

EXPLOITATION
UNION LEADERS UNDERMINING
WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE
STRIKE AGAINST
RENT ROBBERY
IRELAND CLASS
U.S. RUSSIA
DEFEATED IN VIETNAM

The blatant exploitation of workers is seen in this exploitation by the fact that ideological employers

for coverage of all the important issues

Struggle

MONTHLY PAPER OF THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (M.L.)

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in this issue

Revisionism and the British
Anti Revisionist Movement

Notes on the Labour
Aristocracy in Britain, Part Two

Discussion: The Origins of
Revisionism in the USSR

MLQ is the theoretical journal of the
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The C.F.B. (M-L) is an organisation of Communists whose purpose is to help create the conditions to form a revolutionary party. The rising level of struggle against all oppression in Britain will not effectively challenge the ruling-class until the lessons of these struggles are widely understood by the working-class and its allies. A disciplined party guided by scientific socialism is needed to lead in this process of raising the struggle to a conscious political level.

No such party exists. The historical contradictions leading to the split in the international Communist movement in the early 1960's have not yet been resolved and the lessons applied to the actual conditions existing generally in Western Europe. Without this being done there will be no guiding political line and programme and no unity within the Marxist-Leninist movement.

The C.F.B. (M-L) is comprised of groups of Marxist-Leninists who have been working together since 1967 to aid in this vital task of forming a party. This process involves combining two forms of political work.

FIRSTLY: We study the main problems facing the British people and the world revolutionary movement, applying the scientific socialist method developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung.

SECONDLY: We engage in immediate struggles on the main issues of exploitation and oppression.

We believe that only in combining the lessons of both these forms of political work can a correct line be developed. Without such a guiding line and programme the struggles on all the vital and immediate issues will continue to demonstrate the treadmill characteristics of the last 150 years.

In developing this line we recognise the need to destroy the influence of social democracy, revisionism and Trotskyism - the main defeatist ideological trends which act to disarm the working-class.

We understand that as all these tasks are increasingly achieved it will become possible to build a mass revolutionary movement capable of withstanding ruling-class attacks and finally of overthrowing and smashing the present system and its State machine. The working-class and its party will then implement its own dictatorship over the present employing class to build socialism and prevent the restoration of capitalism.

Our basic policy document is 'The Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain; Origins and Perspectives' published in 1969. Readers wanting to know more about our policy and political work should contact their local group or the Secretary of the C.F.B.

Signed articles in M.L.Q. do not necessarily represent the political line of the C.F.B. (M-L).

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Editor's Note

The sales of M.L.Q. 2. considerably exceeded those of our first issue and the comments and criticism it provoked in various quarters leads us to believe that the upward trend will continue.

We said at the outset that we made no pretence to have a ready-made line on all the important issues facing the working-class movement today and that M.L.Q. would reflect the discussion and argument within the C.F.B. as we proceed towards the formation of policy on domestic and international questions. In this issue we carry the first discussion article on 'The Origins of Revisionism.' The argument will continue over future issues of the journal and we are sure it will attract the attention, and hopefully the contributions, of those outside the C.F.B.

In addition to the second part of the 'Notes on the Labour Aristocracy in Britain' we are publishing in M.L.Q. 3 as our leading article a survey of the development of the anti-revisionist movement in Britain during the 1960s. It is a long article and it necessarily treats its subject in some detail. In some respects it is an expansion of 'Origins and Perspectives' and is, we think, an important contribution to the theory of the party in Britain.

In M.L.Q. 4 and subsequent issues we shall be carrying articles on Ireland, the history of the Comintern, Peaceful Co-existence and internationalism, Zionism and Marxism and Womens' Liberation.

Revisionism & the British Anti-Revisionist Movement

The Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain and throughout the world has emerged in the course of a complex struggle with modern revisionism. In each country the situation and the struggle has had many individual features, but there have also been experiences and problems common to all countries. Revisionism has attacked the basis of Marxism-Leninism on such issues as the state, dictatorship of the proletariat, the party and imperialism. On these matters it has successfully diverted, in the short and medium term, parties and movements in many areas of the world. But its most fundamental blow at the world communist movement has been the strangulation of dialectical materialist knowledge and method in the old, now revisionist, parties. Without a knowledge of dialectics party members are unable to engage in political discussion of sufficient depth to unmask revisionism.

It is necessary to discuss the British Marxist-Leninist movement, its problems and course of development in relation both to the particular nature of revisionism in this country, and in relation to the world communist movement. Born in the fight against revisionism the Marxist-Leninist movement was shaped by the nature of that fight, collectively and individually and must be so understood. Revisionism and Marxism-Leninism are engaged in a struggle, not in isolation, but in close connection with the day-to-day class struggle in Britain and throughout the world. Thus problems of the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain cannot be understood in any depth without an analysis of its historical relationship to revisionism and the world communist movement. At the present stage the central problem of development faced by revolutionaries in Britain is the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist party.

THE C.P.G.B.

The nucleus of the anti-revisionist movement in Britain emerged in the course of struggle, against the Communist Party of Great Britain. These struggles, confined to a small number, resulted in expulsions and resignations in the early 1960's. The anti-revisionist movement, on a collective basis, can be said to date only from this time. Why should this be so?

It is a major weakness in the Marxist-Leninist movement that many of the objective reasons for the emergence of modern revisionism have yet to be identified and analysed. Objective and subjective factors were prominent in the development of the struggle in Britain. Although there had been many individual struggles against the revisionist line of the C.P.G.B. (1) - it was not until a polemic developed in the international communist movement that it was possible for groups of anti-revisionists to become established in Britain. The most important single reason why this should be so was the lack of basic philosophical training and practice in the

C.P.G.B. membership. Without an ability to apply Marxist dialectics to the current political situation the membership, debased in any case by unselective recruitment, were entirely at the mercy of a leadership that at best was weak and misguided, and at its worst cynical, corrupt, and opportunistic. Democratic centralism had been transformed into bureaucratic centralism, and discipline into suppression. Lenin's 'disciplined army of the proletariat' had objectively become an obstruction to the development of working-class politics. The political awareness and freedom of discussion of the membership simply did not exist as corrective factors.

But the development of this state of affairs in Britain also has an important international context. The revisionist leadership of the C.P.G.B. drew great authority and prestige from their connection with the international communist movement - from their connection with foreign parties engaged in massive, armed struggle, and of course, from their connection with the Soviet and east European party leaderships. The importance of such prestige as political support was (and is) particularly great in Britain because of the small size and relative political isolation of the C.P.G.B. It is not necessary to outline here and discuss the basis of the enormous prestige enjoyed by the Soviet party and its leadership. Perhaps it is important to remind ourselves that from the time of the establishment of the Soviet state its defence had been the main task and distinguishing feature of communists throughout the world. Endorsement by such a party was, to most communists, endorsement by living history, by the most powerful symbol of international working-class unity and aspirations. The low ideological state of the C.P.G.B. membership is not of itself sufficient to explain the lack of significant collective resistance to the introduction of the revisionist policies of 'The British Road to Socialism'. Members who opposed, or who had doubts about the correctness of such policies, were faced with the prospect of cutting themselves off not just from the British party, but from the whole world communist movement. (2).

For many members of the C.P.G.B., open and unwavering support for their party, and through that party, for the Soviet Union was a testimony to their political integrity. When bourgeois commentators sneer at the 'slavishness' of such party members they fail to remember the times. The Soviet Union and its party were a concrete manifestation of the hopes of millions and millions of ordinary working people all over the world. In themselves they might recognise that it had its warts, but to do so publicly was for them unthinkable. To do so was to align oneself with the imperialists, capitalists, social democrats, fascists and feudalists who were all united in their hatred for the Soviet state. Too many renegades and traitors had been warmly received, and had made comfortable livings from anti-communism and anti-sovietism in this country. Paradoxically, therefore, with the development of the anti-revisionist movement, it was many of the most active and staunch members of the C.P.G.B. who opposed it most vehemently. (3). The tragedy is that their staunchness and integrity had been manipulated by and capitalised upon by a self-perpetuating leadership concerned with their own power. (4).

If a central strength of the corrupt leadership of the C.P.G.B. had been their endorsement by the seemingly monolithic international communist movement, their position was severely shaken by the polemics in the movement in the late fifties and early sixties. At first muted and indirect, the polemics swiftly became open and specific. Anti-revisionists in Britain now had their political stand endorsed by an important section of the international movement. The subjective conditions long a major obstacle for many had now developed to a point sufficient to permit an open attack on the policies and leadership of the C.P.G.B. (5)

SUMMARY

Two important conditions enabled the revisionist leadership of the C.P.G.B. to maintain its position. The low state of knowledge and of practice of materialist-dialectics among party members, and the international endorsement of the leaders and policies of the C.P.G.B. The former condition arose from a variety of factors: the mass party - in particular the wartime and post-war influx of those supporting the stand of the Soviet Union; centralism without democracy in policy making, and the low priority given to ideological clarity as against uncritical mass work, particularly in the labour movement. (There were many other factors which must be documented and analysed fully if we are to learn from our mistakes). The condition of international endorsement is also complex and in need of careful analysis. The chief factor was the role of the Soviet Union as a symbol and distinguishing criterion. Support for the Soviet State, party and leadership, even if given at a relatively formal level, as in the case of the C.P.G.B., was evidently enough to secure admission to the international movement and its support. (6). For many C.P.G.B. members their own and others' political integrity rested above all on support for their party against all attacks, from whatever quarter, and through the C.P.G.B. support for the Soviet Union.

THE EARLY ANTI-REVISIONIST MOVEMENT

The issue of Stalin was an important and common first awakening for many anti-revisionists. This was, of course, not accidental. The world outlook of many communists had been based on a defence of Stalin's role and leadership. The impact of Khrushkhev's 'secret report' to the twentieth congress of the C.P.S.U. was widespread and diverse. For many it was a shattering of near-religious beliefs, and caused them to cut themselves off from all progressive politics. Others accepted the stand of the new Soviet leadership. This group included most of the members and leaderships of communist parties throughout the world. The symbol of Soviet leadership was stronger for many than the symbol of Stalin, whilst others were just uncritical or opportunist baton-followers. Another group rejected the Khrushkhev report. Some of this last group stayed in the C.P.G.B., and are a part of the group who now criticise the leadership on its attitude to the Soviet Union, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in particular. For those people Marxism has ossified into a set of absolute precepts. The other part of this group, that rejected Khrushkhev's report, took an anti-revisionist stand and were expelled from or left the C.P.G.B.

The basis of the anti-revisionist position of Stalin was a rejection of Khrushkhev's sweeping international and domestic policies, launched and justified under the pretext of the 'restoration' of Leninism and 'combatting the cult of the personality'. This issue of Stalin is still under consideration in the movement, but what is of interest here is that it was for many the first and easiest to grasp, formulated objection to modern revisionism. Anti-revisionists thus indicated their still close concern with the symbolism of the international communist movement. That system, based as it was on factors such as uncritical loyalty had undoubtedly played a highly progressive role, but with changing times and conditions had failed to develop and had been transformed into its opposite and had become reactionary. Although, therefore, anti-revisionists had adopted a progressive stance on this matter, a stance critical of modern revisionism, it is indicative of the background and low state of ideological development that this particular issue, of all issues, was the most significant for many. A section of the anti-revisionist movement has never managed to outgrow this still-subjective stage, which relied on dogma rather than investigation for its support. Indeed dogma and dialectics are still in major conflict in the anti-revisionist movement. Some comrades, right on the content of the particular issue of Stalin, were unable to see that it was not the changing of that content that was the issue between the revisionist and anti-revisionist positions, but the substitution of any dogma (pro-Stalin or anti-Stalin) for dialectics.

This question of Stalin has been cited at some length to make the point that much of the early anti-revisionist position was adopted and supported for subjective reasons. Just as open polemics between the Chinese, Albanian and other parties was a powerful, though subjective support of itself (irrespective of the content of the polemic which was objective support), so also the changing of the hitherto existing line on certain matters by the revisionists was of itself thought to be sufficient justification for the anti-revisionist stand. The anti-revisionist movement is transformed into a Marxist-Leninist movement insofar as it progressively recognises and discards subjective reasoning and justification for investigation and argument. Subjective motivation can be, and has been, progressive in the development of the communist movement. In our British conditions it was a necessary condition for development. But unless recognised for what it is and replaced by objective justification of policies it can become a highly reactionary feature, a major obstruction to political advance.

With a partial and subjective understanding many moved to an anti-revisionist position on the question of Stalin. For others the issue was that of 'peaceful transition', or the Soviet leaders' transmutation of the Leninist policy of peaceful co-existence into great power politics. A common feature of many at the time, however, was the inability to see how all these matters of policy were necessarily linked to modern revisionism, and how this, in turn related to economic and social developments in the world at large, and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in particular. (This last stage of understanding has yet to be substantially dealt with by

the international communist movement).

In this situation the position of many anti-revisionists regarding the C.P.G.B. itself was far from clear. Many thought that it was merely a question of policy, and that the C.P.G.B. could be put back on the revolutionary path by changing its policies in an appropriate way. These comrades thus thought that the C.P.G.B. could be transformed from within. They did not see that the C.P.G.B. was rotten through and through, and that its policies, structure and inner-party life were all corruptly and necessarily connected. One of the first internal polemics in the anti-revisionist movement concerned the question of whether the revisionist party could be reformed, or whether it had to be smashed. Given the level of knowledge the now untenable position of some that the C.P.G.B., if it were not for its policies, was still the most progressive party in the country, is nonetheless understandable. A large section of the anti-revisionist movement, even when they saw the need to smash the C.P.G.B. did not fully understand why. They thought that all that was needed was to leave the revisionist party and go into a Marxist-Leninist party, with new slogans, and new leadership, and new allies in the international communist movement. There was no real understanding of the size of the problem that had to be tackled if the working-class movement in Britain was to advance.

THE C.D.R.C.U.

The fetishism of the party, seeing the organisation as an end in itself, and not as a living political body and contribution to the class-struggle, entered into the anti-revisionist movement from the earliest stage. Many who left the C.P.G.B. behind brought with them the political expectations of revisionism. Disturbed by revisionist policies many were equally disturbed by the disunity within the anti-revisionist movement. They wanted all anti-revisionists to be united as soon as possible into a brand-new party which could then work out correct policies. Many who were vocal opponents of revisionist policies stayed in the C.P.G.B. on the grounds that they would wait until the new party was formed before leaving. There was a failure to take responsibility oneself for the work necessary to build a new party, indeed, no clear concept of a Marxist-Leninist party existed for almost all comrades. There was a hope that leadership would somehow or other emerge. Rumours circulated about divisions on the E.C. of the C.P.G.B., and on the basis of past record this revisionist leader was assessed hopefully against another as a possible future leader of a new party. The lack of confidence in oneself, the failure to realise responsibility, may be called 'the man from London attitude'. There was a hope in the various groups that secret moves were under way and that they would soon be told what the new party and new leadership required of them. A man would come from London, or Glasgow, or anywhere but where the group itself was.

Bearing in mind the variety of factors that shaped the political outlook of those who took an anti-revisionist stand in the early sixties, the approach to party building of the Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity was inevitable. The C.D.R.C.U. was a direct response to the subjective needs of a section of the anti-

revisionist movement for an instant party, legitimated by international recognition and providing ready-made policies, formulae, and leadership. By the very manner of its origin, by its outlook and aspirations the C.D.R.C.U. could not possibly have made a positive contribution to party building in Britain. (7). Anti-revisionist in name and (for most of those involved) in intent, it brought into the anti-revisionist movement some of the chief features and incorrect political expectations of organisation that characterised the revisionist C.P.G.B.

