to strategy?

In one sense tactics may be regarded as of less importance than strategy -- in the sense that an individual battle (such as a strike) may be lost through the adoption of incorrect tactics without affecting the outcome of the war as a whole.

But strategy is put into operation during each phase of the war through tactics, so that if a whole series of battles are lost as a result of the continued adoption of incorrect tactics, a correct strategy may be rendered null and void.

Furthermore, certain battles in a war between states must be regarded as "decisive", in that their outcome affects the history of the war at least for a long time to come. If, as a result of the adoption of incorrect tactics by the General Staff of one state involved in such a battle, the army of that state is smashed to pieces, its soldiers disarmed and taken prisoner, then these incorrect tactics have clearly affected the history of the war for a long period.

If the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in a developed capitalist country results in the smashing of the army of the working class, then this will clearly affect the history of the class war for a long period. If this is so, then the struggle against fascism represents a decisive battle in the class war, and it is supremely important that the General Staff of the working class -- the Marxist-Leninist Party -- should have elaborated the correct tactics for the struggle against fascism.

b) The Question of the "Red" Trade Union Opposition

"A task of cardinal importance for the Marxist-Leninist Party is to win the support of a majority of trade unionists to a progressive -- and ultimately a revolutionary -- policy.

This requires that every member of the Party should work actively within his appropriate trade union in accordance with the strategy and tactics laid down by the Party.

It requires that two or more Party members within the same union should form an organised fraction for this purpose.

It requires that a Party fraction should strive to win non-Party progressive trade unionists to collaborate with the fraction, so that they may participate in broader, non-disciplined progressive groups -- led, if possible by the Party fraction -- with the aim of winning them to support within the trade union the strategy and tactics laid down by the Party, in their own interest.

Such progressive trade unionists can then be invited to study classes organised by the Party, they can be sold appropriate Party literature, etc. with the aim of winning them into membership of the Party -- and so into membership of the narrower, disciplined Party fraction within the trade union.

The name by which such "progressive groups" within the trade unions are called is not of great importance. Nevertheless, a trade unionist who is prepared to struggle for higher wages and better living conditions and who recognises that this can only be done from below, against the existing leadership of his union, may be yet far from being a revolutionary socialist. To insist that such "progressive groups" within the trade unions be called "red" or "revolutionary" is to place a barrier against participation in them by such trade unionists, to hold back the struggle to transform the reformist-led trade unions into real organs of working class struggle, to retard the recruiting of progressive trade unionists to the Party.

The insistence on calling such "progressive groups" within trade unions by the name of Red Trade Union Opposition or Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition was thus a "leftist" tactical error.

c) The Question of the "Red" Trade Unions

The transformation of reformist-led trade unions into real organs of struggle can be accomplished only from within these trade unions, by correct fractional struggle which exposes the role of the right-wing bureaucratic leaders to the rank-and-file:

"The struggle must be waged ruthlessly to the very end, . . . until all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism have been completely discredited and expelled from the trade unions".

(V. I. Lenin: "'Left-wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 92).

In some unions the bureaucracy will succeed in using the union machinery to prevent their expulsion by the will of the majority of the membership. In such cases it is correct, provided certain conditions pertain, to break away from the old union machinery and establish new "independent unions" (independent, that is, of the right-wing bureaucracy).

The pamphlet "What is to be Done Now?" was written and published by Baker in collusion with Scott in 1973, without it having been approved by the MLOB. The promise extracted from Baker that this would not recur proved one of the "fetters" which Baker found intolerable in relation to the MLOB. However, in the circumstances in which it appeared, it must be presumed to express Baker's views on the conditions under which it is correct to form such new "independent trade unions". Marxist-Leninists, writes Baker, must take care to avoid

". . . the sectarian error of setting up independent organisations before the task of exposing the labour lieutenants before sufficient workers to generate the new embryo organisations has been fulfilled, that is: a) when the great majority of the members have been convinced by their own experience of the need to have an independent unions; and b) when they are convinced by their own experience that the bureaucratic machinery of the existing union cannot be used to transform the existing union along the lines required".

(M. Baker: "What is to be Done Now?"; London; 1973; p. 19).

We are in agreement with this formulation, which is in line with Lenin's scathing criticism of the moves to set up minority "red unions" in Germany in 1919-20:

"We cannot but consider the ponderous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary disquisitions of the German Lefts on why Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, why it is permissible to refuse to do such work, why it is necessary to leave the trade unions and to create in their stead brand-new, clean little 'workers' unions' invented by exceedingly nice (and, for the most part, probably very youthful) Communists, etc., to be equally ridiculous and childish nonsense. . . .

The German 'Left' Communists . . . jump to the conclusion that . . . it is necessary to . . . create new, artificial forms of labour organisations!! This is an unpardonable blunder equivalent to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie. . . .

It is imperatively necessary to work wherever the masses are to be found."

(V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 90, 93, 94).

In flagrant contradiction with this sound principle of Marxist-Leninist tactics, Solomon Lozovsky, the leader of the Red International of Labour Unions, was telling the ECCI Trade Union Commission in 1929:

"Where is the most backward, the most reactionary part of the working class today? That part of the working class which is organised in the reformist trade unions. . . .

Our comrades put forward the slogan: . . . 'Join the reformist unions'. . . I consider that that slogan is unsound. . . .

I propose to unite the vanguard in mutual aid societies. . . .

'Conquer the Trade Unions!' That is . . . an empty scheme, and nothing will come of it".

(S. Lozovsky: Speech to ECCI Trade Union Commission, in: "Communist International", Volume 6, No. 17; July 15th., 1929; p. 659, 661, 662).

Already, in line with this policy, the 4th. Congress of the RILU in March/April 1928 had adopted a resolution calling for the transformation of the Communist fractions in the trade unions into new "revolutionary unions"

The 5th. Congress of the RILU ratified

". . . the decision of the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany and Poland to drop the slogan of 'into the reformist unions'"

(5th. Congress RILU: Resolution, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 3; Oxford; 1965; p. 142).

As a result of this pernicious "leftist" policy, by the end of 1932 the Red Trade Unions had a membership of 95,000, against a membership of the reformist-led trade unions of more than 5 million.

Already by the middle of 1932, however, voices were being raised in condemnation of this policy:

"It was a grave mistake to have liquidated the Red opposition groups in the mines after the formation of the Red Union of Miners.

Had active groups existed within the reformist miners' unions during the preparations for the actual strike, we would have been able to capture a number of union meetings called to disrupt the struggle.

The absence of work within the reformist union facilitates the trade union bureaucracy in all their manoeuvres".

(S. Perevoznikov: "Lessons of the Miners' Strike Struggle in the Ruhr in 1931-32", in: "Communist International", Volume 11; July 1st., 1932; p. 407).

At the 13th. Plenum of the ECCI in December 1933, B. A. Vasiliev pointed out that

". . . if the CPG had had good fractions in mass organisations, they would have survived the destruction of the legal apparatus of those organisations".

(B. A. Vasiliev: Speech at 13th. Plenum ECCI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 280).

The "Materials" published by the ECCI for the 7th. World Congress of the CI in July/August 1935 were designed to turn the international communist movement on to a right revisionist course, and so were blunt about the effects of the former "leftist" policy in relation to the trade unions, pointing out that the Party had

". . . in many places created new unions artificially and without mass support, instead of working within the reformist unions. As a result, the revolutionary trade union opposition existed in the main outside the unions".

(ECCI: Materials for the 7th. World Congress of the CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 53).

And at the congress itself, Wilhelm Pieck, reporting on behalf of the ECCI, said:

"Again a sectarian mistake was committed; the revolutionary trade union opposition was transformed into new unions and as a result found itself isolated from the great mass of members of the reformist unions".

(W. Pieck: Report at 7th. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 53).

On March 5th., 1933 the CPG appealed for a general strike against the fascist coup. As Ossip Piatnitsky told the ECCI Presidium in July 1934, there was a

". . . failure of the workers to respond".

(O. Piatnitsky: Speech at ECCI Presidium, July 1934, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 251).

--The policy of the ECCI and the CPG towards the trade union movement in 1929-33 was clearly a most harmful "leftist" one.