By 1963 various hitherto isolated individuals and groups adopting an anti-revisionist position had come together for discussions and in an attempt to co-ordinate work. A central issue, as has been mentioned, was whether the C.P.G.B. could be transformed from within or whether a new political party was necessary. Michael McCreery and others later in the C.D.R.C.U. to their credit supported the creation of a new Marxist-Leninist party. But McCreery and his supporters split with those who also supported the building of a Marxist-Leninist party. The basis of the split ostensibly was the timing and means of achieving the new party. At a meeting in London in the autumn of 1963, McCreery and his supporters presented an ultimatum in the form of a document entitled "Appeal to all Communists from Members of the C.P.G.B." If the others present at the meeting did not sign the document, then McCreery and his supporters would do so, it was stated. This they did, failing to carry the meeting with them. The document was published and, as expected, McCreery and the other signatories were expelled from the C.P.G.B.

The approach of McCreery and his C.D.R.C.U. rested on the premise that if leadership were provided the rank and file anti-revisionists would rally to it. In other words, they saw leadership in principally organisational rather than in political terms. Here was an acceptance of the 'man from London' attitude, and a determination to be that man. But if politics were not seen as the basis of leadership, what was? Specifically, the C.D.R.C.U. sought to erect an edifice that would attract those whose subjective needs were for a new Marxist-Leninist party, with the 'correct' slogans and international connections now. The C.D.R.C.U. was in essence a continuation of revisionism in the form of the party fetish, asserting organisation above politics, asserting form above content.

What was needed if the C.D.R.C.U. was to be quickly transformed into a new party? - obviously, members. With members and a new organisation, it was reasoned, the correct slogans and tactics could then be worked out. So the central problem was to attract membership. As the very concept of the C.D.R.C.U. rested on subjective and incorrect analysis, it is hardly surprising that organisation rather than politics were seen as the means of attracting a membership and thus opening the way for future development.

ORGANISATION VERSUS POLITICS

The C.D.R.C.U. was established in November 1963. By February 1964 it published the first issue of its journal 'Vanguard'. Anyone with experience of setting up a new publication must realise that the only task of the C.D.R.C.U. in the intervening period must have been the work necessary to produce this publication. The effort required was considerable, and the numbers involved in the C.D.R.C.U.

were small. But the effort was organisational rather than political; a task carried out by a small group of 'leaders' in an attempt to attract members, rather than an outcome of political building and a response to the needs of political developments which had already taken place. For a journal to be established on the correct political basis it is not enough that it should attempt to adopt the right slogans. It should be the outcome of the political work of an organisation involved in political struggle. Only in that way can it serve the needs of the struggle. A paper that is not the result of involvement in struggle will be academic, lifeless, and sterile. Lenin's observation on agitational papers rested on this same reasoning. To found a working-class paper, he said, it was necessary to "start it not as a business (as usually newspapers are started in capitalist countries), not with big sums of money, not in ordinary and usual manner, - but as an economic and political tool of the masses in their struggle. Either the miners of this district are capable to pay halfpenny daily (for the beginning weekly, if you like) for their own daily (or weekly) newspaper (be it very small, it is not important) - or THERE IS NO BEGINNING of the really communist mass movement in this part of your country. If the Communist Party of this district cannot collect few pounds in order to publish small leaflets daily as a beginning of the really proletarian communist newspaper - if it so, if every miner will not pay a penny for it, then there is not serious, not genuine affiliation to the Third International." (8).

Lenin's observations on the building of the mass movement were equally applicable to the building of the anti-revisionist movement. If a paper was to help in the building of that movement it had to reflect the political and organisational level of that movement. Only thus could it help to resolve the problems of raising political levels and organisational experience. It is necessary for a journal to be involved in the real organisational and political problems of the movement. Such a paper could not be launched as a business, 'bought' for the movement with a large sum of money. Indeed, insofar as McCreery and his supporters attempted to do this they were acting in a revisionist manner. The press of the C.P.G.B. had long since ceased to reflect the real problems of that organisation, reflecting the political and organisational experiences of members. The revisionist press was supplied as a service to help keep intact the revisionist organisation. This function of the revisionist press was as incorrect as the content of the publications often were. The C.D.R.C.U., wittingly or unwittingly, whilst in much of the content of their journal attempting to adopt an anti-revisionist line, in the method by which they founded it were acting in a revisionist manner. Nor is this surprising. The political experience of all the leading figures involved had been shaped by revisionism, and a long process would be required if they were to ever be able to recognise the revisionist components of their basic political outlook.

Vanguard, the paper of the C.D.R.C.U., rested on the funds of one man, Michael McCreery. McCreery's private means were the chief resource for the journal, and were also the chief resource for the political and organisational work of the C.D.R.C.U. The journal was lavish in size - sixteen well composited and illustrated pages. The entire resources of all those organisations who today, after ten

years of growth and development, describe themselves as Marxist-Leninist, could not produce such a journal as McCreery produced with a literal handful of people.

The first issue of Vanguard serves well to illustrate the political outlook of the C.D.R.C.U. - its inability to 'put politics in command'. The lead article, by McCreery, was entitled "The Way Forward". In many ways this was a succinct statement of the anti-revisionist position (with the addition of McCreery's own position on the national question, which led him to call for separate parties for England, Scotland and Wales). But what analysis was there of the historical background and immediate political problems of the anti-revisionist movement? None! Yet without such an analysis how could the various individuals and groups begin the process of emancipating themselves from revisionism and establishing a Marxist-Leninist political analysis in Britain? Although in his article McCreery quite rightly attacked the C.P.G.B. for its lack of political education and its suppression of politics, there was no discussion of the impact of this feature of the C.P.G.B. on the anti-revisionist movement. This shows clearly that McCreery was objectively in the same camp as those who sought to reform the revisionist C.P.G.B., and did not see that revisionism characterised and arose from the structure and methods of work, linked indissolubly with the policies. They put organisation and form above politics and content. McCreery and his supporters did exactly the same thing. The central problem to them was a new form of organisation. Little real attention was paid to content, including the historical background of the movement. There was no recognition that organisation had to be treated politically, and as subordinate to politics. When dealing with how the new party should differ from the old revisionist party, the only organisational difference that McCreery mentioned was the re-establishment of factory branches, as the main form of organisation. Yet the abolition of factory branches as the main form of organisation in the C.P.G.B. was not the cause of revisionism, just as the adoption of incorrect analyses and slogans were not the cause of revisionism. Failure to analyse the rise of revisionism from within the processes of the C.P.G.B. itself, and within its international context, showed that McCreery, whatever his subjective motivation, however much he condemned the C.P.G.B. teaching on the state, its line on China, etc., could not free himself from revisionist ideology.

Other features of the first issue of Vanguard also reflected its incorrect basis. With the objective of recruiting support, and copying the C.P.G.B. use of international endorsement as a means of securing a position of leadership, great use was made of international greetings. A message from Enver Hoxha was printed - "I wish you success in your very noble struggle against imperialism and modern revisionism for the unity of Marxist-Leninist Communists in your country, for the triumph of peace, freedom, democracy and socialism in the world." There is nothing exceptional in that letter, and British anti-revisionists welcomed the political support given by the Albanian Party of Labour. What was incorrect was the context of the letter and the way in which it was used. This letter was being employed, not as a support to the British anti-revisionist movement as a whole, but to a tiny part of it - the C.D.R.C.U. This letter was not featured prominently in Vanguard

for its political significance, but for its organisational significance. This was as much an appeal to the subjective, revisionist conditioned feelings of the anti-revisionist movement as was any use of endorsement from abroad by the revisionist C.P.G.B. leadership. The use of this letter, seen in the context of the objective of publication, was a clear revisionist act. Likewise was the publication of the second international greeting from Jacques Grippa, at that time leader of a substantial breakaway from the Belgian C.P., known as the Brussels Federation of the Belgian Communist Party. (9).

Other contents of Vanguard also reflected the obviously intended desire to create an impression of size and widespread support. There were unsigned and differently signed articles written by McCreery and his associates, displayed in order to present an exaggerated picture of the number of people involved. Three full pages of letters had been written mainly by individuals in the small group associated with McCreery, in an attempt to create an impression of countryside support. There were advertisements for Albanian and other publications, agreeable enough in themselves, but in this context actually drawing attention to international connections and support.

By issue No.9 (October 1964) a Central Committee complete with a Secretariat was announced. The function of the secretariat was to "determine the general line and policies of the C.D.R.C.U." So just as McCreery had provided an 'instant journal' for his organisation, now he was going to provide politics - and all without the pain of political discussion, investigation and learning by the membership. For years the bulk of the C.P.G.B. membership had taken their politics painlessly from the provided party journals, and McCreery and his associates followed the same method of work - of course the politics given to the membership would be 'anti-revisionist' politics! Bogus regional committees for Scotland, Wales, Lancashire and Yorkshire were said to have supported the formation of the 'Central Committee' and the 'Secretariat'.

In March 1965 Vanguard reported McCreery ill. The very next issue departed from monthly publication, and was reduced in size and quality of production. McCreery died in April 1965. Only four regularly published editions followed his death. (Three bi-monthlies and a monthly.) Regular production ceased in October 1965. McCreery's money and other resources were no longer available, and the illusion had collapsed.

There was some half-hearted but revealing self-criticism in the August/September issue - "Initially some comrades expected overnight fireworks and a dramatic build-up of Marxist-Leninist forces - such optimism led to impatience and disillusion when progress was gradual..." There was admission, for the first time, that only a small nucleus had been involved and that the turnover of members of that tiny nucleus had been great. The grand-sounding 'Central Committee' and 'Secretariat' were exposed as the sham they had always been. The last regular issue, in October 1965 gave a list of achievements of the previous ten months. The achievements included what today would be considered a derisory increase (for a national organisation) in the circulation of their journal, and a small number of leaflets circulated. There was also the statement that "we have conducted several discussions with anti-revisionist

groups and individuals, both within and outside the C.P.G.B., with a perspective of united action" (p.16). This was the closest that Vanguard ever came to even a mention of the rest of the anti-revisionist movement. (10).

The C.D.R.C.U. declined to a rump with a constantly changing membership. Shorn of some of its delusions of grandeur, it made an appearance at a meeting of the Joint Committee of Communists in early 1969. (11). At that meeting it claimed that it saw its task not as the other groups did, in engaging in practical local work, and building theory through analysis and education, but rather as providing theory for the movement as a whole! Once an obstacle to the development of a genuine Marxist-Leninist movement the C.D.R.C.U. now exists only as a negative example.

SUMMARY

Modern revisionism cannot be understood merely in terms of incorrect and disruptive policies. Such a limited view led some in the early anti-revisionist movement to believe that the problem of development consisted merely of changing policies or of establishing a new organisation which could then pursue correct policies. In fact, the development of modern revisionism must be understood in terms of the relationship between policy, party structure and methods of work. The nature of the revisionist party and its policies are not accidental, but are necessarily linked. No revisionist party can be won to correct Marxist-Leninist policies in the long term. Revisionism must first be exposed and then routed in the smashing of revisionist parties and the construction of new Marxist-Leninist organisations.

An essential characteristic of the anti-revisionist movement is that it was called into being by the contradictions within the national and international revisionist movement. At one level it is a truism, but important all the same, to say that the anti-revisionist movement could not exist without the distortions of revisionism. There are however important implications here for the anti-revisionist movement. Anti-revisionists were themselves shaped by revisionism in their political expectations and organisational experience. For the anti-revisionist movement to develop it must recognise this, and by such recognition and continual analysis seek to become conscious of the full nature of revisionism in all political activity and organisation. Such organisation as the anti-revisionist movement constructs must have the objective of building consciousness, and must be in a form appropriate to the development of that consciousness and be capable of resolving the problems involved.

The C.P.G.B. had, at the time of the emergence of the anti-revisionist movement, long since made a fetish of the party. That is to say, they had transformed Lenin's requirements of democracy and centralism into political direction of the membership of the leading group. An attack on the policies of the leading group in the C.P.G.B. was portrayed as an attack on the party, and through the party on the entire international communist movement. Loyalty to the organisation was placed higher than loyalty to principled

political analysis and debate. The revisionist party provided newspapers, journals, pamphlets and so forth. A great part of the function of these publications was simply the maintenance of the revisionist organisation, and they were provided rather than an outcome of inner party political life and struggle. With low levels of political training and incorrect expectations of party organisations, many members saw loyalty to the organisation as the criterion by which friends could be distinguished from enemies. International endorsement was a central support for the revisionist leadership and a central deterrent for would be critics. Overall, it can be said that it was (and is) characteristic of the C.P.G.B. that organisation has primacy over politics, and that as an organisation it coheres on the basis of subjective rather than objective thought.

The C.D.R.C.U. continued the revisionist practice of placing organisation above politics, and met, therefore, the subjective needs of many anti-revisionists for a Marxist-Leninist organisation leading to a party, which once established, they thought, would be capable of putting forward correct analyses. The need, for them, was to have an organisation which would follow correct policies, rather than an attempt to discover the basis of revisionism, and thus be able effectively to combat it. In their subjective anxiety for a new party, in their desire to quickly overcome the divisions in the anti-revisionist ranks, these people failed to see that anti-revisionists had first consciously to emancipate their own political organisations and politics from revisionism. Without this process of examination, often carried on through debate and polemic, politics could not be put in command, and any new 'Marxist-Leninist' organisation would in essence be as corrupt and revisionist in essence as the C.P.G.B.

The techniques of revisionism of relying on a prominent display of their international connections, of providing an organisational facade to mask the sterility of their politics were continued by the C.D.R.C.U. which, although it may never have made it explicit, indeed it may not have been part of its consciousness, followed the same political line of the C.P.G.B. with respect to organisation and therefore failed to develop. Any organisation constituted on the basis of the C.D.R.C.U. would similarly have failed to develop into a Marxist-Leninist organisation.

It can be seen that, emerging as it does from the development of revisionism, the anti-revisionist movement develops insofar as it recognises and changes the revisionism in its own politics. With a predominantly subjective basis in its early stages, it is necessary for the anti-revisionist movement to progress increasingly to political consciousness and objective direction of work. To the extent that this progress from the subjective to the objective takes place the anti-revisionist movement develops, on a quantitative and qualitative basis, into a Marxist-Leninist movement. Progress from the subjective to the objective opens more and more issues and problems to assessment by revolutionary dialectics, and places the party increasingly in charge of its own fate, an effective revolutionary weapon of the working class, not simply responding to historical change but developing that change itself.

'THE MARXIST'

The next significant attempt seeking by revisionist methods to establish a national Marxist-Leninist organisation was the launching of the Marxist in November 1966. The journal was initiated and supported by a group of wealthy businessmen, largely engaged in trade with China. The previous year some of these businessmen had financed the production and distribution of a series of articles attacking revisionist policies in the period preceding the 1965 Congress of the C.P.G.B.

The Marxist, like the C.D.R.C.U. was in no way an outcome of political activity in the many Marxist-Leninist groups up and down the country. It was provided complete and intact without the support or participation of any group. The amount of money involved was large. The journal was expensively produced. Wages and accommodation for a full-time worker, M. Paulkner, were provided for almost a year. (12). Ownership was vested in a £100 limited company, Oasis Publishing Co. Ltd., with a registered office at Borough High Street, London S.E.1. Two shares in the company were taken up, one by a writer, and the other by an engineering worker. Jim Kean, the secretary, had no share holding.

The Marxist venture was based on a mechanical interpretation and application of Lenin's What is to be Done? In this article Lenin advocated the setting up of an all-Russian political journal which would serve to bring together the Marxist groups all over Russia. The articles would unite the groups politically, whilst distribution of the journal would bring about greater organisational cohesion. Obviously the problems of the Russian revolutionary movement in 1902 and the problems of the anti-revisionist movement in Britain over sixty years later could, at the least, well be different, but the Marxist group undertook no investigation of the problems, ideological, political and organisational, of the anti-revisionist movement. Even a cursory investigation of the nature and practice of British revisionism would have revealed to those concerned their incorrect approach.

With no investigation, an attempt was made which, objectively, would have destroyed the whole basis of the anti-revisionist movement in Britain, by destroying the groups. The tactics of the Marxist organisation were to set up Marxist clubs all over the country. These clubs would (a) support the Marxist organisationally, (b) discuss articles appearing in the Marxist and suggest new articles, (c) arrange educational syllabi, (d) engage in political activities, appropriate to members of the group. (13). Those concerned with the Marxist used whatever contacts they had in anti-revisionist groups, and also visited various parts of the country to attempt to further their ends. In most cases the tactics were to bypass existing groups and approach individual members directly. In some instances they succeeded in splitting and destroying groups.

This organisation had little overall impact. It lacked any real base, and was unable to contribute significantly to the development of the politics of most of the anti-revisionist groups then existing. The fact that it had been launched by wealthy

businessmen was uncovered and widely publicised, and though this fact in itself was not supported by any political analysis and a contrary indication of the correct path of development, it caused severe damage to the Marxist organisation and its ambitions. Politically and organisationally all it could offer was the mere vehicle of a journal, whose control and conditions of establishment were viewed with increasing suspicion on a subjective basis alone by most active groups. So far as is known, the chief revisionist feature of this organisation was its attempt to impose a facade without political investigation. It did not achieve the international connections of the C.D.R.C.U.

By August 1967 contradictions within the Marxist group had come to a head. It was decided on a subjective basis and without breaking out of the original erroneous concept completely, to put the journal more at the service of the groups.

However, the basis of work of this organisation still rested on an incorrect attitude towards the groups, and was still not based on any analysis of the development of the anti-revisionist movement. The journal was the legal property of one or two people and there was no real and honest attempt to involve groups in its future. It was seen as a provided service.

Not springing from the day-to-day political work and problems of groups, the Marxist, which at best involved only a few groups and a tiny part of the anti-revisionist movement, became less and less relevant. With sometimes notable exceptions, the majority of the articles were selected on an available basis, i.e. whatever suitable material presented itself. The journal more and more became an end in itself rather than a political means. Organisation, in the true revisionist tradition, was placed totally in command of politics, and subjectivism took the place of attempting correct political analysis.

Politically and organisationally quite isolated, this journal now appears irregularly and is the property of the Brent Industrial Group, whose political work is characterised by an aversion to theory, by sectarianism and, as would be expected, a spontaneist outlook. (14). As for the erstwhile founders and supporters of the journal who were not involved in groups, some have ceased to be politically active, others now work in groups, whilst a significant number joined the next opportunistic organisation that looked viable and presented itself.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

The origins and development of the C.P.B.(M.-L.) combine all the features of its true forerunners, the C.D.R.C.U. and the Marxist. This organisation, however, has survived for longer as an obstacle to the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain than did its predecessors. It will be dealt with in some detail here, and in a future article. The Communist Federation of Britain (M-L) regards the political exposure and destruction of this revisionist organisation as an important task in the building of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party.

The C.P.B. (M-L) was founded by and to a very great extent depends upon one man, Reg. Birch. Birch had a long and active experience as a member of the C.P.G.B., eventually becoming a member of the Executive Committee. His connection with the C.P.G.B. terminated in 1967 when he was expelled for being in correspondence with the leader of a Marxist-Leninist party abroad. A full-time official in the A.E.U., Birch's work for the revisionist C.P.G.B. had been in the industrial field. He had been the leading figure in the building up of an alliance in the A.E.U. to contest for union positions and influence in North London, and nationally. He was the C.P.G.B. and 'left' sponsored candidate for the presidency of the A.E.U. for a number of years.

Birch was involved, in a peripheral manner, with the Marxist organisation, even whilst still a member of the C.P.G.B. Outside of this and a section of the A.E.U. he had no known record as an anti-revisionist, though it is only fair to add that he had been known to have had 'rows' whilst a member of the C.P.G.B. E.C. But as the anti-revisionist movement was never involved in these rows they cannot be considered as part of an anti-revisionist struggle. Birch, like many others who have since repudiated their past, is on record as supporting the revisionist 'British Road to Socialism' and, as recently recorded, revisionist campaigns to increase production in the post-war period. (15). In the absence of any public record as an anti-revisionist, it has been argued in his favour that his break with the C.P.G.B. damaged his career prospects in the A.E.U., as it deprived him of the support of C.P.G.B. endorsement for the presidential elections in 1968. But this may well have been why he was exposed in impermissible activities by the C.P.G.B. leadership, and then expelled, rather than taking an open political and organisational stand against revisionism in the ranks of an anti-revisionist movement that had, at the time of his expulsion, existed for at least seven years. It is significant that Birch at this time refused to make any public political statement.

However much scepticism there may be, in retrospect, it must be said that Birch, when first involved with the anti-revisionist movement in 1966/67 had a formidable reputation. He was the first, the only, E.C. member of the C.P.G.B. to have taken an implicit anti-revisionist position, by allowing his name to be associated with the Marxist. Marxist-Leninists have always recognised the powerful role that leadership can play, and before exposing himself as an opportunist in the anti-revisionist movement, many who subsequently became his bitter political opponents hoped that he would play an important part in the development towards a genuine Marxist-Leninist movement.

In August 1967 Birch visited China. Whilst there he had talks, as many had before him, with members of the C.P.C. Whilst Birch was still in China, his wife, in collaboration with A.E.U. contacts, arranged a meeting of anti-revisionists which was to take place on his return. There are two important points that should be made concerning the circumstances of this meeting. Firstly the fact that it was announced whilst Birch was still in China. The significance of the C.P.C. as a leading force in the international Marxist-Leninist movement was based on an objective

achievement and contribution of massive proportions. However, the sum of the C.P.C. also had an important subjective impact on the British anti-revisionist movement. Although the C.P.C. was not directly involved in the meeting the implication was that Birch had been informed by the C.P.C. that it supported the immediate formation of a Marxist-Leninist party in Britain and had asked him to act. Secondly, the organisation of the meeting was not done by a group but by individuals. Birch had not been a member of any group active in the anti-revisionist movement. So how could his wife and friends determine to whom the invitations to a meeting should go? How did people with no political experience of the anti-revisionist movement recognise the political characteristics of anti-revisionism? This is all aside from the basic problem confronting the largely subjectively-based anti-revisionist movement of what revisionism in British conditions actually was.

It was in this manner that there was collected together a group of initially 44 people at the Conway Hall on 12th September 1967. The meeting started at 11.00 a.m. Birch, who opened, made a short speech that contained much that can now be seen to be the revisionism and opportunism of his position. He first of all asked the meeting to forego the election of a chairman. He said that the 'I' used in the circular which had convened this meeting did not mean that his standing was high or that his knowledge was superior. Referring to the motley composition of the audience - some people from groups, many just individuals, whilst some important groups had never been notified at the meeting at all - he said that the blame was all his; he never carried names and addresses for security reasons. This was his entire explanation for the calling of a meeting that did not, organisationally or politically, reflect the composition of the anti-revisionist movement, but which would, nonetheless, it emerged, take a decision that was of great importance for the future of the anti-revisionist movement. One of the attributes required of full-time union officials is organisational ability, and Birch is noted as a capable employee of his union. His total experience of meetings of all kinds is immense, so that many attending that first meeting found it hard to accept his explanation, especially, as it emerged that whereas most groups that were represented had one or possibly two people there. Birch, in his 'random' invitations, had secured a very substantial attendance by his friends and supporters, who made appropriate contributions at appropriate times.

Birch next informed the meeting that contrary to belief (and the rumours that had begun to circulate during the previous months) there was no Marxist-Leninist group in the A.E.U. Some of the union group which had worked together were still members of the C.P.G.B., and would not affiliate to any of the groups, in London or elsewhere. (He did not explain in any terms why this should be so). It was inevitable, Birch said, that people would adhere to a Marxist-Leninist position following the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. The fragmented nature of the Marxist-Leninist groups could not be avoided. However, he said, we cannot excuse the present position in which there is no revolutionary party in Britain. Birch's speech up to this point showed that he regarded the existence of groups as unhelpful to the development of a Marxist-Leninist movement. He showed no awareness of the fact that they

were, in British conditions at least, the anti-revisionist movement, and that their polemics and analyses represented, for better or for worse, the entire attack that had been made, with Marxist-Leninist intent, upon the revisionist C.P.G.B.

Birch then turned to the future. If 'we' continued with the development of groupings without a centre there would be no progress towards a party. Groupings would simply proliferate. Positions would come to be drawn, people would arrive at different stages of development, and various people would set up to be a party. We need a party, but how do we go about it? Once again, despite the highly ironical reference to "people who would simply set up a party", Birch showed that he saw the groups and their political activities in a negative light. Yet from a Marxist-Leninist point of view, indeed against the whole history of Marxism, possibly the most important contribution that the groups were making was the drawing up of positions. Without the drawing of clear political lines there was (and is) simply no future for the revolutionary movement in Britain: Birch quite clearly revealed that his perspective for development did not for one moment begin from investigation, and was in fact based upon the revisionist priority of organisation over politics.

More irony and double-talk followed. Should we use Birch's standing to set up a party, asked the man himself, and then replied with a firm 'No!' We must form a provisional committee on which there would be representation. This committee should arrive at a constitution and a programme. All those present in the room, said Birch, must have something in common, otherwise they would not be there. But in any case, he at the end of the day would still go ahead. (Author's emphasis). He hoped that the discussion would not centre around the way in which the meeting had been called. Birch had used this standing to call that very meeting, and his standing was to be the main, indeed sole, support of the organisation that came out of the meeting, so his statement of intent was a straight-forward lie, designed to anticipate criticisms. The phrase "on which there would be representation" later acquired significance, and its use shows that even at an early stage Birch knew exactly what he was doing. When his 'Provisional Committee' was formed, Birch and his supporters made on-the-spot nominations. Individuals were nominated on exactly the same basis as representatives of groups. In this way, just as he had packed the meeting itself, Birch and his supporters packed the Provisional Committee (a technique long used by the revisionist C.P.G.B. in union and other broad-front work). The only real politics that mattered in this situation were thus suppressed. The statement that all those who were in the room must have something in common is a tautology and platitude, yet this was Birch's only reference to the divisions in the anti-revisionist movement. Historically, this was the only justification he put forward for his actions. But whatever pretences adhered to the tautology, he brushed aside when he stated that in any case, whatever was decided he was going ahead at the end of the day. Birch's standing would be used and this packed meeting was no more than a figleaf.

However, to understand why Birch's erroneous and revisionist

politics succeeded at that meeting (in the sense that they were not fully exposed) it is necessary to point out that much of the political understanding of the Communist Federation of Britain (M-L) that exists today actually grew out of the experience of Birch's early tactics and subsequent organisation. Comrades attending the meeting were not, at that time, fully capable of explaining why groups were essential at that stage if the movement was to develop. Comrades spoke of the negative experience of McCreery and the C.D.R.C.U., and the Marxist (indeed Birch himself was at some pains to deny any connection between the Marxist group and his actions). They spoke of the need to consult groups, and of loyalty to groups. One or two even spoke of "putting politics in command". What they did not do was to show that in the particular situation the whole basis of the movement was the groups, and that "putting politics in command" meant the support of their development, and that in that situation any other action was incorrect and opportunist. (The groups constituting the J.C.C., Communist Federation of Britain (M-L) had to learn from the example of the C.P.B. (M-L) and others the lessons which they applied in their important document analysing the anti-revisionist movement, (The Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain: Origins and Perspectives). Birch's undoubted manipulative skills are only a part of the reason why he was not politically exposed at that meeting, and the low political understanding of the anti-revisionist movement must also be considered.

Concerted opposition to Birch was small, and as has been said, not fully effective. The opposition group was two or three in number, and argued from a largely subjective and empirical base. Much larger was the group that was in complete disarray and did not know where to turn when faced with Birch's reputation as an industrial leader, and by the cleverly implied endorsement of the Central Committee of the C.P.C. There was a widespread echoing of the opposition group's criticism of the manner in which the meeting had been constituted, but it would not be unfair to say that this was the highest level of unity against Birch's opportunism. The low level of unity and political argument unfortunately was an accurate reflection of the stage of development of the anti-revisionist movement. (16). At the end of the day, Reg. Birch and his supporters did go ahead and set up the Provisional Committee of the British Marxist-Leninist Organisation. The anti-revisionist movement had shown itself still incapable of resisting the revisionist methods of work formerly demonstrated in the C.D.R.C.U. and the Marxist organisation. But in many ways this meeting was an important catalyst for the building up of a political awareness sufficient to limit the influence and damage caused by Birch's future party.

Many of the organisations and individuals who had expressed doubts about or opposition to the action of Birch and his supporters nonetheless attended the first meeting of the newly founded Provisional Committee. In some cases this reflected the already existing threat of a split in their groups, if attendance had not taken place. This was held on 14th October 1967 at Birch's house. The lack of clarity among the groups on the one hand, and the united manipulation of Birch and his supporters on the other, which had characterised the 12th September meeting, continued. Some other groups - from Birmingham and Oxford attended

this meeting and complained that they had been told by a Birch supporter (Hannington) that the October meeting had been an internal meeting of the A.E.U. group. There was an unconscious truth and farcical element in Hannington's apology, and as this was the main reservation or objection expressed by either the Birmingham or Oxford groups, it serves further to show the low state of development of the groups at that time, and indeed of the J.C.C. of which they were member groups.

But this and more substantial objections to the previous meeting were brushed aside by Birch who announced that there could be no going back to the first meeting. Likewise, there was to be no discussion of the question of the weight of representation, as between individuals and groups, on the new committee, Birch announced. The Joint Committee of Communists (J.C.C.) poor as its political level was at the time, nonetheless attempted, according to that level, to place the whole meeting on a different footing by proposing that instead of proceeding with the existing meeting a co-ordinating committee should be formed and given the task of calling a new meeting of groups and other interested parties in 'four to six weeks' time, which could then go ahead, on a proper footing, to make the preparations for the formation of a party. Inasmuch as this proposal can now be seen to be, it did represent some rejection of the opportunism of the Birch group. This was simply rejected by Birch and the meeting went ahead to discuss the proposals for the work of the Provisional Committee that Birch had drafted. In fact, there was no political discussion allowed at this meeting, in the sense that no questioning of the Provisional Committee's relationship to the anti-revisionist movement was allowed. The 'political discussion' was confined to Birch's draft document and how best to proceed on the basis of the existing committee. The items discussed, therefore, were how a draft programme for the proposed communist party could best be delegated out to those present and the election of a 'Secretariat'. (17). It was stated that an office should be obtained as soon as possible, and that in the meantime Birch's address would be used. A treasurer was elected and a number of financial contributions were made there and then. (18). It was agreed that as an immediate activity there should be a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution. Also discussed were the relations of groups with foreign organisations. (Until the new party was established, Birch stated, the groups could have links with foreign organisations). It was also announced that the question of which groups should be 'recognised' would be considered by the secretariat. With the conclusion of this meeting the Provisional Committee was well on the way to the establishment of a bogus 'Marxist-Leninist' party. (19).

This meeting was the last to have any representation from groups. The Oxford group - one of the smallest and least experienced of the J.C.C. groups (who were small and inexperienced enough in themselves) - joined the Provisional Committee. The Communist Workers' League (a mainly Bristol-based group) was divided on the issue and was a member for two months. Generally, however, it is a tribute to the integrity of the bulk of the still poorly developed anti-revisionist movement that Birch and his supporters remained isolated from the October meeting onwards.