Furthermore, the same objections already considered to calling "progressive groups" within trade unions by the name of "Red" or "Revolutionary" apply equally to insistence on calling "independent trade unions" by the name "Red" or "Revolutionary". This places a barrier against membership of them by trade unionists who recognise the need for an "independent trade union" to struggle for their day-to-day interests, but may yet be far from being revolutionary socialists.

This, too, is a "leftist" error.

d) The Question of the Distinction between "Parliamentary Democracy" and Fascism.

Marxist-Leninists recognise that "parliamentary democracy" is a false facade which conceals the dictatorship of the capitalist class. It is their aim to replace "parliamentary democracy" by the more democratic dictatorship of the working class.

Nevertheless, Marxist-Leninists understand that the "parliamentary democratic" form of capitalist state, as distinct from the fascist corporate state, is associated with possession by the working people of certain democratic rights and liberties which are valuable to them in their day-to-day struggles, and which facilitate the building of a movement of socialist revolution.

It is clearly of benefit to the development of the movement of socialist revolution that workers should be able legally to form independent organs of struggle, that a Marxist-Leninist Party should be able to operate legally, to publish literature legally, to hold meetings and demonstrations legally, to stand candidates for election legally so that they may use the positions to which they are elected to raise the political level of the working people.

Thus, the replacement of "parliamentary democracy" by a fascist dictatorship is detrimental to the interests of the working class, is detrimental to the building of the movement for socialist revolution.

If this analysis is correct, then it is clearly vitally important in the interests of the working class, in the interests of the socialist revolutionary movement, to construct an effective resistance force against fascism.

If, on the other hand, this analysis is rejected and it is held that there is no qualitative distinction between a "parliamentary democratic" state and a fascist state, then the construction of an effective resistance to fascism is held to be of little or no importance, and "anti-fascism" is regarded merely as an aspect, a slogan, of the socialist revolutionary movement.

The "leftist" leadership of the CI held in 1929-33 that there was no qualitative distinction between a "parliamentary democratic" state and a fascist state, and this line was loyally followed by the Communist Party of Germany:

At the 11th. Plenum of the ECCI in March/April 1931, Dmitri Manuilsky said:

"Mistakes in our midst which occur in the direction of opposing in principle fascism to bourgeois democracy, . . . constitute the most pernicious and destructive mistakes for the Communist movement. At this moment this represents our chief danger. . . ."

The Social Democrats . . . deliberately proclaim that the chief enemy of the working class is fascism. . . to create the impression among the workers that they must struggle for the 'democratic' forms of their exploitation and against the fascist form". (D. Z. Manuilsky: "The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism"; London; 1931; p. 111, 112).

"There have been revealed in our ranks tendencies to draw a contrast between fascism and bourgeois democracy. . . . That is the worst danger for the Communist Party". (E. Thälmann: "Some Mistakes in the Theoretical and Practical Work of the CP of Germany and the Way to Overcome Them", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11, No. 63; December 10th., 1931; p. 1137).

A resolution of the Central Committee of the CPG in March 1932 called for the overcoming of

every tendency to draw a liberal contrast . . . between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship". (CC, CPG: Resolution, March 1932, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 215).

This "leftist" misrepresentation was associated with the claim that the restrictions imposed by "parliamentary democracy" -- even though the CPG remained legal, was able to hold meetings and demonstrations legally, was able to contest elections at all levels -- amounted to "fascism":

As early as January 1931, Thälmann was telling the CC of the CPG:

"The Brüning government can . . . be characterised as the government for the carrying out of the fascist dictatorship". (E. Thälmann: Report to Meeting of CC, CGB, January 1931, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11, No. 3; January 22nd., 1931; p. 54).

In June 1932 the CC of the CPG was describing the Papen government as

". . . a government of the blackest fascist reaction". (CC, CPG, Appeal, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 26; June 9th., 1932; p. 527).

At a conference of Party functionaries in August 1932, Thälmann was declaring:

"The further policy of the Papen government, as the government of the fascist dictatorship, is directing towards accomplishing and rearming the fascist coup". (E. Thälmann: "The Results of the 31st. July and the Next Tasks of the CPG", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 35; August 11th., 1932; p. 726).

In December 1932 the CI journal was saying:

"Schleicher's fascist government is trying to camouflage its actually intensified fascist regime by a few 'social' gestures". ("International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 56; December 15th., 1932; p. 1196).

This "leftist" political misrepresentation continued right through the period to the actual imposition of the fascist dictatorship from December 1930, when the CPG paper declared:

"The fascist dictatorship is no longer a menace -- it is a fact. We are living now in a fascist republic. The bourgeois dictatorship has become a fascist dictatorship". "Rote Fahne" (Red Flag), December 2nd., 1930, cited in: "Communist International", Volume 9, No. 17/18; October 1st., 1932; p. 630).

e) The Question of the Anti-Fascist United Front

If the replacement of "parliamentary democracy" by a fascist dictatorship is detrimental to the interests of the working class, is detrimental to the building of the movement for a socialist revolution, then it is clearly vitally important to construct an effective resistance to fascism.

Baker's "Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front", published in November 1974, are an eclectic melange of some of Baker's own views with some which were "forced" upon the MLOB by the majority of members. With Baker's principal thesis the Communist League entirely agrees:

"In order to defeat the attempt of monopoly capital to impose a fascist dictatorship, .. it is necessary for the Red Front (the socialist revolutionary movement -- BC) and the Marxist-Leninist Party to take the initiative in building . . . a broader front of resistance to fascism . . . : an Anti-Fascist United Front . . .

It is vitally necessary . . . that . . . its ranks should be open to all organisations and individuals which, irrespective of their current attitude to the socialist revolution or, indeed, to any other question -- are prepared to participate actively in resistance to fascism".

(M. Baker: "Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front"; London; 1974; p. 8).

If, on the other hand, this analysis is rejected, and it is held that there is no qualitative difference between a "parliamentary democratic" state and a fascist state, then the construction of an effective resistance to fascism, in the form of a broad anti-fascist unit united front, is held to be of little or no importance, and "anti-fascism" is regarded merely as an aspect, a slogan, of the socialist revolutionary movement.

This latter was, logically enough on the basis of the false premise, the position of the CPG in the earlier part of the period under consideration: that the fight against fascism is the fight for socialist revolution:

"The Communist Party sets itself the task of frustrating the maturing of the fascist dictatorship by advocating the strategy of the proletarian revolution".
(CC, CPG: Resolution, January 1931, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11, No. 3; January 22nd., 1931; p. 81).

"In Germany it is necessary to direct the blow against the bourgeois dictatorship in the form of the Brüning Government. . . . The whole theory of the 'lesser evil' rests on the presupposition that fascism of the Hitler type represents the chief enemy".

(D. Z. Manuilsky: "The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism"; London; 1931; p. 112).

"The chief slogan which the CPG must put forward to offset the slogan of the fascist dictatorship . . . is the slogan of the workers' and peasants' republic, i.e., Socialist Soviet Germany".
(12th. Plenum ECCI: Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern Sections, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 228).

Later, however, as the pressure for a united front against fascism rose among the working class, including the rank-and-file of the CPG, this slogan -- "for the building of a united front against fascism" -- was adopted by the Party, but, in line with the political position described in the previous paragraph, was termed a "red" or "revolutionary" united front against fascism, thus presenting a barrier to participation in it of anyone who did not already support socialist revolution:

"For a revolutionary united front against the reaction from Severing to Hitler!" . . .

Vote for a Free Socialist Soviet Germany!"
(CPG: "Appeal Concerning the Presidential Election", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 2; January 14th., 1932; p. 23).

"Only the red united front of the militant working class can repel fascism. . . .

For the red united front!"
(CC, CPG: Appeal to Social-Democratic Workers, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 18; April 21st., 1932; p. 350).

Even when, on the initiative of the CPG, the "anti-fascist united front" was given organisational form in May 1932 as "Anti-Fascist Action" this was described as

"... a revolutionary united front against fascism".

(E. Thälmann: Report to CC, CPG, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 24; June 2nd., 1932; p. 499).

and workers were urged to join,

"... under the slogan of the Anti-Fascist Action, the fighting Red United Front against the class enemy".