The position of the Provisional Committee, that it could not talk or act with any group on an equal basis because it was of itself of a different order of political organisation, was an important subjective factor contributing to its isolation. The important objective factor was that any discussion the Provisional Committee had could only, as with McCreery before it, be on the basis of why the other party should unite with it. The real problem of how and why the Provisional Committee existed at all could not be considered. In a very real sense, therefore, there could be no principled discussions at all, even though the Provisional Committee had played lip-service to their necessity - after they had taken their unprincipled stand! The Provisional Committee went ahead with the organisational procedures it had laid down and the so-called Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), an organisation born of blatant manipulation and opportunism and the negation of Marxist-Leninist politics, was founded on 12th April 1968. By this time the greetings of the Provisional Committee to foreign communist parties on special occasions had appeared in the Chinese and Albanian press, as had some of their other statements. Secure with such implied endorsement (at that time extended to them alone) the new party procured an office from the A.E.U. and launched a monthly paper, 'The Worker', in January 1969. (20).

CONCLUSIONS

The Provisional Committee of the British Marxist-Leninist Organisation and the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) which it set up followed the revisionist methods of work of its predecessors the C.D.R.C.U. and the Marxist organisation closely. An organisational facade and international endorsement were used, as substitutes for politics, to win the support of the British anti-revisionist movement. There was no analysis of the origins of the anti-revisionist movement, and the contradictions within it. Implicitly and explicitly the groups, who in their polemics and organisation were revitalising the Marxist movement in Britain, were treated as obstacles. In one important sense, of course, they did constitute an important obstacle to the intentions of the Birch group. They no longer paid homage to the organisational facade which was presented to them. Increasingly they demanded political justification, even against endorsement from revered foreign parties. The experience of the C.D.R.C.U. and the Marxist had strengthened the movement.

The Birch group was more successful than either of its predecessors for a number of tactical reasons. It did not have the stigma of 'rich men's money' that attached to both the C.D.R.C.U. and the Marxist. Birch had a high reputation - based partly on the fact that he was the only member of the E.C. of the C.P.G.B. to be associated with the anti-revisionist movement - but mainly on his involvement in trade union organisation and industrial conflict. Many illusions existed in the anti-revisionist movement at that time about the way in which industrial struggle was important. Some of these illusions were of a spontaneist nature, others were direct imports from the C.P.G.B., and as far as they were consciously held at all confused the historical role of the working-class as a whole, with individual political standing.

According to this 'feeling' (it rarely became more explicit than that) an industrial worker was intrinsically somehow or other more valuable than a non-industrial worker or an intellectual. Birch quite deliberately used both his standing and the misconception about the strength and political quality of the A.E.U. organisation as valuable assets in his fight to win support on a subjective basis. A further distinction between the Birch group and its predecessors was that organisationally the Birch group was highly effective. It had shown that in north London union work. But even the fact that they had worked together at all gave them enormous advantage over McCreery and the businessmen of the Marxist. All in all, whilst the anti-revisionist movement had developed its political strength and level immeasurably since the early sixties, it was still not in a position to smash opportunist bids such as that of the Birch group, completely and at an early stage.

ORGANISATION SERVING POLITICS

The C.F.B.(M-L) has already outlined its views on the British anti-revisionist movement. (21). Whilst its views are continually developing and are certainly being communicated more effectively, the basis of that analysis still strongly holds: that is, that political analysis comes before organisation, and that organisation must at all times serve to develop the political struggle. As has been said, the central task in Britain is to reach an understanding of revisionism, in policies and methods of work, sufficient to provide the conditions for the establishment of a party. But this political process does not go on inside some kind of autonomous anti-revisionist movement, cut off from society. Issues where revisionist and Marxist-Leninist views contest are to be found within the day-to-day ongoing class struggle. The C.F.B.(M-L) therefore feels that practical work in the struggle of the working-class and the building of theory and political consciousness are not discrete activities. They are indissolubly linked. This has also been the experience of revolutionary movements in other countries and at other times, as even a brief examination of Russian experience of the 1900's and British experience in 1919-21 serves to illustrate.

The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (fore-runner of the C.P.S.U.) was fought for against a situation of numerous study-circles and groups - each defending autonomy and most acting in an amateur and ineffective manner. In his analysis, Lenin did not attempt to remedy the situation by decree. His first significant action was an analysis of the movement itself, of the various tendencies and conflicting ideologies. (22). Lenin did not seek to dictate differences away, but rather to subjugate differences by principled political argument. He declared, regarding the building of unity, "Some comrades (and even some groups and organisations) are of the opinion that in order to achieve this we must adopt the practice of electing the central party institution and instruct that body to resume the publication of the party organ. We consider such a plan to be a wrong one, or at all events a risky one. To establish and consolidate the party means to establish unity among all Social-Democrats. Such unity cannot be decreed, it cannot be brought about by, let us say, a meeting of

representatives, passing a resolution...

Open polemics, conducted in the sight and hearing of all Russian Social-Democrats and class-conscious workers, are necessary and desirable in order to explain the profoundness of the differences that exist, in order that disputed questions may be discussed from all angles... Indeed, we regard one of the drawbacks of the present-day movement to be the absence of open polemics between avowedly different views, an effort to conceal the differences that exist over extremely fundamental questions." (23). Further, "before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation." (24). Lenin was here putting politics firmly in command. It should be noted, moreover, that the process of drawing lines of demarcation did not preclude an appropriate degree of co-ordination throughout Russia. Indeed, a polemic such as Lenin envisaged needed communication and an exchange of views between groups as a very minimum, but political unity at a party level could come about only through polemic and could not be decreed. It should be further remembered that Lenin's statement was made after the bankrupt foundation congress of the R.S.D.L.P. had been thoroughly exposed in practice as having had no positive effect on the divided and disparate groups. Unity by decree had already failed. (25) It was only after a lengthy process of ideological consolidation against the opportunism and defeatism of economism that Lenin was able to tackle the organisational opportunism of the Mensheviks in One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (1904), a slashing attack on autonomism and the circle mentality. (26). With ideological preparation an important new line was drawn, between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. The party was politically formed at this meeting, and only after this were the organisational steps of adoption of a programme and rules and the election of a central body taken.

A different situation in very many ways prevailed in Britain when the C.P.G.B. was founded, yet the principles guiding the foundation of that organisation was also the primacy of politics. To the extent that departure was made from that principle the C.P.G.B. later paid the price.

Some six or seven organisations, most with already substantial public records of political activity, were involved in the attempt to build unity in the creation of the C.P.G.B. One organisation, the British Socialist Party, could trace its origins, through changes of name and structure, back to 1881. (27). Klugman sees the impulse to unity itself going back several years, to 1913. (28). Certainly the Russian revolution and, in 1919, the Communist International were very important factors bringing about the unity discussions. These two important events gave political support to the concept of a communist party in Britain, and provided the occasion to the British revolutionary groups to consider their differences and how they might be resolved. The B.S.P., the largest of the groups, called series of meetings which started in June 1919 and continued into the middle of the next year. On 31st July 1920, after over a year's preparatory work, a Unity Convention was held in London. Only groups from organisations which accepted the "fundamental basis of Communist Unity" were invited. The basis of unity was

"(a) The Dictatorship of the Working Class, (b) The Soviet System, (c) The Third International." (29). (It can be seen, therefore, that the intervening year had been spent in consciously drawing lines, and in polemic.) The London Convention formally inaugurated the C.P.G.B. However, there was a recognition that all the necessary political work had not been carried out. The main issues contested in the preceding polemics had been whether parliamentary action should be undertaken, and whether there should be affiliation to the Labour Party. As majority decisions were taken on both of these matters, the Convention resolved that "since full unity had not yet been achieved, the provisional committee of eight members...was instructed to carry on, with the addition of six persons elected by the Convention" and attempt to build further political unity. (30).

A Second Unity Convention took place in Leeds on 29th January 1921, and concluded unity between the groups involved. (The I.L.P. 'Left' group did not come in until 1922). Organisation still did not command politics, and because of the level of political unity the party had a federal form. (31). At a Rules Conference in Manchester in April 1921 the principle of regional representation was again incorporated in the rules. Reform of this loose federal structure, even with the active intervention of the Communist International, was not accomplished overnight. The adoption of the theses of the Third Congress of the Communist International secured formal agreement to a central committee, district committee structure. Even then this still had to be fought for politically within the party. (32).

The C.P.G.B. was formed at a time of much greater urgency and change than Britain in the sixties. Lenin and the Communist International expected imminent revolution in the west - "it is likely we shall require two and even three years before the whole of Europe becomes Soviet ... I assert with confidence that one year sooner or later, a little more patience, and we shall finally possess an International Soviet Republic, which will be guided by one Communist International." (33) Nonetheless, and with the direct urging of Lenin, extensive political discussions went on. All the groups involved had publicly stated positions, some going back for many years. Between them they represented memberships of very different sizes - from 2,500 down to a handful. Yet there was no 'decreeing' of unity and no arbitrary decisions, based on membership strength. Even so it could probably be argued that because of the urgency with which they saw the world situation, Lenin and the Communist International to some extent intervened in such a way as to shorten political and organisational discussion. (34).

From this brief account of the formation of two parties, the Russian and the British, it can be seen how much historical example contrasts with the three attempts in Britain in the 1960's to establish a Marxist-Leninist party. In Russia and in Britain in 1919, in accordance with conditions prevailing, the question of party-building was taken seriously. Organisations with greater experience, membership and public political records than any of the British anti-revisionist groups did not attempt to use their strengths to impose unity by decree. Political differences were put to the fore, discussed and analysed, and only on the basis of

a resolution of the differences was unity reached. Groups were not viewed in a subjective manner and treated as obstacles. They were treated for what they were; the basis of the existing revolutionary movement. In both Britain and Russia the importance of the groups was recognised in continuing federal elements in party structure. Even at this stage unity was not seen as resolution passing, but as the outcome of political struggle.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Modern revisionism is not a mere matter of slogans and of incorrect policies. It is a matter of consciousness, of ways of viewing the world. An organisation may adopt at any one time slogans which are 'correct' and still be thoroughly revisionist in nature. (35). The Chinese Cultural Revolution has demonstrated clearly that the most profound changes are needed to combat revisionism, and that the struggle against revisionist world view is extremely complex.

British anti-revisionists have emerged in political and in individual terms from the revisionist C.P.G.B. They are faced with the central task of emancipating themselves, not just from the slogans and policies of the C.P.G.B., but from the methods of work; from the whole political consciousness imparted by that organisation and its international allies. Many come to an anti-revisionist position on subjective grounds. They rejected the sterility and oppression of the C.P.G.B. Others were strengthened in partial understandings by the stand of the Albanian and Chinese parties in the early sixties. The task of the movement has been, and is, the substitution of an objective political world view, based on a Marxist-Leninist analysis, for the subjective positions of individuals and groups. Without an objectively established British Marxist-Leninist ideological and political analysis, the movement cannot advance. This continues to be the immediate priority for the British revolutionary movement, and will lead to the establishment of a genuine and effective Marxist-Leninist party.

Throughout its history the revisionist C.P.G.B. was of a small size and had a relatively low level of political development in its branches and members. It has generally been isolated from the mainstream of British working-class politics, which after fifty years' existence of the C.P.G.B. still remain dominated by the ideology of social-democracy and parliamentarianism. In this situation the C.P.G.B. relied heavily on two factors for its continued existence - international endorsement and vicarious prestige and an extensive organisational facade. The organisational facade was both a means and an end, as its maintenance soon became, and remains, the main activity of the party. Giving organisation priority over politics involves the suppression of discussions and denying from party members and organisations the opportunity to develop politically.

The anti-revisionist movement has clearly shown the impact which revisionist consciousness has had upon it in the three

main opportunist attempts at party formation in the sixties. In each of the three cases the objective was seen in almost purely organisational terms. Coming inevitably from such an objective were the methods of constructing an organisational facade and of securing endorsement ('recognition' was the term used) from parties with prestige and standing in the international communist movement. Such organisations even had they attained their necessary objective at the price of the destruction of the British anti-revisionist movement, could never themselves have been anything but revisionist. Depending for their existence on a facade and recognition they (rightly) saw the groups as an obstacle in their path. The essence of the groups was political and organisational autonomy and polemic. Polemic could not be tolerated where the main effort was to present a united front to impress and deceive revolutionaries at home and abroad. Without politics there could be, can be, no emancipation from revisionism, in the broad and penetrating sense that we understand it. At best there would be a mechanical following of a foreign baton, as with the C.P.G.B., as a substitute for a genuine political encounter with British and world struggles and problems.

But what of the groups? As has been stated, much of the groups' understanding of the nature of revisionism was (and is) partial. Often it was extremely superficial. The reasons for rejecting the revisionism of the C.P.G.B. and the later pseudo-anti-revisionist organisation was mainly subjective. There was a rejection of sycophancy, of meaningless and verbose political formulae, of dictation and manipulation. Centrally there was the feeling that revisionist politics did not reflect the real world, and that British Marxism had to be revitalised by practical and theoretical work. The groups had (and have) at their best the great virtue of putting politics and principle in command. No pseudo-revolutionary organisation can allow this to happen without being destroyed. But this does not mean that the groups were (and are) without serious negative features. Many made no serious attempt to move from the stage of subjective and partial understanding, and displayed characteristics of sectarianism and irresponsibility. Not all (or even most) polemics were conducted for principled political reasons. Not all groups knew how to engage in polemic on a principled basis, and reflecting the mode of debate in the C.P.G.B. confined themselves to attempting to pin damaging labels of 'spy', 'agent', 'trotskyist' and the like on their opponents. Many polemics had only the dubious virtue of employing invective in a novel manner. These negative characteristics could and would be exposed by the needs of groups' practical work and problems, and could, moreover, be corrected without destroying the basis of the groups' existence. The negative features of the pseudo-anti-revisionists, on the other hand, were of a fundamental nature that they were not subject to correction without destroying the whole basis of the existence of those groups. The groups had (and are now) adapted to the concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement in Britain, and provided the correct organisations for political analysis, investigation and education. Any attempt to build a Marxist-Leninist party in Britain must start with the groups and their politics.

From time to time in the British and international communist

movement those who diverted and sabotaged the struggle have had conscious motivation attributed to them, and have been called agents of the imperialist intelligence services and the like. Similar accusations have been made against the leadership of the C.P.G.B. and against those involved in the C.D.R.C.U., the Marxist and the C.P.B.(M-L). Whilst on occasion these accusations may have been true, in the British and international movement they do not amount to an explanation of revisionism. The motivation of McCreery, Birch and others is largely irrelevant, and it is the consequences of their actions that interests the movement. There seems no reason to attribute to them necessary motives of deliberate and conscious sabotage. We can assume that they were not interested in personal power and glory, but sought to do their best for the movement. We can say that their attempts to destroy groups were motivated by the desire to stop quarrels that seemed endless, and to get on with the serious business of leading the class struggle. Birch, who wished to apply his reputation and expertise, McCreery and the businessmen of the Marxist who wished to apply their money, all probably did so without any intention of destroying the movement, but rather of building it. What has been argued here is that these efforts, because they did not proceed from an analysis of the real situation, because they were subjective in their reasoning, because they gave the fetish of organisation priority, would objectively have resulted in nothing less than the destruction of the movement, and the setting back, for a generation or more, of the struggle for a Marxist-Leninist party in Britain.

An organisation based on a revisionist concept of the party, founded and maintained by revisionist methods can never be reformed, can never become a Marxist-Leninist organisation. Such organisations have failed, and will fail, to develop. However, the requirements of the ever-heightening class struggle in Britain and throughout the world, the basic principles of Marxism, allow no genuine revolutionary to sit back and await the dissolution of these obstacles by the development of their own internal contradictions. Our efforts must contribute to their political and organisational destructions without delay. Already exposed ideologically, propaganda and agitational efforts must be directed to uniting with all those with whom principled unity is possible. We must also fight against the other opportunist efforts that are and will be made to direct the movement. The main target of our work should, for the time being, be the C.P.B.(M-L). If our work avoids subjectivism and is based on analysis and investigation, the whole British movement can be improved quantitatively and qualitatively, and unity will be built to a hitherto unreached level. Marxist-Leninism can be the powerful weapon of the British working-class. British revolutionaries can fulfill their duty.

T.M.

NOTES

1. For an excellent account of one such individual struggle in the late forties, see The Rotten Elements, Edward Upward, Penguin 1972.
2. Upward's two main characters, Alan and Elsie, have an interesting discussion about the C.P.G.B. leadership which illustrates this point:

"If it were just power they were after wouldn't they be in some other organisation not quite so small as the present British Communist Party?"

"I don't think the power they now have seems all that negligible to them. Remember, they have 'international contacts'. And the portraits of some of them have been carried on banners in processions through the cities of various capitalist as well as communist countries."

"That is a frightening thought. And also it almost makes me doubt whether we mightn't after all somehow be wrong about them. They are honoured in other countries by communist leaders whom we trust and admire. Can they really have become what we think they are? How could it have happened?" (Ibid., pp.160/161)

The sentiments, if not the actual conversation, were surely held by many anti-revisionists, at one time or another in their struggle against the C.P.G.B. With some, of course, the struggle never even began because of those crippling doubts.
3. This is one of the reasons for the relative backwardness of the anti-revisionist movement in the North-East, Scotland and Wales. These were all areas of relatively high C.P.G.B. activity and prestige, whose membership by their loyalty and adherence to the revisionist party were the most difficult to approach. An instinctive 'closing of the ranks' was a major obstacle to political exposure of revisionism.
4. The social pressures imposed on party members in the event of any conflict or breach with the leadership should also be remembered. Very many party members had few, if any, social contacts outside the party. Complete inter-generational involvement in the party was not uncommon. A couple would meet in the course of party work and would marry. Their children might eventually be involved in the Y.C.L., would make friends there, marry, and so the cycle went on. The small size and political isolation of the C.P.G.B. helped to make this a common pattern. It greatly decreased the possibility of a correct and critical, Marxist-Leninist posture for many.
5. See The Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain - Origins and

Perspectives (1972 edition), p.6. Obtainable from the C.F.B.

6. In fact, by pursuing policies which promoted the growth of revisionism, the leaders of the C.P.G.B. were anti-Soviet in essence, and were strengthening imperialism.
7. This is not to say that its failure was not of itself a contribution by negative example.
8. Lenin. Letter to Tom Bell, 13th August 1921, in Lenin on Britain, F.L.P.H., Moscow. Lenin wrote this letter in English. The capitals and emphasis are his.
9. Grippa later became a supporter of the revisionist Liu Shao-Chi, when the policies of Liu were attacked during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.
10. Those who experienced such 'unity' discussions will remember that the unity discussed was organisational, and always around the C.D.R.C.U.
11. The forerunner of the Communist Federation of Britain (M-L).
12. Throughout this article I have named certain individuals and the contributions they made in order to give the reader evidence to illustrate the general argument which I advance. It also allows those active at the time to check the accuracy of my account. Names have been omitted in cases where individuals have not taken up a public position, or in cases where it was felt that they could suffer at work etc. if their connection with the movement were made known.
13. From notes taken at a Marxist meeting.
14. The J.C.C. and, for a while, the C.F.B., attempted to work with this group in the Marxist. The Brent group joined the J.C.C. in December 1968 and left a few months later in Spring 1969. They made no contribution to the organisation and offered no substantive criticisms. They left because, they said, the J.C.C. was 'irrelevant' to the British class struggle. Time has clearly proved who was relevant and who was not. For a while, however, many articles which appeared in the Marxist and much of the production and distribution work was carried out by members of the J.C.C., and later by the C.F.B. Owing to the sectarianism of the Brent group, political relations could not be built between them and the constituent groups of the C.F.B., and seeing no potential for development the C.F.B. transferred its efforts into the creation of its own publications.
15. "Employers are not going to be allowed to do things just as they think fit. The nation's needs must come before the personal ambitions of the old employing class. Because of the urgent needs of the day, there is every reason why Joint Production Committees should be in existence, more so today than in the most perilous war days. The people have elected a Labour Government - the first of its kind in the history of

the country. There are powerful interests already at work sabotaging the efforts of this Government. The workers' safeguard is inside the factory, demanding Production Committees determined that the maximum production must be achieved and that no one is to be allowed to frustrate our efforts ... In fact, years and years of necessary work stare us in the face. The engineering workers are willing to co-operate. Nothing must be allowed to stand in the way."

A Wage Based on Human Needs, Reg. Birch, C.P.G.B. Pamphlet 1946, pp. 15-16, cited in Workers' Control, Coates and Topham, Panther, 1970.

Despite his frequent protestations of being a militant supporter of the working-class, this quotation shows Birch to have been devoid of even the most elementary class analysis and politics at the time of writing.

16. Steven Taylor, a member of the Workers' Party of Scotland, argued against Birch on the grounds that there should be four national parties; one for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. In the course of making his contribution he mentioned that he had previously lived in New Zealand. Birch, in reply, ignored the case that Taylor had made, incorrect as it was. Is there a Polynesian Party to cover the New Zealand trust territories, he rhetorically asked. Taylor was forced to answer 'No', and Birch considered the matter closed.

John Hannington, a close associate of Birch, attacked the London groups. The A.E.U. (the North London machine) did not belong to any of them, he said. The A.E.U. activists worked in groups. Of course the A.E.U. group had a weakness in not having a political policy, he said, but nonetheless they tackled the revisionists as they came. Hannington then went on to say that many of the London groups were too academic. Indeed, he enlarged, the London groups had "been poncing off the industrial workers for years." Hannington did not make clear what he meant by this, but it was his contribution to the attack on groups made by Birch supporters; and was an accurate reflection of the political level of the attacks, and calls to mind Lenin's statement: "All worship of the spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling the role of 'the conscious element', of the role of the party of Social Democracy, means, quite irrespective of whether the belittler likes it or not, strengthening the influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers." (Lenin, What is to be Done? Sel. Works, I, pp. 175-176, F.I.P.H., Moscow, 1947).

Dorothy Birch argued that 'we' were being too careful. The time has come to set up a provisional committee. The time for little groups is past. She compared, unfavourably, the intellectuals whom she imagined constituted most of the groups. "We have got to decide today", she concluded, to applause.

A. Manchanda, representing Indian workers, argued that Marx and Engels did not represent the groups. But they reflected

the interests of the workers. The whole of mankind. Manchanda supported the immediate establishment of a provisional committee.

Ted Roycroft (formerly of the Marxist group) also argued for the immediate formation of a provisional committee, as the present situation was wasteful of energy.

Others who supported the immediate formation of a provisional committee included an associate of Manchanda at that time. He argued that the groups existed purely because of the petty pride of the members. All wanted to maintain predominance. An associate of Birch supported an immediate go-ahead, as did Mrs. R. Ash and D. Ryan. None gave any political grounds for their stand. An interesting contribution was made by a writer who had been prominent in the Marxist organisation. He argued that the anti-revisionists should forget the past and only consider the future. This was a preposterous stance, the equivalent of asking the young anti-revisionist movement to forego what experience it had had, and step back six or seven years.

Representatives of the Coventry and West of England groups, and most members of the Camden Communist Movement were the only real opposition that Birch and his supporters had.

All attributions and quotations respecting this meeting are from long-hand notes taken at the time and confirmed with other participants.

17. Roycroft, Birch, Ryan, Manchanda, Hannington and Clerk. A member of the J.C.C., declined nomination. Outside of Ryan and Manchanda - fervent supporters of Birch in their contributions to the September 12th and October 14th meetings, all the other members of this Secretariat, in charge of the day-to-day guidance of the Provisional Committee, were members of the A.E.U. alliance.
18. The A.E.U. group gave £10 and Indian workers £5. D. Ryan offered half of £10, a television fee, already pledged to the Bristol Workers' Association. Birch thought that it might be better if he consulted the B.W.A. first.
19. There were various interesting and revealing remarks made by Birch supporters. The writer previously of the Marxist described groups as "an alibi for individual activity." Dorothy Birch stated in regard to the groups' objections to the way in which the Provisional Committee had been established, "I am not worried by some phoney little groups. Birch said, 'Blame me. Take me.' I am delighted and admire him." Hannington told A.E.U. members to speak up in support of the Provisional Committee. "They (A.E.U. members, auth.) do more than anyone else. They are bruised and beaten up. They should let people know."
20. As with the first issue of Vanguard, the first issue of The Worker carried greetings from Albania - on this occasion

from the Editorial Office of Zeri-i-Popullit. There is nothing exceptional in this, or in the Albanian and Chinese printing, the statements of the Provisional Committee and C.P.B. (M-L). British Marxist-Leninists must, however, consider the use to which they were put by the Birch group, and how objectively therefore these greetings and publications were likely to affect the development of a Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain. In point of fact their impact was minimal as by now the movement was of the correct opinion that the only 'recognition' of real importance to its development was that of British revolutionaries and the British working-class.

By issue No. 3, in an almost uncanny replication of Vanguard, The Worker was carrying advertisements for New Albania and for a recently acquired New Albanian Society. There was, of course, in the first issue's statement of intent no mention of the British anti-revisionist movement, at the moment or in the past.

21. The Marxist Leninist Movement in Britain: Origins and Perspectives, obtainable from the C.F.B. (M-L).
22. See, What the Friends of the People Are and How they Fight the Social Democrats, The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats, What is to be Done?
23. Draft Declaration by the Editorial Board of the Iskra and the Zarya, Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. IV, part I, pp.13-23, London: Laurence and Wishart Ltd., 1929.
24. Lenin, Sel. Works, I, p. 164, F.L.P.H., Moscow, 1947.
25. It is a notable fact that to the extent that the C.P.B. (M-L) has taken up any ideological position of its own on the British situation, it is characterised by economism and spontaneist thought. (For useful, though limited, exposure of this ideology of the C.P.B. (M-L) see Economism or Revolution? A Critique of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), published by the Marxist-Leninist Workers' Association and obtainable from them, 1/289 Green Lanes, London N.4, or the C.F.B. (M-L). The chief ideological struggle waged by Lenin at the time he was arguing for open polemics was against the Russian Economists. He could as well have been arguing with the C.P.B. (M-L) when he asserted against the Economists the primacy of politics. The economists, he said, argued that "the role of the conscious element in the working-class movement, the organising and directing role of socialist consciousness and socialist theory was insignificant, or almost insignificant; that the Social-Democrats should not elevate the minds of the workers to the level of socialist consciousness, but, on the contrary, should adjust themselves and descend to the level of the average, or even of the more backward sections of the working-class, and that the Social-Democrats should not try to impart a socialist consciousness to the working-class, but should wait until the spontaneous movement of the working-class arrived of itself at a socialist consciousness." History of the C.P.S.U.(B), pp.62-63, F.L.P.H.,

Moscow, 1951. Nothing could more clearly reflect the founding and continuing work of the C.P.B. (M-L).

26. This article was an analysis of the Mensheviks who were defeated at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., in 1903.
27. The organisations involved were: The British Socialist Party, South Wales Socialist Society, Socialist Labour Party, the Unity Group (a split from the S.L.P.), Scottish Workers' Committee and Sylvia Pankhurst's Communist Party, and the I.L.P. Left group.
28. James Klugman, History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Vol. I, 1968, p.30 (Laurence and Wishart).
29. The British Communist Party, Henry Pelling, p.9, London, 1958.
30. Ibid., p.10.
31. Thus elections to the committee were on a semi-federal basis. "It was agreed, however, that elections for the new committee of the united party should be partly on a geographical basis and partly on the basis of representation of the participating groups. Unity was thus to be limited by a measure of federalism, which clearly reflected the sectionalism that ... was all along an important feature of the Marxist support in Britain." Ibid., p. 12.
32. Ibid., pp. 21-22. See also Tom Bell, who in his Pioneering Days states, "time after time on the Executive Committee we had to combat the federalist and constituency notions of the comrades who had come from the provinces." Cited by Walter Kendall in The Revolutionary Movement in Britain, 1900-21, London, 1969, p.194.
33. Zinoviev to the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, 17th July - 7th August 1920, cited in Kendall, op. cit., p. 16.
34. The history of the Communist International is an urgent need of Marxist-Leninist evaluation. Membership of the C.I. conferred great powers on individual party leaderships, and its negative effects on the politics of the C.P.G.B. and other Western European parties have to be assessed. With a new international alignment of Marxist-Leninist forces, and with the differences in sizes and political and organisational resources between parties, a resolute struggle must be waged to ensure that such negative tendencies as 'endorsement' and 'exclusion' do not reappear.
35. See for example the case of the Australian Communist Party in the early sixties. This organisation sided with the Albanian and Chinese parties for a while, yet soon returned to following the Moscow baton.

Notes on the Labour Aristocracy in Britain; part two

"The war (First World War) and the post-war crisis dealt a further decisive blow to Britain's monopoly position. There were fewer super-profits, the crumbs which fell to share of British labour leaders began to dwindle away. Voices began to be raised more and more frequently about the reduction of the standard of living of the British working-class. The period of "peace and prosperity" was succeeded by a period of conflicts, lockouts and strikes. The British worker began to swing to the left, to resort more and more frequently to the method of direct struggle against capital."

(STALIN - 1926) (1)

The first part of this article (M.L.Q. 2.) summarised the views of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the reasons for British imperialist dominance in the period up until the first world war. These were that British industrial monopoly during most of the nineteenth century and then the huge foreign investment holdings enabled the ruling class to use the resultant super-profits to corrupt a portion of the working-class. The article argued that the section so influenced - the "labour aristocracy" - was characterised by its mode of production, the fact that it was largely pre-industrial. (2). The combination of these two factors: the ability of the capitalist class to pay wages to this section well above subsistence level and the nature of the work done by the labour aristocrats, produced a mode of overall existence that can be summarised in the following way.

Firstly, wages paid to this section were approximately double those paid to the unskilled workers in the same industry. Secondly, their way of life, possessions, security of employment and political consciousness was much closer to that of middle management and the petit bourgeoisie (those owning small shops, businesses, etc.) than it was to other workers. Thirdly, the unions they formed were narrowly confined to a particular craft with severely restrictive entry qualifications.

The second and last part of this article will argue that with the decline of the international dominance of Britain, both industrial and financial, and the all-round development of mass production methods, the labour aristocracy, as an objectively existent stratum within the working class, has ceased to exist. It will also suggest why bourgeois ideology and opportunism continues to be the main enemy within the working-class movement and propose conclusions in terms of policies for the C.F.B.

THE DECLINE OF INDUSTRIAL MONOPOLY AND OF DIRECT SUPER PROFITS.

In 1870, Britain exported nearly three times as much by value per capita as her nearest industrial competitor and produced about one-third of the world output of manufactured goods. But in the next forty years this position was seriously undermined by the

rapid industrialisation of western Europe and of the United States. This key period of inter-imperialist rivalry was characterised by Germany and the U.S. overhauling Britain in terms of industrial production - both produced more of the key industrial product, steel, by 1900, and by the drive to capture the colonial markets of the underdeveloped world. While Britain's exports fell sharply from 1872 to a level only to be regained in 1900, her trade deficits were largely covered by the results of financial and colonial dominance.

India, for example, whose own textile industry had been destroyed by Britain in the first quarter of the nineteenth century came to take nearly half of Britain's textile exports by the end of the century. In addition India ran an export surplus, largely by export of opium which British gunboats enforced upon countries like China and this surplus was then appropriated by the British ruling class. "Thus not only the funds for investment in India but a large part of the total investment income from overseas that gave Britain her balance of payments surplus in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was provided by India. India was in truth the 'jewel in the imperial diadem.'" (3).