(CC, CPG: "The Overthrow of the Brüning Government", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 24; June 2nd., 1932; p. 480).

And, answering questions from social-democratic workers in mid-July 1932, Thälmann made it clear that the aim of Anti-Fascist Action was

"... the smashing of the capitalist state".

(E. Thälmann: "Answers to 21 Questions from Social-Democratic Workers"; Berlin; 1932; p. 14).

Furthermore, it was made quite clear that organisations and functionaries of the Social-Democratic Party would be refused participation in the "anti-fascist united front":

"The Communists ... cannot enter into any bloc or agreement with social-democracy".

(W. Florin: "Fascism, Social-Democracy and Communism", in: "International Press Correspondence", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 18; April 21st., 1932; p. 349).

"Is an alliance of the CPG and the SPG possible in the struggle against the Papen government and against fascism? ...

An alliance between the CPG and the SPG is impossible. ...

We Communists ... reject any accord with the SPG leaders".

(E. Thälmann: "Answers to 21 Questions from Social-Democratic Workers"; Berlin; 1932; p. 17).

This "leftist" formulation enabled the SPG leaders to make offers of participation in a united front against fascism to the CPG, knowing in advance that they would be rejected. Thus, instead of exposing the opposition of the SPG leaders to organising a genuine anti-fascist united front, it was the CPG leaders who were exposed:

"How great is the danger is to be seen at the present time from the latest manoeuvre of the social fascists (the SPG leaders -- BC) who 'threaten' to make a united front with the Communist Party. The CP of Germany has not created all the prerequisites in order to be easily able to thwart such attempts to mislead the masses".

(E. Thälmann: "Some Mistakes in the Theoretical and Practical Work of the CP of Germany and the Way to Overcome Them", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11, No. 63; December 10th., 1931; p. 1137).

The tactics of the CPG in relation to the building of a broad anti-fascist united front were clearly harmfully "leftist".

f) The Question of "Social-fascism"

Up to the time of World War I, parties representing the interests of the working class were generally known as "social-democratic" parties, and the systematised views of these parties as "social-democracy".

With the degeneration of these parties into political instruments of the monopoly capitalists of the various countries, Lenin coined a number of terms such as "social-imperialist", "social-chauvinist", etc., to ~~denote~~ ^{denote} an imperialist posing as a social-democrat, a chauvinist posing as a social-democrat, etc.

The crypto-revisionist leadership of the Communist International in 1930-33, coined the term "social-fascist", meaning, by analogy with the terminology developed by Lenin, a fascist posing as a social-democrat.

It is true that social-democracy, to the extent that it exerts mass influence over the working class, assists the development of fascism. It is equally true that social-democracy, in office, is capable of severe repressive measures against the working class and the socialist revolutionary movement. But is it true that the only difference between a fascist and a social-democrat is that the latter is a fascist posing as a social-democrat, is a crypto-fascist?

If this latter statement were true, then with the establishment of a fascist dictatorship social-democrats could throw off their masks and reveal themselves as fascists. But history shows that this is a rare phenomenon.

We understand that it is the contention of one of your leading members that, with the imposition of fascism in Germany, the social-democratic leaders were simply "pensioned off". This is contrary to historical fact. Even Baker, a strong proponent of the term "social-fascism", admits that

". . . the massacre of the leaders of German Social-democracy which followed the very day after they turned out on parade before Hitler on May Day 1933 could well be repeated here in Britain". (M. Baker: "Workers' Control"; London; 1976; p. 21).

The application of the term "social-fascism" to social-democracy equates social-democracy with fascism. This is untrue. Social-democracy assists in the development of fascism, but it professes anti-fascism; a fascist dictatorship is established directly, not by social-democracy but by the violence of the fascist gangs. There is a certain real competition between social-democracy and fascism for the service of monopoly capital.

But where there is any contradiction between enemies of the working class, no matter how small these may be, it is the task of Marxist-Leninists to strive in their tactics to utilise such a contradiction for the benefit of the working class:

"It is possible to conquer the more powerful enemy only by exerting the utmost effort, and by necessarily, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest, 'fissure' among the enemies". (V. I. Lenin: "'Left-wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 112).

And where the working class is faced at a particular time with two enemies, between which there is some contradiction, the task of the Marxist-Leninist Party is to direct the struggle of the working class against the principal, most immediately dangerous enemy and to strive to take advantage of the contradiction between the principal and the secondary enemies in order to expose the latter to the working class. These were the tactics developed by Lenin when, in September 1917, the working class was faced with direct attack by Whiteguard troops under Lavr Kornilov while the social-democratic government of Aleksandr Kerensky mouthed words of resistance:

"We will fight and are fighting Kornilov. . . But we do not support Kerensky; on the contrary, we expose his weakness. . . We shall point out to the people (who are fighting Kornilov) the weakness and vacillation of Kerensky". (V. I. Lenin: To the Central Committee of the RSDLP, September 12th., 1917; in: "Selected Works", Volume 6; London; 1946; p. 205; 206).

In Germany in 1930-33 the fascist party was being armed and financed by monopoly capital with the aim of the establishment, through this party, of a terroristic dictatorship over the working people, while the social-democratic party, although nouthing "anti-fascism", was in practice sabotaging the building of an effective resistance to fascism.

Clearly, in these circumstances the fascist party was the principal, most immediately dangerous enemy of the working class, against which the principal struggle of the working class should have been directed, while the social-democratic party was a secondary, less immediately dangerous, enemy which required primarily to be exposed -- not least because of its sabotage in practice of the anti-fascist movement.

The use of the term "social-fascism" by the CPG in this period had the effect of equating fascism and social-democracy, of directing the struggle with equal emphasis against the principal enemy -- fascism -- and the secondary enemy -- social-democracy -- and so both weakening the struggle against the principal enemy and failing adequately to expose the secondary enemy.

On the latter point, it must be said that our experience in the anti-fascist movement in Britain today completely confirms this conclusion: the use of the term "social-fascism" to describe not only social-democracy, but revisionism and trotskyism --

"The 'CPGB' and the trotskyite parties and organisations may be considered as the new parties of social-fascism" (M. Baker: "The Economics of Oil and the Falling Rate of Profit"; London; n.d.; p. 20).

-- not only fails to expose the leaders of these political trends to the rank-and-file, but tends to rally the rank-and-file behind these leaders in indignation at what they consider to be mere unjustified, insulting abuse.

Nevertheless, in the period 1930-33 the CI and the CPG made constant use of the terms "social-fascism" and "social-fascist", making it clear that they rejected any practical distinction between social-democracy and fascism:

"There have been revealed in our ranks tendencies to draw a contrast . . . between the Hitler party and social fascism. . . That is the worst danger for the Communist Party". (E. Thälmann: "Some Mistakes in the Theoretical and Practical Work of the CP of Germany and the Way to Overcome Them", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11, No. 63; December 10th., 1931; p. 1137).

"The masses must come to realise in the actual fights led by the CPG that it is not a question of contrasting the national socialists with social-democracy, but that it is a question of either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie . . . or the dictatorship of the proletariat". (Editorial, "Pravda", March 17th., 1932, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 14; March 24th., 1932; p. 276).

The use of the term "social-fascism" by the CPG in 1930-33 was a "leftist" tactical error.

g) The Question of Social-Democracy as "the Principal Enemy"

It is true that the leadership of both the CI and the CPG in this period sometimes spoke against the equation of social-democracy with fascism. But this was done not in order to present fascism as the principal, most immediately dangerous enemy of the working class, but to present as the principal enemy of the working class, against which the main struggle of the working class should be directed, social-democracy:

"Social-fascism . . . was the chief force making for the establishment of fascist dictatorship".
(E. Thälmann: Report to CC, CPG, October 1929, in: J. Degras (Ed.): ibid.; p. 100).

"Only by directing the main blows against social-democracy . . . will it be possible to strike and defeat the chief class enemy of the proletariat -- the bourgeoisie".

(ECCI: Theses on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Sections of the CI, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 44; October 6th., 1932; p. 941).

"The 11th. Plenum of the ECCI clearly stated that social-democracy represents the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie . . . and that we must direct our main fire against it in order to capture the majority of the working class".