By such forms of exploitation Britain was able to compensate for her declining industrial importance. Returns from foreign investment reached a peak in the decade before the First World War reaching 9% of the national income - over a third of total profits. At the same time the share of output of manufactures, although increasing in absolute terms after 1900, shrunk relatively from 32% in 1870 to 14% in 1913. (4).

Indeed as was argued in the first article British industry lagged behind other industrialised countries' technological advance over this period of unparalleled foreign investment. There is no doubt that foreign investment in this period produced immense super-profits.

It is not necessary in an article concentrating on developments of the British class structure to analyse in any detail the reasons for the general decline in British foreign investment since 1914. Certainly it must be said that such investment acted to destroy industry in the third world and that not only therefore is it, like any capitalist investment, exploitive, but in addition is non-dynamic: it fails to develop an industrial capacity which will form the base of a growing economy which in turn will raise demand for industrial products from the metropolitan countries. (see below). But in any case the decline in the return on such investment is clear. The first World War, the acute depression from 1929 through most of the 1930's, and the 1939-1945 war all acted to create the present situation where the net return of foreign investment is now only about 1% of national income. (5). This can hardly be regarded as a source of such super-profits as could bribe any appreciable section of the British working-class.

A considerably more complex and unquantifiable issue is the overall structural relationship between the imperialist countries and those of the third world. By this is meant the overall relation-

ship between imperialist industrialised countries and those whose national economies have been prevented from developing. A huge body of writing has been devoted to this subject especially in the last decade. (6). There is no doubt that prices of raw materials can be driven down by relatively few buyers in the imperialist countries, that independent development is stifled and suppressed where possible as in the recent manoeuvrings of U.S. owned companies like I.T.T. in Chile and that in general every attempt is made to monopolise the production of capital goods in the hands of the main international companies and thus act to raise the prices of such goods as against those primary products on which the third world countries rely for their investment savings. To the extent that this is effective it can be argued that the metropolitan countries benefit and therefore potentially to an extent the working-class in these countries. On the other hand the 'development of underdevelopment' as it has been called limits the ability of such countries to purchase the products of the metropolitan areas and thus this relationship limits the sales necessary to overcome the perennial problem for capitalism - that of overproduction. The only way we can observe the effects of this process on the profits of the companies operating within Britain is to observe the movements of these profits and see if some new potential for buying off sections of the working-class has presented itself.

PROFITS IN BRITAIN

Again this is a highly complex area for analysis. Glyn and Sutcliffe (op. cit. note 4) estimate that in 1870 the share of property income (profits and rents) was approximately 50% of national income. The Prices and Incomes Board (7) quoted these estimates:

1911.....	25%
1921.....	21%
1965.....	16%

(See also National Income and Expenditure 1972). (8).

We must of course be sceptical (as always) of such figures. The share of profits and their significance, changes over time for many reasons. The other main part of the equation, wages and salaries, appear inflated because of the general process of proletarianisation whereby millions who were self-employed in the nineteenth century have been forced out of business by the increasing centralisation of capital. Thus the proportion who are forced to sell their labour power has continually increased. In addition the State controls directly a larger and larger proportion of the national wealth in a way which official statistics often conceal. (9). But this general trend of the falling share of profits is clear and goes a long way to explain the ever increasing attacks of the ruling class against wage earners. There exists at present no satisfactory analysis of the real historical relationship between property incomes and wages which takes account of the qualifying factors mentioned above but there is no evidence that the capitalist class has been able to use super-profits to buy off

workers. In fact since 1914 those profits have been barely sufficient to finance necessary (for capitalists) accumulation.

THE CHANGING MODE OF PRODUCTION AND THE TREND TOWARDS AN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING UNION

The first part of this article argued "by the end of the nineteenth century the skilled engineer who had till that point benefitted materially from the industrial revolution without suffering the attendant division of labour, became inexorably subjected to the machine so removing the basis for the wage differential and his status on which he relied for his aristocratic position."

The official historian of the Amalgamated Engineering Union describes the period 1890-1915 as encompassing "a minor revolution in the workshop" compared with the 'relative absence of technical change between 1850 and 1890.' (10). Capstan and turret lathes were developed for mass production methods and to some extent replaced the traditional centre lathe though that itself was adapted under similar pressures. The milling machine replaced much of the work that had till then been carried out by fitters using a chisel and file. Steel became the material used for engineering products and this in turn necessitated stronger driving power for all cutting and shaping tools. A paper read to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in 1902 stated:

"The main object of these modern methods..was that of reducing as far as possible the number of highly skilled workmen, that is the fitters."

In fact the fitters job became fragmented but the craft remained. At the same time this technological change and the increased level of capitalist expenditure in engineering needed considerable changes both in planning and in increasing productivity. New jobs were created which helped separate the skilled workers from any remaining managerial function. Works engineers, planners, rate fixers and production engineers ('factory doctors' as they were ironically called) appeared and the foremen and inspectors jobs were split.

Jefferys comments:

"The revolution in the tools of the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century had prepared the way for the united organisation of skilled men - the A.S.E. The revolution in the methods and tools of the beginning of the twentieth century was preparing the way for a further amalgamation and development of an organisation which included all grades of workers from the fully skilled to the unskilled." (page 126).

Nevertheless in the twenty years before the First World War 90% of those entering the A.S.E. were fitters and turners: functions which still formed the backbone of the industry. Similarly in general, differentials in 1913 were fairly near the high point of forty years before with the district rate for turners standing at 35 shillings (this however marked a decrease in his standard of living of twenty years before despite record super-profits) compared

with 21s. 10d. for the average machinist. Despite this differential life was not easy for the skilled man. An E.E.F. representative in 1908 reported 'little chance' for the skilled man finding a fresh situation after fifty or even forty-five. The expectation of life for a skilled engineer was only fifty-five (and for his wife fifty!), while Pensions and National Insurance provisions passed by the 1906 Liberal Government ('Lloyd Georgeism' as Lenin referred to it) improved the relative position of the unskilled and unorganised worker for the first time.

These changes were reflected in the development of contradictions within the A.S.E. itself. In 1896 the General Secretary, John Anderson had been defeated in the election for his post. His platform was that the A.S.E. should continue as a 'non-political' union, devoted to carrying out its previous main function of paying provident and pension benefits. The next year the defeat of the union by the employers' lock-out demonstrated that other unions were not prepared to come to the aid of a union bent on defending its relatively privileged position. George Barnes who had defeated Anderson in the 1896 election had however a very narrow view of politics - bourgeois politics. So confident was he of the effectiveness of parliamentary politics that he wrote in the union journal in 1908 (he was himself a Labour M.P.):

"We shall probably find that we need not strike at all except through the ballot box,"

a view strongly opposed by Tom Mann. The slump of that year showed that the existence of Labour M.P.s did nothing to halt the rise of unemployment, which increasingly hit skilled and unskilled alike. One member writing in the journal suggested that:

"the most charitable thing that can be said about political (parliamentary) action is that it is too slow, so slow that it breaks men's hearts."

Jefferys concludes about the engineers in this period that their "worsened position" meant that they were "no longer the 'aristocracy of labour', whether measured by wage rates, working conditions or as leaders of the trade union movement..."

The growing dissatisfaction among engineering workers (as well as railwaymen and miners) with the policies and leadership of their union developed very rapidly in the course of the war. A few militants strongly influenced by Marxism realised the imperialist nature of the conflict. Many more soon learned that it was being fought at their expense.

In March 1915 the unions, guided by their chauvinism, signed the 'Treasury Agreement' under which, with the 'Munitions of War Act' of the same year, they gave up previous rights, including those regarding the manning of machines and above all the right to strike. Prices rose consistently throughout the war: food prices for example increased by nearly 300% between 1914 and 1920. Real wages fell as a result of the Agreement, from 97 to 74 (as measured by Kuczynski's wage index, 1900=100) between the beginning of the war and July 1917. (11).

The centre of the opposition which developed to these cuts in real wages and deteriorating working conditions was the shop-stewards movement among engineering workers. (There is a good overview of this movement given in Jefferys, and Pollard as well as a considerable number of more detailed studies.) This development is of the greatest importance in British working class history and it is probably true to say that no other country has produced a comparable rank and file organisation. Its spirit at that time is best illustrated by an exchange between Lloyd-George and engineering stewards at a meeting on Christmas Day 1915 in Glasgow City Hall.

"When Lloyd-George, the 'best paid Munitions worker in Britain' - he was getting nearly £100 a week - got up to speak he was greeted with booing and cheering and two verses of the 'Red Flag' were sung before he could utter a word. When he did start every other sentence was inaudible and each point was capped by another from the floor. For example when he was stressing the need for dilution he said:

'We need a very large number of guns and projectiles and I am going to put to you a business proposition' (for the exploiters). 'Do you think the men in the trenches are exploiters?' (Don't hedge) (the shipowners are doing their bit). 'Do let me state the facts..' (We know them).. 'What steps have we taken? We have started great National factories State-owned and State-controlled ... My friends these are great Socialist factories.' (Violent interruption)."

(Jefferys op.cit. p.179)

There was little confusion among these workers on the vital distinction between 'nationally' and 'socially' owned industries.

The power the shop-stewards wielded on behalf of the mass of workers, and their class-consciousness was not narrow or sectional, and as Lloyd-George realised was Socialist in conception. On the Clyde, the centre of the shop-stewards movement, it was estimated that 85-90% of all engineering and shipbuilding workers were organised in unions. It was this movement which spearheaded the drive for amalgamation in 1920 which created the Amalgamated Engineering Union and later the 1926 decision to open the union to all male workers in the engineering industry. There was in addition a growing recognition of the need to conduct national and not merely local campaigns of which the best example was the achievement of the 47 hour week in 1919, a reduction of six or seven hours depending on the district. The Glasgow district struck for a 40-hour week issuing a 'Call to Arms' and was supported by the Belfast and London districts, but the Government mobilised troops armed with machine guns, the Executive of the Union suspended the three District Committees, the strike was isolated and the leaders arrested. Such a campaign could not have been led on the basis of sectional craft interests. At this time there were still two hundred unions organising skilled engineering workers with about 450,000 members, twelve unskilled unions, with 75,000 members in engineering, and the National Union of Railwaymen which had 30,000 members in railway workshops (Pollard op.cit. p.81). The shop-stewards movement organised regardless of union membership: the most convincing way of denying the

continuing validity of the old craft-union structure.

The recession which followed the war and characterised the inter-war period continued this process. The creation of the A.E.U. and its 1926 change of rule has already been referred to. By the year 1925-6 only one-third of the youths under 21 in engineering were apprentices and the National Committee reported that only 16% of fair-sized firms were taking on indentured apprentices. In the period 1920-1925 the skilled sectors I and II comprised 75% of the A.E.U. membership, but by 1935-1939 this proportion had declined to about 50%. Unemployment of the A.E.U. membership, at 25% in the peak year 1932, was above the national average and in the most depressed industries of iron and steel, and shipbuilding, reached 50% and 62% respectively.

Politically and industrially the A.E.U. increasingly played the role of a progressive working-class organisation instead of a body defending narrow craft interests. There were strong remnants of the craft tradition which are still in evidence today as I will note later in more detail. But the qualitative change had been made. In 1926 at least half the A.E.U. membership struck work before the call came from the General Council. The collaborationist Mond-Turner talks between industrialists and the T.U.C. were opposed by the union. In 1930 the A.E.U. seconded the (unsuccessful) resolution which called on the T.U.C. to declare its:

"opposition to the false cry of industrial peace and to the policy of collaboration with the enemies of labour . . . and instructs the Council to put an end to such Conferences forthwith, as they are a serious menace to the interests of the working-class movement."

The 1936 National Committee condemned the foreign policy of the Government, urged the united action of the working-class against fascism and supported the affiliation of the C.P.G.B. to the Labour Party. The Union supported the collection of aid to the Spanish Republic in the fight against Franco and the Axis powers, and during the 1939-1945 War consistently opposed the ban of the 'Daily Worker'. The policy of the A.E.U. continued to be that of building one mass engineering union. At amalgamation in 1920 the membership stood at 450,000. There was a decline in the slump, but by the end of the 1939-1945 War it had reached 900,000 (women were allowed into membership at long last in 1943). In 1970 a new amalgamation occurred, creating the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (A.U.E.W.), including a 'white-collar' section, with a total of over 1,250,000 members.

During most of this period the reactionary and class-collaborationist trend in the trade union movement was led by the two main general unions organising the unskilled (12) - the Transport and General Workers Union under Bevin and Deakin and the General and Municipal Workers Union led by the Honourable J.R. Clynes, Lord Dukeston, Sir Tom Williamson and finally Lord Cooper.

It has already been suggested that the primary reason for the decline in the craft and labour aristocrat tradition was the

developing mode of production. The other feature of industrial change which has to be referred to is the changed structure of that production: the growth of new industries. This forms another factor in the general argument that the engineering industry of the mid-twentieth century, based on modern mass-production methods, was qualitatively different from the craft-based industry of nineteenth century Britain:

	1907	1935
Percentage employed in shipbuilding	25.0	7.4
Percentage employed in electrical motors and aircraft production	12.0	51.0

Armaments production leading up to the war continued this process. The newer sectors of industry developed different traditions and had few links with the earlier period. There were of course privileged sectors, notably in the toolrooms of which the 'Tool Operatives Agreement' is a classical example. (13). But it would be difficult to argue that such privileges were the results of super-profits gained as a result of imperialist dominance (see above, 'Profits in Britain').

Throughout this section I have concentrated on the main developments in the engineering industry, and especially within the A.E.U. I have done this because skilled workers in this industry were by far the most important sector which developed from craft-consciousness towards class-consciousness. As I shall argue, this process is far from being completed and indeed only active and successful communist work in the working class movement can accomplish this. But objective industrial developments changed the face of this crucial industry and certain spontaneous developments in class-consciousness followed. Certainly in the 1920s and 1930s, and to some extent thereafter active militants in the C.P.G.B. played an important role and it is significant how many of their early leaders came from among engineering workers. (14). The failure of this work to develop a mass case and a correct political direction is a most important issue for communists today, but it is wilful dogmatism to argue that this was because of the class background of those involved. Any real scientific approach must be based on a recognition that it was a failure which characterised the work of parties now revisionist in most countries in the world, ranging from the metropolitan nations to those in the Third World. To postulate the labour aristocracy as the prime and continuing reason, regardless of stages of historical development, nations or political structures is to turn Marxist analysis into the simple repetition of a religious catechism.

WAGE DIFFERENTIALS

What remains in these 'Notes' is to show the change in the income structure of the working-class which confirms the arguments advanced already. Again the main change in differentials took place around the period of the 1914-1918 war. Between 1914 and

1914 there was a 75% increase in the cost of living. Wages for contracting electricians and building workers rose by a similar amount. But for fitters and electricians in engineering they rose only by 45% and for shipbuilding joiners, shipwrights and electricians in shipbuilding only 18%. (15).

The Prices and Incomes Board in their report, already cited (see note 7) show a similar trend over a longer period as the following extract demonstrates:

Table 1. Unskilled workers time rates as a percentage of skilled time-rates. (16).

Industries	1914	1920	1950	1970
Building	66.5	81.0	84.1	85.5
Shipbuilding	55.2	77.2	81.7	79.5
Engineering	58.6	78.9	85.2	79.5
Railways	54.3	81.2	78.0	68.7

One other set of wage relationships is also worth citing, because it includes a further important phenomenon - the decline of white-collar differentials, which contracted particularly during the recovery from the slump and during the course of the 1939-1945 war.

Table 2. Weekly earnings in manufacturing, indices added in brackets, 1938=100. (17).

	1924	1938	1971
a) Males over 21 (includes overtime).	2.65(75)	3.55(100)	29.80(838)
b) Skilled fitters, over 21 (includes overtime).	3.67(66)	5.55*(100)	32.40(584)
c) B.A.T.A. members over 30 (basic earnings, i.e. excludes overtime).	5.25(94)	5.60(100)	33.60(597)

*1939 only available

These figures do show that the major variations in wages are not determined any longer by the skilled status of a certain stratum as was the case in general before the 1914-1918 war. It is certainly true that the same range of earnings is apparent now as in 1906.

Table 3. Dispersion of average weekly earnings of full time male manual workers, all industries covered by surveys. (18).
Deciles and Quartiles as a percentage of the median*

	Lowest decile	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Highest decile
1906	66.5	79.5	100	126.7	156.8
1970	67.3	81.1	100	122.3	147.2

*(note: when a range of figures are put in order of magnitude, the lowest decile is one-tenth of the way from the bottom figure, the lower quartile one-quarter of the way, the median is the middle figure, the upper quartile three-quarters of the way up, and the highest decile nine-tenths of the way from the bottom figure (one-tenth of the way from the top figure). Thus in 1970 for every 67.3p. the worker on the lowest decile point earned, the worker on the middle earned 100p. and the highest decile worker earned 147.2p.).

Even with the higher relative incidence of taxation now levied on the better-paid workers the range of earnings is still considerable.

But to confirm that it is not the craft or skill that determines wage levels now it is necessary to refer to the following results of the New Earnings Survey of 1970. (19).

Table 4. Dispersion of Earnings, unskilled workers by industry, £'s.

	Lowest decile	Median	Highest decile
Metal manufacture	17.10	26.60	38.20
Mechanical engineering	16.30	22.40	34.80
Vehicles	19.00	27.00	36.90
Textiles	13.20	18.90	28.00
Construction	16.70	22.30	33.00

The range of earnings for unskilled workers is therefore much the same as the overall range for all manual workers (see Table 3).

A considerable proportion of unskilled workers in metal manufacturing and vehicle production in fact earn nearly three times as much as those in textiles (i.e. ten per cent earning above £38.20 and £36.90 respectively, compared with ten per cent earning below £13.20). And within each industry the top 10% of unskilled are earning around twice as much as the bottom 10%.

The same table in the New Earnings Survey shows a similar range within the categories of the skilled, the foremen, clerks, draughtsmen etc. An analysis of these figures, combined with other wage information now available, indicates that these variations can at one level be explained by locating such factors as the type of industry, the size of the plant, the level of trade union organisation, the capital intensity of the plant, the amount of overtime worked etc. But this would be merely to engage in empirical description. This article is not intended to be a general exercise in wage theory except insofar as it relates directly to the question of the Labour Aristocracy. However it may be useful to make a general observation for comrades to test from their own experience. This is that the central factor which narrows the range of earnings for all workers from unskilled to 'white-collar' is the plant in which they work. This seems to me to be worth pursuing in future and in so doing seeing if the relative level of earnings plant by plant is most closely related

to the ratio of capital invested per worker: the organic composition of capital. (20). In any case craft restrictions seem to play very little part in the determination of wage-levels.

BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY AND THE WORKING CLASS

Reference has already been made to Engels optimism about the development of Socialism in Britain in 1892, and Stalin's in 1926. (21). The failure of the General Strike and the fact that the revolutionary mood of the years immediately after the Russian Revolution ebbed away, left the communist movement in the West in confusion. The "third period" and then the "United Front" policies of the 1930s and after (see for example M.F.'s article in MLQ 2) were signs of the lack of consistent strategy to deal with the changed situation. Neither the slump of the inter-war period, nor the relatively steady post-war growth and high levels of employment in the metropolitan countries were developments which objectively favoured revolution in those countries. Only since the mid-1960s has Marx's "spectre" of Communism begun to re-assert itself. Of course such a "spectre" does not develop spontaneously: it requires the conscious and collective work of a genuine Marxist-Leninist organisation.

I have argued that this lack of development cannot, in the last fifty years, be laid at the door of a disappearing labour aristocracy. Some alternative explanation is therefore called for. What follows are only some brief suggestions as to the outline of such an explanation.

Firstly, we are still undeniably in the epoch of Imperialism. On a world scale this means that the principal contradiction is between the imperialist countries and those peoples and nations fighting imperialist domination. Both the effect of imperialist oppression on these 'underdeveloped' countries and the increasingly successful struggles against it, make the remittance of super-profits more and more difficult. Within each imperialist country the main contradiction is between the ruling class and a working-class increasingly augmented by middle strata becoming progressively proletarianised as the mode of production becomes more technologically advanced. The development of state monopoly capitalism has served temporarily to obscure the system's essentially moribund and decaying final stage. In order for this process to succeed, even temporarily, the leadership of the trade unions, and if possible the whole organisation, have to be progressively incorporated into the state. It is no longer sufficient or even possible to bribe certain strata. The majority of the class has to be ideologically disarmed or physically coerced. While the essential class-contradiction between those who own and those who operate the means of production make any permanent incorporation impossible, the history of this century has demonstrated that this is possible to achieve for a time. In this the fight between revolutionary, and reformist and revisionist ideology, is crucial. While reformism had an objective economic basis during the period of the ascendancy of capitalism this basis has been progressively eroded. But experience and Marxist philosophy also shows that there is no mechanical and immediate relationship between the decay of an

economic base and the superstructure of bourgeois ideology. More concretely the negative experience of the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and most of Eastern Europe, and the positive experience of the successful Cultural Revolution in China shows that this battle between the two lines has to be continued not only under decaying capitalism, but all through the period of socialist construction.

Thus, despite the fact that there is not an economic basis for it, a certain craft narrowness still exists among some skilled workers. An illustration of this is the composition of the Executive of the Engineering section of the A.U.E.W. (the old A.E.U.). Of the nine executive councilmen (including the President and General Secretary) all apparently come from a time-served skilled apprentice background. In general the same applies among district officials and National Committee members. Although the union has been open to all male engineering workers since 1926, the T&G.W.U. and the G.&M.W.U. have continued to be able to organise a large proportion of unskilled, and more important, semi-skilled workers, throughout the industry.

Nevertheless unions of skilled workers have shown themselves more willing to oppose state policies of incorporation. Reference has been made to the A.E.U. and the Mond-Turner talks. More recently under the 1964-1970 Labour governments the early opposition to an incomes policy was led by white-collar unions like D.A.T.A. and the A.C.T.T., representing relatively well-paid workers. Opposition to the 1971 Industrial Relations Act was in union terms led by the A.U.E.W. To a considerable extent therefore the position has been reversed since 1892. At that time the emergent unskilled unions were the important factor in the developing potential of the Socialist movement. Since then the decline in relative earnings, social status and hopes of 'advancement' of skilled workers seems to have been the major factor in making this sector the leading force in working-class opposition to capitalist attacks.

It should be made clear that I am referring to relative movements of consciousness within a reformist tradition. No sectors of the working-class (or any other strata) have developed into a revolutionary movement, and there is as yet no Marxist-Leninist force with sufficient experience and understanding to give the necessary powerful lead. A revolutionary programme for trade union work will only emerge as Marxists develop not only their theoretical understanding of the history and class-contradictions of the working-class movement, but also their involvement in mass struggles of all kinds. But there are certain components which must form an essential part of such a programme.

Firstly there are no important contradictions existing between white-collar, skilled and unskilled workers. The economic changes of the last seventy years or so have seen to that. The majority of productive workers are now organised, and the weakest area - white collar workers in private industry - is one where unions are now growing faster than ever before. Even more important is the unionisation of women workers.

In developing unions, all barriers between trades and crafts must be broken down. The policy decided by the First Congress of "Red Trade Unions" in 1921 - "to encourage organisation by industry as against old-fashioned unionism of organisation by craft" - is correct. Industrial unionism, organising workers on the basis of where they work rather than their particular function, must be our constant aim. Thus policies of 'horizontal' trade unionism (organising technicians, foremen and supervisors in whatever industry they work) is reactionary. The policies of such a union, Clive Jenkins's A.S.T.M.S. increasingly reflects not only its social base but also its stratified concept of building a union. Thus one premise of unions must be established - 'industrial unionism'.

Secondly our policies within such unions must be where possible to mobilise for national combined action to develop from local guerilla action. Even in such economic struggles the lessons of common interest of workers wherever they work is a vital one. Similarly where national actions, on better wages or conditions or against State repressive policies, can be developed on a much wider basis than any one industry, it will mark a further stage of development of common struggle. This is especially so in a period when any such struggle puts dangerous pressures on the very existence of employers' profits and therefore has a strong political potential.

Thirdly the recognition must be widened that although such struggles deepen the employers' and Government's economic and political crisis, the politics engendered are not themselves revolutionary politics. The fight against economism is still the most vital one for those in trade unions. A conscious socialist working class will only be able to recognise the need for scientific socialism when involved in action that is wider than that of trade unions. Lenin's statement in 'What is to be done?' is most important:

"The Social Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears."

Fourthly one prime "manifestation of tyranny and oppression" arising from British imperialism is the existence of racialism. The strong tendency in many industries for West Indian and Asian workers to be given the worst jobs at the lowest pay is particularly difficult to fight in a period of high unemployment. Nevertheless all communists must stand firmly against such practice, whatever short-term unpopularity it causes.

Fifthly and allied to the previous point Britain has a tradition of chauvinism and narrow national pride which affects all classes and strata. In a period of multi-national production by international companies, close links must be forged with workers in other countries. These can be most immediately achieved for our part with workers in Europe. Only a tiny minority of plant organisations have these links (Fords, Dunlop-Pirelli and a very few more) and international trade union organisation at rank and file level would be a considerable

step forward.

These are policies which will enable wider forms of action to develop which will help to overcome many of the traditional weaknesses and faults of the British working-class movement. They are not such as would limit involvement to those with a revolutionary perspective. But in different ways they have the potentiality of countering much that formed the labour aristocrat tradition. The need however exists for a consistent and all-round trade-union programme to counter the whole ruling class attack and destroy the influence of reformism. The C.F.B. has a duty to help in the formulation of such a programme. The objective trend towards a less differentiated working class, the end of the labour aristocrat stratum and proletarianisation of many white-collar workers all make the situation very favourable for such a programme. It will also be a key task in the formation of a Marxist-Leninist party.

S.M.

NOTES

1. STALIN: C.W. 8. 165.
2. See M.L.Q. 2. p. 25-26 and notes
3. A.J.P. Taylor quoted in Hobsbawm "INDUSTRY AND EMPIRE".
4. Shares of World Output of Manufactured Goods - percentages.

	United States..	Germany..	U.K...	France..	U.S.S.R...	Japan
1870	23	13	32	10	4	-
1913	36	16	14	6	5	1
1953	41	6	6	3	14	2
1963	28	6	4	2	20	4

(from Glyn and Sutcliffe "British Capitalism, Workers and The Profits Squeeze" Penguin 1972)

5. Share of income from abroad (gross) in British Gross National Product.* (in percentage terms).

1863-73	1894-1900	1910-14	1919-21	1946-50	1969-70
4.0	6.2	8.6	4.3	3.7(1.7net)	3.7(1.3net)

* Gross national product is the amount of wealth produced each year.

** Net figures are quoted where available as the most relevant for this subject. They represent the income remaining in Britain when other countries profits from investment in this country have been repatriated. Before the First World War there was very little foreign investment in Britain so there would be very little difference between gross and net figures.

It should also be noted that since the 1920's and especially since the mid-1950's foreign investment from Britain and other capitalist countries has increasingly been directed to the growth areas within the metropolitan countries where the international companies can make higher profits. (See for example Barrat Brown op.cit. table 2).

6. See for example: H. Magdoff. . .The Age of Imperialism, Monthly Review Press 1969. P. Jales. . .The Pillage of the Third World, 1968. A. Frank. . .Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, Monthly Review Press 1967. A. Emmanuel. . ."Unequal Exchange" N.L.B., 1972.
7. P.I.B. Report No.169 General Problems of Low Pay p.158-159.
8. National Income and Expenditure.....1972 (H.M.S.O.) Table One.
9. See for example "Struggle" December 1971.
"In 1970 about £42,000 million worth of wealth was produced. Of this £23,000 million was spent by the State. (This compares with spending only one sixteenth in 1860 and one eighth in the 1930's).
10. 'The Story of the Engineers' by James Jefferys. (L. & W. 1945)
The strength of this study compared with most official histories of unions is the way in which it relates technological change to the developing consciousness of engineering workers and the structure of the A.S.E., later the A.E.U. Jefferys, a member of the C.P.G.B. at the time he wrote this book, is conscious of the contradictions within the working-class although to an extent limited by the official nature of his commission. This section of the article relies heavily on Jefferys' study and unless otherwise stated, all references are to this book.
11. Sidney Pollard, "The Development of the British Economy 1914-1950", (Edward Arnold, 1962) pp.76-87.
12. See for example "Labouring Men", Eric Hobsbawm Ch.16.
The reasons for these unions developing leaderships which formed the basis of the far right in the Labour Party for over forty years (longer of course for the G.M.W.U.) must be the subject of other articles. Reference is made to their policies to counter the assertion or inference sometimes made that unskilled workers are necessarily more progressive and open to revolutionary ideas than other workers.
One important comment was made by J.R. Campbell in May 1924 in "Communist Review":
"If we examine the unions approximating the industrial form, the N.U.R., the T.G.W.U. and the I.S.T.C. (Iron and Steel Trades Confederation) we find that while they are approaching the industrial structure they are far from adopting the outlook which alone makes better organisation valuable and without which larger organisation only leads to bureaucracy and stagnation. . . . Active men must beware of propagating amalgamation (of unions S.M.) in a mechanical fashion without

reference to the need for a most vigorous struggle and without reference to the need for trade unionists to hew their way out of capitalism."

None of this of course is to say that unskilled workers have any less revolutionary potential than other workers.

13. The agreement signed in 1940 guaranteed toolroom workers earnings not less than those of skilled piece-workers. It was only brought out by employers in Coventry in 1972 after a long stoppage.
14. Willie Gallacher, Harry Pollitt, J.T. Murphy, Tom Mann and Wal Hannington are obvious examples. I am unsure from what industries other working-class militants came, such as MacManus, Bell and Paul.
15. "Story of the Electrical Trades Union" (1952) published by the E.T.U. This book as its name suggests is not a serious history of the union. But it does show similar trends to those followed by the A.E.U.
16. Without a much closer analysis these can only be taken as showing a general trend (the same applies for Table 2). Two points, however, should be made. Rates as opposed to earnings, especially in a period of relatively low unemployment, underestimate to some extent the wages of those who can push up earnings through securing different forms of bonus payments and of course by those working overtime. Certain advantages are evident here for skilled workers especially for those skills in short supply. Secondly and allied to this point is the observable increased differential between 1950 and 1970. I am not sure about the reasons for this, except that certainly in engineering it again relates to some extent to shortage of certain skilled categories. However even this does not appear to fit the 'labour aristocrat' argument. In the 19th. century this stratum certainly imposed severe limitations on entry to their crafts where privileges were so marked. By that means, accepted by many employers: (see Part 1 of this article) they could impose a Monopoly over the purchase of their skilled labour-power and thus raise its price above its value. But once those specific limitations on entry are removed and technical change makes it possible to substitute unskilled (or semi-skilled) labour they cannot at all easily be re-imposed by any section of workers. It seems much more likely that the increase in differentials where they occurred were the results of the particular need for skilled labour over a relatively short period of time in order to keep production going, e.g. re-tooling for a new production line, at a time of growth in demand for goods. This shortage of skilled labour was caused exactly by the previous decline in differentials. Skilled labour takes more time to produce and where its production does not seem worthwhile to workers, i.e. the time spent at low apprentice wages, evening classes etc., compared with the relatively increased price obtainable for selling unskilled labour power, it will not be forthcoming. For we must

remember that skilled labour does produce more value, that while labour power is a commodity, skilled labour-power will in general command a higher price, but that that price will be varying around its real value. See for example "Wage Labour and Capital" and "Wages, Price and Profit", which also deal with the impact of advanced machinery on skilled labour. Also e.g. Capital Vol.I Part III, 'Production of Surplus Value':

"The higher more complex labour which counts as worth more than average social labour is the manifestation of labour power in which higher costs of training have been incorporated, of labour power whose production has cost more labour time. That is why it has a higher value than simple labour power."