("The Ideological Mistakes and Shortcomings in the Fulfilment of the Decisions of the 11th. Plenum of the ECCI", in: "Communist International", Volume 9, No. 4/5; March 15th., 1932; p. 149).

"The intensification of the fascist terror . . . compelled the revolutionary party of the proletariat to launch its main blow with even greater energy against social-democracy".

(E. Thälmann: Report to Conference of CPG Functionaries, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 27; June 16th., 1932; p. 544).

This line was continued not only right up to the fascist coup of January 1933:

"The task of the Communist Party of Germany remains as before -- to direct the chief blow at the present stage against social democracy".

("The CPG takes the Offensive", in: "Communist International", Volume 9, No. 20; December 15th., 1932; p. 700).

but even after it!:

"Social-democracy continues to play the role of the main social prop of the bourgeoisie also in the countries of open fascist dictatorship".

(13th. Plenum, ECCI, December 1933, in: J. Degras (Ed.): ibid.; p. 297).

"The SPG remains, as before, the chief social pillar of the capitalist dictatorship".

(CC, CPG: Resolution, May 1933, in: J. Degras (ibid.): ibid.; p. 256).

h) Conclusion

Far from being a model for the Marxist-Leninist Parties in developed capitalist countries, the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party of Germany in 1929-33 were examples of harmful "leftism" in many important respects, a strategy and tactics which objectively assisted German monopoly capital to impose its fascist dictatorship.

The Question of the Defence of "Parliamentary Democracy"

Baker declares that the Anti-Fascist United Front should struggle

". . . for the preservation and ultimate enhancement of those actual concrete democratic rights and liberties of the working class and working people, including those associated with the parliamentary facade, . . . which fascism seeks to destroy altogether: the right to freedom of speech, of assembly, of organization, the right to strike, and the right to contest for parliament and the local councils independently of the corporatist or fascist political parties -- including active defence of those democratic rights and liberties associated with the parliamentary democratic

facade".

(M. Baker: "Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front"; London; 1974; p. 11-2).

At the same time, he insists:

"Under no circumstances is it tactically admissible to seek to win the lower and lowest levels of consciousness in the broad working class to active anti-fascist united struggle by appealing to any influence exerted ideologically by 'bourgeois democracy'". (M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 11).

Many people who are prepared to participate actively in an anti-fascist united front will have illusions about "parliamentary democracy", will not recognise that it is a facade which conceals the dictatorship of the capitalist class. In appealing to them to join in the defence of democratic rights and liberties associated with "parliamentary democracy", how does the Anti-Fascist United Front avoid appealing to those illusions? Only, it would seem, by proclaiming that "parliamentary democracy" is the dictatorship of the capitalist class, a truth which is recognised only by those who have come to accept the principles of Marxism-Leninism."

Again, Baker says:

"Under no circumstances is it permissible to seek to win the lower and lowest levels of consciousness in the broad working class to active anti-fascist united struggle by appealing to . . . a 'classless' freedom in the abstract". (M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 11).

Many people who are prepared to participate actively in an anti-fascist united front will not recognise that the concrete freedoms of the working class can be retained and extended only by forcibly restructuring the concrete freedoms of the capitalist class, and ultimately secured only by the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class. In appealing to them to join in the defence of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, etc., how does the Anti-Fascist United Front avoid appealing to these illusions? Only, it would seem, by proclaiming that it favours such freedoms only for the working class, a position which is accepted only by those who have come to accept the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

But for the Anti-Fascist United Front to take up such positions on "parliamentary democracy" and class freedom is equivalent to restricting membership to anti-fascists who have come to accept the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Thus, while saying in one place that the ranks of the Anti-Fascist United Front ~~should be~~

". . . should be open to all organisations and individuals which, irrespective of their current attitude to the socialist revolution, or, indeed to any other question -- are prepared to participate actively in resistance to fascism".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 8).

and

"The aims of the Anti-Fascist United Front must be confined to the struggle against fascism and there must be no confusion between the constitutional aims and propaganda of the Anti-Fascist United Front and those of the RED FRONT (the socialist revolutionary movement -- BC)".

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 9).

by saying that the propoganda of the Anti-Fascist United Front on the questions of "parliamentary democracy" and "freedom" must be based on Marxist-Leninist principles, thereby in effect restricting participation in it to those who have come to accept those principles.

But it is, of course, the task of the Marxist-Leninist Party and the socialist revolutionary movement to put forward Marxist-Leninist principles; it is the task of the Anti-Fascist United Front to resist fascism.

Thus, the Anti-Fascist Movement says that it stands for the defence of the democratic rights and liberties associated with "parliamentary democracy", including the freedoms of speech, of assembly, etc. against the attempts of the fascists to destroy them.

The Marxist-Leninist Party and the socialist revolutionary movement does not take a position in contradiction with that of the Anti-Fascist United Front. But it adds to the presentation of the position of the Anti-Fascist United Front the view that "parliamentary democracy" is in reality the dictatorship of the capitalist class and needs to be replaced by the dictatorship of the working class in order that a new socialist society may be constructed; and it adds that the concrete freedoms of the working class can be secured only by ultimate suppression of the concrete freedom of the capitalist class.

Baker's pretext for insisting that the Anti-Fascist United Front adopt a Marxist-Leninist position on the questions of "parliamentary democracy" and "freedom" is that, unless this is done, it

"... would lead, not to the retention and political development of such elements (who have illusions about "parliamentary democracy" and "freedom" -- BC) within the Anti-Fascist United Front but, on the contrary, to their progressive alienation, to their falling increasingly under the influence of the fascist organisations, as the truth about the role of parliamentary democracy . . . becomes ever more glaring".
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 11).

The picture which Baker draws is, of course, nonsense!

It is the picture of workers joining the Anti-Fascist United Front because they wish to participate in resistance to fascism but still retaining illusions about "parliamentary democracy"; in the Anti-Fascist United Front they come into contact with members of the Marxist-Leninist Party and the socialist revolutionary movement who play the leading role in the Front and who have long ago shed their illusions about "parliamentary democracy"; it is the picture of these workers shedding their illusions about "parliamentary democracy" both as a result of its degeneration and as a result of the influence of Marxist-Leninists; of realising that not only fascism but even "parliamentary democracy" represents the dictatorship of the capitalist class -- and then joining the fascists!

And if, as Baker demands, the Anti-Fascist United Front had put forward a Marxist-Leninist position on "parliamentary democracy"? Then these workers, retaining their illusions about it, would not have participated in the Anti-Fascist United Front. This would then have not become a broad organisation, and the destruction of the socialist revolutionary movement would have been inevitable.

To sum up, what does the Anti-Fascist United Front say to a worker who approaches them, saying: "I believe in 'parliamentary democracy', which the fascists want to destroy, which the fascists denounce as 'useless'. Does the Anti-Fascist United Front believe in defending 'parliamentary democracy' against fascist attempts to destroy it?"

According to Baker, the reply of the Anti-Fascist United Front to such a worker should be: "Certainly not! We are not in favour of defending 'parliamentary democracy' against fascist attempts to destroy it. We think it is useless too".

This can hardly be called an encouragement for such a worker to join the Anti-Fascist United Front!

Furthermore, it implies that, while the fascists may be bad in wanting to destroy the freedoms of the working class, their attempts to destroy "parliamentary democracy" are good and are favoured by the Anti-Fascist United Front. Such a formulation would be, of course, completely in line with Baker's thesis of "The Third Stage" -- that transition from "parliamentary democratic" monopoly capitalism to fascist monopoly capitalism represents a "historically progressive" development, one which bring the working class nearer to socialist revolution!

In conclusion, insistence that the Anti-Fascist United Front should dissociate itself from the defence of "parliamentary democracy" and the democratic rights and liberties associated with it against fascist attempts to destroy them is a harmful "leftist" mistake.

The Question of Albania

The position of the CL on Albania has been made clear in a number of documents, including the appendix to the China report. The section of the CL Manifesto dealing with Albania says:

"Of the states in which socialism had been, or was being, constructed after World War II, there remains only the People's Republic of Albania. Here the working class remains in power and is continuing the socialist transformation at a remarkable pace.

The Albanian Party of Labour has remained faithful to Marxist-Leninist principles in relation to the internal economic development of the country, and played a notable role in the exposure of revisionism in the Soviet Union and the international communist movement.

Nevertheless, the cardinal error of the leadership of the APL in presenting China as a 'socialist' state and in supporting maoist groups in various countries as 'Marxist-Leninist' has seriously retarded the urgent task of building a new Marxist-Leninist International and, if not corrected, must lead to the internal degeneration of Albania's socialist society".

(CL Manifesto, in: "COMbat", February 1977; p. 49-50).

The character of the economic basis of a particular society is determined by the relations of production which exist there; not by the foreign policy of its ruling party.

The process by which a socialist society may be converted into a capitalist society is presented in documented detail in our forthcoming book: "The Restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union": the elimination of centralised economic planning; the ending of the practice of free allocation of means of production to enterprises; the transformation of means of production into commodities; the introduction of profit as the motive and regulator of production; the determination of production "plans", prices, etc., by each enterprise; the introduction of bonus schemes drawn from the profits of each enterprise and distributed so that the lion's share, surplus value, accrues to the management personnel, the new Soviet capitalists; and so on.

None of these developments has occurred -- to date -- in the PRA. On the contrary the former differentials between the incomes of directors and top officials on the one hand and ordinary workers on the other have been greatly reduced as a conscious attack on what the APL correctly diagnoses as a principal economic basis of revisionism within a socialist society.

At the same time, the pro-Chinese propaganda of ten years ago has been greatly reduced. Despite the recent death of Mao, Hoxha in his Report to the 7th. Congress of the APL in November 1976 refers to China and Mao in a formal couple of paragraphs for the first time on page 200. The Communist Party of China has refrained from sending a delegation to the last two congresses of the APL, and the Albanian government has significantly refused to follow the Peking line of supporting NATO as a "force for peace". The extensive purges of last year indicate that there is an intense political struggle proceeding within the APL.

In other words, the final position of the APL has not yet been determined. So long as Albanian society remains proletarian socialist in character, the possibility remains that Albania will not only remain a socialist enclave in a capitalist world, but that the APL will eventually play a leading role in the establishment of a new, genuinely Marxist-Leninist International -- for the correction of its foreign policy in relation to China would be bound to lead to repudiation by it of the maoist groups (as well as of Albania by the latter).

In these circumstances, we maintain that it is the cardinal duty of every Marxist-Leninist group to do its utmost to foster solidarity with socialist Albania.

Baker's position has for some years been that, because the APL has an incorrect policy in relation to China and the maoist groups, ~~its economic basis~~ "its economic basis cannot be socialist".

The discussions which were held within the MLOB on Albania were "unsatisfactory" to Baker not, as he says, because Comrade WB

". . . was most reluctant to reveal the contents of this (material received by Comrade WB from Albania -- BC) to the MLOB meetings". (M. Baker: Letter to Indian Comrades, March 10th., 1975; p. 4).

In fact, the Albanian Society published regular accounts of the social system in Albania, and of the policies adopted by the Albanian government, which Baker received as a member of the society. Further, the unpublished material from Albania was available to Baker as a member of the committee of the Albanian Society from 1968 until he allowed his membership to lapse in 1975.

Baker's dissatisfaction with the MLOB discussions on Albania was due to the fact that no-one, including himself, was able to present any evidence to justify speaking of the revisionist degeneration of Albanian society, and so justify Baker's wish to end the policy of working for solidarity with socialist Albania.

Nevertheless, this did not prevent Baker from securing the passing of a resolution in 1974 instructing Comrade WB to withdraw from the position of Secretary of the Albanian Society -- a decision which has placed the operation of the society in grave difficulties, since the new Secretary has proved unreliable and has resigned in less than a year.

Far from supporting solidarity with socialist Albania, Baker has now descended to the depths of the gutter capitalist press in suggesting that such solidarity is linked with "foreign espionage", as when he denounces Comrade WB's

". . . association with Albania"
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 4)

as having

". . . deeper and more sinister aspects . . . which we cannot go into here".
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 4).

Baker's hostility to the Albanian Society, however, goes back much further than his hostility to socialist Albania. Even when he favoured solidarity with Albania, he objected strongly to the Constit-

ution of the society, maintaining that, if it was not to be an "opportunist organisation" it must adopt a Marxist-Leninist position on the facets of Albanian policy which it reported factually -- that it must praise those facets which were in accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles and denounce those which were not. This is clear from his demand that the society should adopt a

"... working class and socialist orientation",
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 4).

that is, a Marxist-Leninist orientation.

The majority of members of the MLOB opposed this viewpoint as "left-sectarian" in character, one which would have effectively alienated from it all those who, while favouring solidarity with Albania and desirous of receiving factual information about it, had not yet reached a Marxist-Leninist position. Had this policy been adopted, it would have transformed the Albanian Society from a broad front with correct, if limited aims, into the MLOB under another name.

Marxist-Leninists distinguish between the aims of the Marxist-Leninist Party and the more limited aims of broad front organisations, which aim to secure the allegiance of persons who support those more limited aims without necessarily accepting those of the Party.

The task of supporting those facets of Albanian policy which are in accordance with Marxism-Leninism, and of criticising those which are not, is the task of the Marxist-Leninist Party (or its nucleus). The MLOB fulfilled this role (e.g., in its critical letter to the APL) and this task has been continued by the CL.

Baker's position in relation to Albania has now become an anti-socialist policy, one in clear breach of all the principles of proletarian internationalism, one akin to that of the trotskyites in relation to the Soviet Union in the days when Soviet society was also socialist in its economic basis.

The folly of his "leftist" attitude towards broad front organisations is shown when he maintains that, although the Albanian society spread factual information about socialism in Albania; encouraged travel to it, fostered campaigns for the establishment of diplomatic relations, assisted in the organisation of official Albanian exhibitions in Britain, etc., the failure to adopt Baker's "left-sectarian" Constitution resulted only in

"... the subordination of the Society and its work to the interests of the bourgeoisie" !

(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 3).

The Question of the Allegation of the Indian Comrades concerning Comrade WB

I have raised with Comrade WB the allegation which, we understand, two of your leading Comrades have made to the effect that Comrade WB "lied" to them during his discussions with them in India in 1975. His reply is as follows:

"When, in the course of a political debate, allegations are made concerning my moral character, my usual response is to reply that I am not prepared to dispute the allegations (which is not equivalent to an admission of their truth). I do so because I find that a futile 'No, I'm not' 'Yes, you are' involves the side-tracking of the political issues under debate. Avoiding this, I can then say: 'Now reply to my political arguments!'

However, as you ask for my comments and as -- unlike the Comrades concerned in relation to myself -- I have a high opinion of the integrity of the two Comrades who make the allegation, I will break my usual practice.

The allegation that I informed the two Comrades that I had not withdrawn my expressed opinion concerning Scott's movement towards renegacy from the MLOB (when this opinion had been withdrawn) is without foundation.

I have gone over the detailed notes I made of my discussions in India, and I see that the letter from me referred to in the allegation was brought up in connection, not with the question of my withdrawal or otherwise of my expressed opinion concerning Scott, but with the view expressed by the two Comrades concerned that I had no moral right to criticise Scott's movement towards renegacy from the MLOB, when I myself had "threatened to resign from the MLOB".

I informed the Comrades that at no time had I ever contemplated resigning from the MLOB, whereupon they stated that they were in possession of a letter from myself to Baker in which I made such a threat. I informed them that no such letter had ever been written by me, and that any letter purporting to be from me which made such a threat was a forgery.

The copy of the letter brought back from India by Comrade HK is, indeed, a perfectly genuine letter from myself to Baker. It contains, however, no threat to resign from the MLOB, but expresses the view that, in all the circumstances, I should be replaced as Chairman of the MLOB by a comrade acceptable to all Comrades. (This action was, in fact, opposed by Baker at the time, and I did not press it).

Now, as to the question of my alleged "lie" to the effect that I had not withdrawn my expressed opinion concerning Scott's movement towards renegacy, the argument against this statement having been made rests, not on my word, but on the fact that it does not make sense. Leaving aside psycho-pathology (and this is not, I believe, suggested) someone who tells a lie must have a motive in so doing -- to strengthen falsely his own case, or to weaken falsely the case of his opponents. But the Comrades concerned were insistent that the MLOB majority, including myself, had been "unfairly harsh" towards Baker and Scott and had rendered it difficult for them to continue in membership of the MLOB. I emphatically disagreed with this view and pointed out various measures we had taken to facilitate their continued membership -- for example, the decision to regard Scott's resignation only as a suspension for three months, the decision not to publish any reasons for Baker's demotion, etc., etc. Clearly, therefore, for me to have "lied" to the effect that I had not withdrawn my expressed opinion concerning Scott's movement towards renegacy would have been directly counter to the case I was making.

That the Comrades concerned were, at the time, fully aware that I had made the gesture of withdrawing my expressed opinion concerning Scott is shown, as my notes of the discussion make clear, by the fact that they criticised this withdrawal as "hypocritical", in view of the doubts I had of the sincerity of Scott's denial that she had contemplated resignation from the MLOB (doubts which were confirmed by her resignation shortly afterwards).

Unlike the comrades concerned in relation to myself, I do not suggest that they have consciously misrepresented the facts. I do,

however, maintain that what has occurred raises psychological questions of political importance.

During my discussions with the comrades concerned, they agreed with me, I believe, concerning the extraordinary degree of self-delusion to which maoists may be subject: 'Mao is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of all time; therefore anyone who says otherwise must be evil; therefore there is no need to subject what they say to serious political analysis'.

I suggest that the 'leftist' inclinations of the comrades concerned has led them into a not dissimilar state of self-delusion: 'Baker is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of all time; therefore anyone who says otherwise must be evil; therefore there is no need to subject what they say to serious political analysis'.

I suggest that the desire of the comrades concerned to cling to their 'leftist' illusions, and their illusions concerning Baker, has led them, over the eighteen months since their discussions with me took place, has led them, no doubt subconsciously, to confuse the issues around my letter -- and also to confuse my puzzlement over my alleged 'letter of resignation' with embarrassment -- in an effort to avoid objective political analysis of the real issues which are at stake.

Were, indeed, my moral character as deplorable as the comrades concerned wish to think, this would have no bearing on the question of whether the political line of the CL is a Marxist-Leninist line or not. It is, whether the comrades are conscious of it or not, a 'red herring'.

The Freezing of the "Red Front Movement"

We understand that two of your leading comrades are under the impression that the majority of the MLOB voted to "dissolve" the so-called "Red Front Movement". This impression is not in accordance with the facts.

The resolution under which the MLOB set up the Red Front Movement called for it to be an organisation of sympathisers of the MLOB for the purpose of providing an organised "stepping-stone" for individuals who were prepared to associate themselves loosely with the MLOB, to undertake certain forms of political activity, etc., but were not as yet prepared to undertake the obligations of membership.

In principle, we favour the formation of such an organisation by a Marxist-Leninist organisation or Party when its organisational strength has reached the stage where this can be done effectively.

However, when the Constitution of the Red Front Movement was drawn up on the inspiration of Baker, its first aim was declared to be

"... to function as the inceptive nucleus of the future revolutionary mass front of the British working class".

(RFM: Announcement by Provisional Committee, in: "Red Front", July/August 1971; p. 32).

This is the main point of controversy which arose concerning the Red Front Movement, for the above "aim" is based on the "leftist", anti-Marxist-Leninist principle that the socialist revolutionary movement can be built up from above, that is, from outside the existing mass organisations of the working class.

It is, of course, axiomatic that the Marxist-Leninist Party must be built "from above", so that the MLOB/CL may be regarded as the "inceptive nucleus" of the British Marxist-Leninist Party. Lenin was speaking specifically of the Party when he wrote:

"The opportunists of Social-Democracy . . . want to proceed from the bottom upward. . . . The former (the revolutionary Social-Democrats -- BC) proceed from the top, and advocate the extension of the rights and powers of the centre in respect of the parts".

(V. I. Lenin: "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1944; p. 447-8).

But when referring to the building of the socialist revolutionary movement, as distinct from its vanguard, Lenin on countless occasions denounced and ridiculed the attempts of "leftists" to build this "from above" -- that is, from outside the existing mass organisations of the working class by the creation of new, artificial organisations (as has been shown earlier in the section on the trade unions):

"In order to be able . . . to win the sympathy, confidence and support of 'the masses', . . . it is imperatively necessary to work wherever the masses are to be found".

(V. I. Lenin: "'Left-wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 93-4).

"In all organisations without exception . . . groups or nuclei of Communists should be formed . . . and these nuclei . . . must systematically train themselves, and the Party, and the class, and the masses, by means of diversified work".

(V. I. Lenin: Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the 2nd. Congress of the CI, in: *ibid.*; p. 169-70).

"Every party that desires to affiliate to the Communist International must carry on systematic and persistent Communist work in the trade unions, the cooperative societies and other mass workers' organisations. In the trade unions it is necessary to form Communist nuclei which, by means of prolonged and persistent work, must win the trade unions for the cause of Communism".

(V. I. Lenin: "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", in: *ibid.*; p. 203).

In violation of this Marxist-Leninist principle, Baker, during the whole period in which he held the position of Secretary of the MLOB, attempted to put into practice the notion of building the socialist revolutionary movement "from above", that is, from outside the existing mass organisations of the working class by the creation of new, artificial organisations.

At the same time, a minority of Comrades consistently opposed this notion and practice, in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism and the Constitution of the MLOB -- as the following extracts from a document submitted to the Political Bureau in 1969 show:

"The achievement of socialist revolution in Britain requires the building of an anti-capitalist mass movement based on the working class.

At the last PB meeting two different lines of tactics were put forward for the building of this anti-capitalist mass movement.

The first line of tactics, which is the present line of tactics of the MLOB and is supported by a majority of PB members, is to establish so-called 'Action Councils'. . . as 'leading nuclei', the aim of which is to build up sections of this mass movement by winning masses of workers to their banners.

The second line of tactics put forward is to establish groups . . . to operate within the mass organisations of the working class. Such groups would participate in the activities of the organisation of which their personnel were members, would put forward an agreed line of action based on the principle of enabling the masses to raise their political consciousness stage by stage as a result of their experience in struggle. They would work to win the best elements in these organisations to participate in the planned activity of the groups, and the best of these in turn to membership of the MLOB. . . .

Under the first line of tactics, . . . these groups -- 'Action Councils' -- regard themselves as 'independent leading nuclei' of mass movements to be built around them; they seek to win the support of the working masses by approaching the working class as bodies

outside the mass organisations of the working class, . . . primarily by means of propaganda sent into the working class from outside the mass organisations of the working class.

But a cardinal principle of Marxism-Leninism is that the masses cannot be convinced, their political level cannot be raised, by propaganda alone, but only as a result of experience gained in struggle:

Revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses; never is it brought about by propaganda alone.

In order that . . . actually the broad masses of toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience'.

(V. I. Lenin: "Left-wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder', in: 'Selected Works', Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 126, 136).

The first line of tactics, the present line of tactics of the MLOB, involves the repudiation of the cardinal Marxist-Leninist principle that it is essential to work within the mass organisations of the working class in such a way as to assist the working masses to raise their political level stage by stage as a result of their experience in day-to-day struggle. It is, in fact, analogous to the line of tactics adopted by the German 'Left' Communists in the late 1910s . . . -- a line of tactics which Lenin denounced as 'ridiculous and childish nonsense'.

The so-called 'East London Action Council' is just such an artificial monstrosity as the clean, little 'workers' unions' set up on the initiative of the German 'Leftists'. It is a 'leading nucleus' which leads nobody.

Of course, to work for the setting up of Action Councils for the defence of working class rights and liberty, for the coordination of the workers' struggles on all fronts, etc., is correct in principle. But to set up 'Action Councils' completely artificially, before the membership of a single workers' organisation has been convinced of the need for such bodies, is rank 'leftism'. When correct Marxist-Leninist work has been carried on within the working class movement so that at least a number of workers' organisations have become convinced by their own experience of the need for such bodies, then indeed Action Councils will come into being. They will come into being as a result of the conscious desire of the masses. They will be genuine Action Councils and not sham bodies, such as the present 'East London Action Council'.

The supporters of the first line of tactics claim that the second line of tactics is 'too difficult', while the first line of tactics is 'much easier'. Of course, it is always much easier to set up artificial committees, to retreat from reality into a cloud-cuckoo-land of illusion, than to undertake arduous revolutionary work among the working masses over a considerable period. But there is no short-cut to revolution which can avoid this work of leading the working masses stage by stage to a conviction that revolution is necessary.

The depths of self-delusion to which supporters of the first line of tactics have already sunk is instanced by the change of name of the 'East London Action Council', without change of content, to that of the 'Greater London Action Council'. One would not, indeed, be surprised to read that it has now called itself an 'All-Britain Soviet', to which all political power in Britain belongs. Children's games of 'Let's pretend' are, as the supporters of the first line of tactics correctly say, 'much easier' than Marxist-Leninist revolutionary work.

The repudiation in practice of Marxist-Leninist work within the mass organisations of the working class is associated with the

ideological view that has been put forward within the MLOB that the mass anti-capitalist movement must be built from above downwards.

Such a conception is fundamentally anti-Marxist-Leninist. . . . The first line of tactics involves the sectarian isolation of the most politically conscious workers from the masses.

The supporters of the first line of tactics claim that our forces are inadequate to adopt the second line of tactics. In fact, it is the formation of a number of 'independent nuclei', each of which must prepare, publish and distribute its own propaganda, etc., which requires a number of cadres in excess of those available. . . . The second line of tactics, on the other hand, can be adopted with any number of forces.

If the MLOB is to fulfil its role in beginning to build a mass anti-capitalist movement based on the working class, it is essential that it repudiate the anti-Marxist-Leninist first line of tactics and replace it by the second, Marxist-Leninist line".

That Baker continues to put forward the first line of tactics criticised in the above memorandum, now that the "restraints" of democratic centralism have been removed from him, is shown by his statement:

"A leading member of the Bland Group (sic!) has openly declared that he is prepared to work purely within revisionist and trotskyite-dominated organisations without any perspective of forming an independent organisation, a concept which he considers 'leftist'" (M. Baker: Letter to Indian Comrades, March 10th., 1975; p. 1).

It is, of course, quite incorrect to say that the CL does not have the perspective of the formation of "independent organisations" (this has already been dealt with in the section on the CPG) but we are satisfied that this can only be brought about, not by the creation of artificial "independent organisations" outside the existing mass organisations, but as a result of correct work within those existing mass organisations (which, of course, are necessarily dominated at the moment by social-democrats, revisionists, trotskyites, etc.).

Returning now to the Red Front Movement: by the summer of 1974, this consisted of three members, all members of the MLOB, with no prospective members within range of vision. Naturally, these comrades felt it somewhat of a futile waste of time to meet solemnly as the "RFM" in addition to attending MLOB meetings, and it was in these circumstances that a discussion on the future of the organisation took place.

Some comrades favoured the dissolution of the RFM, but a majority -- a majority which, incidentally, contrary to Baker's assertion, included Comrade WB -- held that the RFM had performed a useful function in the previous period in bringing sympathisers closer to, and into, the MLOB and favoured:

- 1) "freezing" the RFM until a new batch of sympathisers had been won who might be willing to participate in it without being prepared as yet to join the MLOB;

- 2) at this time, amending the Constitution of the RFM to make it clear that it was no more than a sympathisers' organisation;

- 3) to retain the name of the RFM "under patent", so to speak, by transforming it in the interim period into a publishing house for pamphlets along the lines of that already published by the RFM on Chile.

In the discussion on the second point above, Baker made a self-criticism of his role in framing the Constitution of the RFM, admitting that its primary aim had been an incorrect "leftist" deviation from Marxist-Leninist principles.

These proposals were supported by Baker.

The statement by Baker:

"RFM was sought to be 'put on ice' . . . , although we (presumably Baker and Scott -- BC.) opposed this"
(M. Baker: Letter to Indian Comrades, March 10th., 1975; p. 3)

is contrary to fact. Baker opposed, not the temporary freezing of RFM, but its dissolution.

His statement in the next sentence, that Comrade WB put forward

". . . the demand . . . to drop the organisation and the name"
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 3)

is also contrary to fact. Comrade WB, along with Baker, supported the proposals referred to above, which included retention of the name of the RFM.

And since the RFM was placed "on ice", it carried out no activities between the time of its freezing and November 1974, so that Baker's statement that, following its freezing, it

". . . threw overboard all the principles of the MLOB's policy on the RFM by going ahead with opportunist manoeuvres with trotskyite and revisionist elements"
(M. Baker: *ibid.*; p. 3)

is no more than the product of Baker's fevered imagination.

As I said earlier, the CL favours the formation of an organisation of sympathisers who are prepared to cooperate with the CL in certain fields of activity but not yet to join it, and it is our intention to form such an organisation when the CL's organisational strength permits. This will not, however, be regarded as the "inceptive nucleus" of the socialist revolutionary movement.

The Question of the Spode Statement

It is, we understand, the view of at least two of your Comrades that the CL should publish a detailed reply to the statement issued under the name of K. Spode:

Before dealing with this, we should like to summarise the events leading up to Baker's expulsion from the MLOB:

Autumn 1974: Comrade PT criticises Baker for "leftist" tactics and, on the sub-committee drafting the Theses on the Anti-Fascist United Front, opposes some of Baker's formulations. Baker ceases to call meetings of the sub-committee.

Oct. 28th., 1974: Spode presents to Chairman, Comrade WB, "charges" against Comrade PT, admitting that they have been inspired and drafted by Baker.

Oct. 29th., 1974: Spode, Baker and Comrade PT agree to "charges" being investigated by Chairman, Comrade WB.

Oct. 30th., 1974: Spode informs Chairman "too busy" to be interviewed by him on matter until Nov. 5th., when appointment arranged.

Nov. 2nd., 1974: Chairman interviews Comrade PT.

Nov. 5th., 1974: Spode cancels appointment with Chairman, having failed to send him written statement of "charges" as agreed.

Nov. 6th., 1974: Spode is found to have disappeared from her home. Baker professes ignorance of her whereabouts.

Nov. 8th., 1974: Spode found to have been concealed in Baker's flat for the past few days.

Baker found to have, without authority, taken possession of MLOB documents, literature and printing press from where they were stored by decision of the MLOB.

Chairman, Comrade WB, issues his report, concluding that the charges of breaches of the Constitution by Comrade PT were false, and that Spode had acted as tool of Baker in presenting them. Recommends removal of Baker from post of Secretary and demotion to status of Candidate Member.

Report circulated.

As Baker refuses to set date for meeting of MLOB (the last meeting having been arbitrarily cancelled by him on Oct. 28th.), Chairman, Comrade WB, at request of a number of Comrades, calls meeting for Nov. 13th.

Nov. 13th., 1974: Spode telephones Chairman saying she will have to be late for meeting and asks that starting time be delayed 30 minutes to enable her to be present. Request agreed to.

Baker telephones Chairman asking that meeting be postponed to give him more time to prepare his case. Chairman promises to place request before meeting.

Meeting held. Neither Spode nor Baker attend. ^{Baker's request} After discussion, meeting endorses Chairman's ^{REJECTED.} report and adopts recommendations. Comrade BC appointed Secretary in place of Baker. Baker and Spode informed of decisions taken.

Nov. 14th., 1974: Baker, writing as "Secretary of the MLOB", calls meeting for Nov. 16th. Agenda: "Disciplinary action against Comrade PT and, now, two other Comrades, including Chairman, Comrade WB."

Chairman and new Secretary validate meeting on Nov. 16th.

Nov. 16th., 1974: At meeting, Baker contends meeting of Nov. 13th. invalid. Meeting confirms decisions of that on Nov. 13th. Baker declares his refusal to accept any resolution removing him from Secretaryship. Motion to expel Baker from MLOB for gross violation of discipline" adopted.

Nov. 24th., 1974: Baker holds meeting which he claims to be a "meeting of the MLOB", despite his expulsion and despite fact that majority of members of MLOB not informed of meeting. Meeting resolves "to expel Comrades PT, BC and WB from the MLOB".

A recital of these events alone should be sufficient to convince any objective observer of the worthlessness of Spode's statement, which, prepared in collusion with Baker, was intended to provide "evidence" to support Baker's allegation that some at least of those members who had voted for his dismissal as Secretary had been engaged in "factional activity".

Now anyone can allege anything against anybody. Such allegations are worthy of attention only if the "witness" is prepared to be examined and cross-examined on the "evidence" on which the allegations are said to be based. Indeed, the right to cross-examine a witness

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for the "prosecution" must be considered as one of the democratic rights which the working class should struggle to retain. Not only was Spode manifestly unwilling to be cross-examined on either of her two statements, but in the case of her first statement she was unwilling even to be examined by the Comrade whom she had then accepted as an impartial investigator. This is understandable since, as those of our Comrades who were members of the MLOB at the time know, the alleged "factional meetings" referred to in Spode's statement never took place.

The value of Spode's alleged concern that the majority of Comrades in the MLOB were "moving towards revisionism" may be judged from the fact that she is now a member of the revisionist Communist Party of Great Britain.

The MLOB, before its change of name to that of the Communist League, did issue a reply to Spode's statement:

"The completely self-contradictory, spurious nature of this new manoeuvre (Spode's second statement -- BC) was revealed even at a quick reading of the statement which accompanied the new "charges":

1) by the fact that Comrade WB, accused of 'breaches of the MLOB constitution', was described as

'... always moving in a constitutional manner' (p. 6);

2) by the fact that Comrade WB, accusing of forming a 'faction' against Baker, was in the same document accused of seeking to form a 'faction' with Baker (p. 5);

3) by the fact that (as the minutes of the meeting show) Comrade WB, accused of forming a 'faction' with other comrades to bring about the winding-up of the Red Front Movement... (p. 5), spoke and voted against the motion to wind up the Red Front Movement, which was defeated;

4) by the fact that the deposition of 'charges' dated November 16th. alleged that 'evidence' that Comrade WB had been

'... engaged in disruptive, factional activity'

had been known

'... over a period of twelve months -- since, in fact, October 1973',

yet on October 28th., 1974 Comrade WB was asked by Baker and Spode to carry out an investigation of identical charges against Comrade PT, and was accepted by both as competent to carry out this investigation.

CLEARLY, THE EXTENDED 'CHARGES' INSPIRED BY BAKER WERE BROUGHT, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY FACTIONAL ACTIVITY WHICH INCLUDED COMRADE WB, BUT BECAUSE BAKER HAD BEEN MADE AWARE THAT THE REPORT OF COMRADE WB, AS CHAIRMAN, HAD FOUND THAT THE ORIGINAL CHARGES (against Comrade PT), WHICH HE (BAKER) HAD INSPIRED AND DRAFTED, WERE SPURIOUS"

(MLOB: Statement on the Expulsion of Mike Baker"; p. 3-4).

We maintain that this reply is more than sufficient to convince any objective observer of the worthlessness of Spode's statement, and that anyone who is not so convinced does not wish to be convinced. In our view, the publication of a further detailed reply -- which could merely state that this alleged meeting and that alleged telephone conversation did not take place -- would be unlikely to convince such a prejudiced observer and would, therefore, be a waste of time.

In various documents issued by Baker during the past eighteen months, Baker has admitted that the basic cause of the events which led up to his expulsion from the MLOB was the political fact that a group of members of the MLOB -- in fact, the majority -- did not

accept as valid his thesis of the "third stage":

"Two theoretical and programmatic tasks, to wit,

- a) the analysis of the new stage in the development of capitalism which we have termed corporate state-monopoly capitalism; and
 - b) the elaboration of the principles of the strategy and tactics of socialist revolution in developed capitalist countries,
- constitute the most fundamental basis and precondition for the building of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. . .

It was on account of their systematic and planned opposition to these most fundamental tasks of revolutionary theory and practice . . . that the liquidationist faction centred around W. B. (sic!) was expelled (sic!) from the MLOB".

(M. Baker: "Workers' Control"; London; 1976; p. 22, 23).

Since there was never the slightest disagreement within the MLOB on the importance of point b above, Baker is admitting that the "split" in the MLOB was brought about as a result of the opposition which he came up against in relation to point a -- his thesis of the "third stage".

This point is clarified in Baker's letter of March 1975:

"The overall assessment of Plekhanov-Bland is that he he fulfilled, up to a certain point in his development, a vitally important positive role in and through his contribution to the theoretical critique of modern revisionism. As this task, however, approached completion . . . the significance of . . . the analysis of the new stage of capitalism, corporatism, and the elaboration on that basis of the strategy and tactics of the proletarian-socialist revolution . . . began to assume a correspondingly greater significance. Bland was never able to accept this, since his theoretical apparatus was never able to develop beyond the formulations developed by classical Leninism".

(M. Baker: Letter to Indian Comrades, March 10th., 1975; p. 5) (my emphasis -- BC).

Thus, point b in the first quotation above has relevance to the "split" in that, as he admits in the second quotation, he wished that the strategy and tactics of the socialist revolution should be oriented on the basis of his thesis of the "third stage".

We reject, of course, the attempt to individualise the political principles involved in this controversy. Were Baker's thesis, in fact, a "creative development of Marxism-Leninism", then the description of the MLOB majority as "dogmatists" would be justified. But revisionists habitually refer to their abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles as "the creative development of Marxism-Leninism", and to those who remain loyal to Marxist-Leninist principles as "dogmatists" -- and we are completely satisfied that Baker's thesis of the "third stage" is a revisionist distortion of Marxism-Leninism which is objectively pro-fascist. Baker's descriptions of the MLOB majority as "Plekhanovists", "empirio-criticists", "liquidationists", etc., merely illustrate his predilection for using long terms as imprecations, without the slightest concern for their scientific meaning, in an effort to deceive political children as to his erudition. Anyone who is deceived by this kind of high-flown bluster is, indeed, far from being a Marxist-Leninist.

The events of November 1974 in the MLOB came about simply because -- as a result of the experience gained by Comrades, assisted by internal documents submitted entirely in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism and the Constitution of the MLOB -- the minority which had long opposed Baker's "leftist" theory and practice grew to a majority, which was unacceptable to Baker.

It may well be that Baker saw this change from a minority to a majority as having been brought about as the result of a "factional conspiracy"; but, if so, this view reflects, not reality, but Baker's own psychological make-up.

Had Baker declared openly that he regarded the "failure" of the majority to accept his theory and practice as "unacceptable", and that he intended to leave the MLOB in order to found a new organisation which would accept his theory and practice, we should, while disagreeing with his action, at least have retained some respect for his integrity. But, instead of adopting this course, Baker chose that of seeking to reduce the majority to a minority once more by disciplinary action against one or more members of the majority on the basis of "charges" which had no foundation whatsoever in fact.

The infantile egotism of the spoiled child who declares: "I must be Leader, or I won't play with you!" is manifested in Baker's revealing statement:

"To oust Maureen (Scott -- BC) and myself from leading positions . . . is tantamount to forcing us out of the MLOB altogether".
(M. Baker: Letter to Indian Comrades, March 10th., 1975; p. 2).

But, in fact, Baker's actions of November 1974 -- which amounted to a coup against the MLOB -- have the most serious political implications. They reveal that, not only is his theory and practice objectively pro-fascist, but that his concept of the Marxist-Leninist Party is a fascist concept -- that of an organisation composed of an irremovable "Leader" and of "followers", whose duty it is to accept without question the "infallible" pronouncements of the "Leader" and to put them into effect.

Conclusion

I must apologise for the length of this memorandum -- which length is due solely to our wish to deal with the political questions raised during Comrade HK's visit to India as fully as possible.

It is, naturally, a matter of great concern to us that some Comrades for whom we have the highest respect should have adopted what we believe to be a harmful "leftist" course, and that your organisation should have broken off relations with the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain, now the Communist League, in order to establish such relations with an individual who is prepared to trample underfoot every principle of Marxist-Leninist organisation. In our view, this course can only lead to your organisation becoming merely another "leftist" sect objectively serving the interests of the enemies of the working class, instead of the genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party which the working class of India so urgently needs.

We request, therefore, that this memorandum be circulated to your membership and be discussed within your organisation.

With warmest fraternal greetings, I am,

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Charnsey,
Secretary,
THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE,
Britain.