(p.192, Everyman edition)

The fact that Marx devoted little time to this problem was precisely because he was concerned with overall relationships between Labour and Capital, and realised better than anyone that value produced by individuals or strata within the working class could not be precisely measured, and that any variation in value could be observed, not at any one particular time, but only historically, over a considerable period.

The same qualification on important details apply as in the above note.

- (a) From 'British Labour Statistics', Dept. of Employment 1971. Until 1938 for engineering only. 1938 onwards, all manufacturing industries.
- (b) Excluding toolroom and maintenance fitters. From the Engineering Employers Federation until 1964, D. of E. thereafter.
- (c) D.A.T.A. (now A.U.E.W. (TASS)) averages. Figures predominantly of draughtsmen, estimators and planners for 1924 and 1938. 1971 includes larger numbers of other engineering technicians, because of change of membership composition.

P.I.B. Report op.cit. Table 1.

19. New Earnings Survey 1970 (H.M.S.O.) Table 36. The figures quoted all refer to the general category, 'Unskilled building or engineering workers', except for 'Textiles' where the nearest comparable category: 'Unskilled textile clothing or foot-wear worker', is used.

20. This in turn would of course relate to the intensity of labour i.e. speed of work, mental and physical pressure on workers etc. For example even at a time of high unemployment the turn-over of labour at car factories among production-line workers appears to be very high despite the relatively high wages offered, e.g. Fords at Dagenham; Chrysler at Ryton Coventry etc.

See also the Comintern resolution on the 1926 General Strike, e.g. "The economic basis of reformism in Great Britain has disappeared for ever...The British bourgeoisie more than the bourgeoisie of any other country maintained its power by bribing the masses (excess profits) and deceiving them ("glorious traditions of the British Constitution!"). The possibility to bribe no longer exists."

Discussion: The Origins of Revisionism in the USSR

Comrade M.F.'s article "On the origins and development of revisionism in the Soviet Union", whilst making many valid and pertinent criticisms of certain policies and incorrect ideas of Stalin and other Soviet leaders in the period 1935 to 1952, nevertheless does not, except in a minor way, contribute to an understanding of why the Soviet Union has degenerated into an imperialist state.

Many of the points raised are not seriously doubted by most Marxist-Leninists, but these points do not in themselves indicate revisionist leadership of the C.P.S.U.(B), but rather errors committed by good Marxist-Leninists. Nor does M.F. explain how or why these errors arose or why they should have led to the revisionist degeneration of the Soviet Union. Other points raised, like the nationalist deviations after 1941 may in fact indicate such revisionist leadership but nowhere does M.F. explain how such nationalism arose. In fact the whole article consists of criticism, mostly valid but sometimes erroneous, of Stalin and the C.P.S.U. It is by no means the analysis of the Soviet Union's degeneration that the article's title leads us to expect. To slightly misquote M.F. himself, "The extensive cataloguing of apparently revisionist phenomena in the Soviet Union from 1935 to 1952 does not in itself prove that revisionism existed there."

Certain of the criticisms made seem quite irrelevant, certainly the Western Communist parties, the French, Italian and British in particular, saw the defence of bourgeois democracy as an end in itself, but there is no evidence that the Marxist-Leninists in the Soviet leadership shared this aberration or that they had any illusions about the nature of bourgeois democracy. Certainly the relationships between the C.P.S.U., the Comintern and the fraternal parties left a lot to be desired, but so did internal party relationships in the C.P.S.U. from 1921 onwards, and in both cases the situation arose from objective necessity not from revisionism, nor is there any reason why such relationships should necessarily lead to revisionism, as Lenin said in 1918:

"...hence there is absolutely no contradiction in principle between Soviet (i.e. Socialist) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individual persons." (1).

M.F. mentions also the shifts in policy in 1928, 1935 and 1939 towards the social democratic parties and says that these policy shifts may have been incorrect. That may be so, but why should such policy shifts lead to revisionism?

Other criticisms seem to be made from a liberal rather than from a Marxist position. Discussing the great purge of 1936 onwards and relating it to the Slansky trial of 1952 in Czechoslovakia M.F. says: "Detailed information provided by the survivors of the 'Slansky'

trial in Prague in 1952, reveals the systematic employment of psychological torture, the fabricating of incriminating evidence and the extraction of phoney confessions in political frame-ups supervised and staged by the Soviet security forces."

This statement would be more appropriate gracing the pages of the "Guardian" rather than M.L.Q., and the detailed information referred to comes from Czech emigre bourgeois and Zionist sources and from ultra-revisionists like Dubcek and Sik and from common-or-garden revisionists like Husak. In any event the essential point is not whether such methods were used but whether the people convicted were objectively enemies of the people and whether or not they could be defeated by any other means.

It is not seriously doubted by Marxist-Leninists that Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Bukharin and the others accused in the Moscow trials were proposing policies which were prejudicial to the interests of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union and were engaging in counter-revolutionary wrecking activities. M.F. would no doubt say that these people should have been defeated by mass action as in the Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution in China, although even there excesses took place as Mao pointed out.

It must be remembered that the objective circumstances in the Soviet Union in 1936 and in China in 1966 were very different. China had not lost a whole generation of cadres and militant workers in a civil war, China did not have to industrialise in ten years and thus have a working class with an overwhelmingly peasant mentality, China did not have to collectivise by force and thus face considerable hostility from the peasantry, in China Liu Shao Chi and his stooges did not indulge in terrorism, assassination and sabotage as did the lackeys of Zinoviev, Trotsky and Bukharin. China was not threatened with imminent imperialist invasion and was not the only socialist state in a hostile world. One could go on for ever, but the fact is that all these factors made it necessary to resolve the internal contradictions by force and by administrative measures, although the rank and file of the party did participate. Here it should be noted that at an earlier period of acute class struggle, in 1921, Lenin and the rest of the Bolshevik leadership did not hesitate to use Fanny Kaplan's attempted assassination of Lenin as an excuse to execute several hundred Left Socialist Revolutionaries and to instigate a reign of terror against the Socialist Revolutionaries and other anti-Soviet elements. This reign of terror was carried out by the use of the Cheka and by show-trials, in other words by administrative methods. Without doubt these and similar methods are undesirable and can only be rarely justified but they in no way indicate revisionist leadership and provided that this bureaucratic style of work is eradicated as soon as possible and the masses increasingly involved there is no reason why such methods should lead to revisionism.

We come now to the more substantive of M.F.'s remarks. During the course of his argument M.F. states that Stalin saw the external rather than the internal contradictions as being decisive in the struggle for Socialism. There is certainly some evidence that Stalin was suffering from some ideological confusion on this question, but it is ingenious to argue as M.F. does that Stalin's

position was that "the victory of Socialism in one country cannot be final because it has no guarantee against intervention." Stalin's published statements in the late thirties show that this was far from being his position. In 1937 he said:

"On the contrary, the greater our progress, the greater our successes, the more embittered the remnants of the exploiting classes will become, the more quickly will they resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more they will do damage to the Soviet state, the more they will clutch at the most desperate forms of struggle as the last resort of the doomed." (2)

and in 1939:

"We must put an end to the opportunist complacency arising from the mistaken presupposition that in proportion to the growth of our forces the enemy will grow ever tamer and more inoffensive, such a presupposition is basically wrong. It is a belch of the right opposition which assured everyone that our enemies would quietly creep into Socialism, that in the long run they would become real Socialists."

and at the same time:

"We must destroy and cast aside the rotten theory that with every advance we make the class struggle here of necessity would die down more and more, and that in proportion as we achieve success the class enemy would grow more and more tractable." (3)

These statements make it quite clear that Stalin fully recognised the internal contradictions and although some other contradictory and contemporary statements reveal some ideological confusion it is quite clear from Stalin's practice that there was no let up on internal class struggle until the beginning of the great patriotic war. M.F. also mentions the related question of Stalin's believing that Communism could be built in the Soviet Union alone. Whilst this idea is obviously not in accord with reality it is in no way a contributory factor to the rise of revisionism as Stalin never allowed this idea to prevent class struggle.

As evidence for his assertions on these matters M.F. quotes the statement of the C.P.C. "On the question of Stalin" and in his notes and references states that this is a milder statement than the earlier "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", published in 1956. Surely the historical significance of this date cannot have escaped the vigilant eyes of M.F.? This revisionist document was published in the aftermath of the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and its assessment of Stalin was essentially the same as that of Khrushchov. The document was erroneous not only on this question but also on that of Yugoslavia where it criticised the Cominform's expulsion of Yugoslavia in 1948. Our Chinese comrades have recognised the nature of this document and have withdrawn it from circulation. Two quotes will suffice to show the essential nature of this document, firstly:

"It is understandable that the Yugoslav comrades bear a particular resentment against Stalin's mistakes. In the past, they made worthy efforts to stick to Socialism under difficult

conditions. Their experiences in the democratic management of economic enterprises and other Socialist organisations have also attracted attention. The Chinese people welcome the reconciliation between the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries on the one hand and Yugoslavia on the other, as well as the establishment and development of friendly relations between China and Yugoslavia."

and secondly:

"The 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. summed up the fresh experiences gained both in international relations and domestic construction. It took a series of momentous decisions on the steadfast implementation of Lenin's policy in regard to the possibility of peaceful co-existence between countries of different social systems, on the development of Soviet democracy, on the thorough observation of the party's principle of collective leadership, on the criticism of shortcomings within the party, and on the sixth five-year plan for the development of the national economy." (4).

It has been said that comparisons are odious and there have been few more odious than M.F.'s comparison of Stalin's reference to "thieves and pilferers" at the eighteenth congress of the C.P.S.U. and Khrushchov's similar references at the twentieth. M.F. says that in both cases there was a failure to relate these phenomena to class antagonisms. This was certainly the case with Khrushchov, and after all who would expect a renegade like Khrushchov to make such an analysis? The statements of Stalin quoted earlier make it quite clear that Stalin recognised the class nature of such phenomena.

Some of the issues raised by M.F. are certainly contributory factors to the rise of revisionism in the Soviet Union, particularly the concessions to nationalists and the new bourgeoisie during the war, the tremendous pay differentials in the army and the introduction of bourgeois customs into the army, the nationalist deviations at the end of and after the war and the lack of a mass line and mass involvement at this time.

However, whilst the points raised by M.F. are valid, it must be stated that M.F. raises them in an idealist and metaphysical manner, in no way relating them to the objective circumstances of the Soviet Union at the time or suggesting alternatives or indeed if there were any alternatives. It cannot be denied that these tendencies indicated serious deviation from the proletarian line and a serious eroding of the proletarian dictatorship. The question is though, through what circumstances did these tendencies arise, why did these circumstances arise, could they have been avoided and what was the balance of class forces in the party and the country as a whole?

To determine this it is necessary to go back to 1917 and earlier. In the first place the proletarian dictatorship was established in a country where the proletariat constituted only 15% of the population. This of course is no reason why the proletarian dictatorship could not be consolidated, as China's experience amply demonstrates, but it is hardly an ideal beginning

and I shall argue that successive crises over the next forty years prevented this consolidation and eventually enabled a new bourgeoisie to seize control of the party and state apparatus by the early 1930's and eventually restore Capitalism.

Whilst the Russian proletariat seized state power through the Bolsheviks in 1917, they did not smash the state machine. In the early 1920's it was estimated that 80% of middle and lower rank civil servants and bureaucrats were survivors from Czarist days, and in most cases old ministries and organisations were simply taken over and renamed. In 1922 Lenin said:

"We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack real control over them. In practice it often happens that there at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine somehow functions....down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials, whom we took over from the Czar and from bourgeois society, and who, in part deliberately and in part unwittingly, work against us." (5).

This early failure to completely smash the state machine was undoubtedly one of the main contributory factors to the subsequent counter-revolution. Marx and Engels, learning from the experience of the revolutions of 1848 had argued that:

".....the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes..." (6).

Over the years 1918 to 1922 the flower of the party and working class, who were naturally the most active and volunteered first, were decimated in the civil war and the wars of foreign intervention. This loss of the most advanced cadres and militant workers was to have serious repercussions over the next thirty years. At the end of the civil war and wars of intervention the party was compelled, for reasons too well known to enumerate here, to introduce the new economic policy. This return to Capitalism and State-Capitalism over much of the economy propagated once more bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology throughout much of the population. Furthermore many opportunists and scoundrels from the ranks of these two classes joined the party and infiltrated the state machine once they realised that the workers state had been successfully defended. Obviously this is a problem that any party will face after the seizure of state power, but because of the previously mentioned decimation of the good elements the opportunists and careerists had far greater scope for the propagation of erroneous and bourgeois ideology and they could not be decisively beaten by the proletarian elements.

"When we are told....that the state farms are everywhere hiding places for old landowners slightly disguised or not disguised at all, and that similar things are often to be observed in chief administrations, I never doubt that it is true." (7).

By the late 1930's the Soviet Union had been successfully collectivised and was well on the way to the successful completion of the plans for the country's industrialization. The cost and circumstances of this collectivisation and industrialization have already been mentioned. At the same time a vast purge had been

carried out and many non-proletarians taking an anti-Soviet road eliminated, although it must be said that many innocent people suffered and many guilty escaped, as Stalin himself admitted. (8). Stalin was aware of the need for the masses to be increasingly involved in the running and decision-making of the Soviet Union and the urgent need to develop a mass line, he was aware also of the dangers of the bureaucratic and administrative methods necessarily used in the Soviet Union up to that time.

"I am referring to the bureaucratic elements to be found in our party, government, trades unions, co-operatives and all other organisations. I am referring to the bureaucratic elements who batten on all our weaknesses and errors, who fear like the plague all criticism by the masses, all control by the masses, and hinder us in developing self-criticism and ridding ourselves of all weaknesses and errors. Bureaucracy in our organisations is a manifestation of bourgeois influence on our organisations. (9).

and,

"The surest remedy for bureaucracy is raising the cultural level of the workers and peasants...unless the mass of the workers reach a certain level of culture the bureaucracy will continue to exist in spite of everything." (10).

and,

"...how are we to put an end to bureaucracy in all these organisations? There is only one sure way of doing this and that is to organise control from below, to organise criticism of the bureaucracy in our institutions, of their shortcomings and mistakes, by the vast masses of the working class." (11).

These quotes from Stalin show that he was well aware of the urgent need to develop a mass line and to eradicate the bureaucracy. They show also however that this could not be done by rhetoric, sloganizing or posturing, but only by painstakingly raising the cultural level of the people. This would have been a mammoth task in the Soviet Union under any circumstances but in the circumstances which prevailed in the Soviet Union it was to prove an insuperable task. It seems to me that the new constitution of 1936, seen by many as revisionist, was in effect an attempt by the party leadership to involve the masses more and more. However, because of the ideological confusion of Stalin on the question of the internal contradictions, the new constitution also enabled many dubious elements, the new bourgeoisie, whiteguards, kulaks, etc., to worm their way into positions of power and influence in the party and state, where they were able to give support to the many bad elements entrenched there.

M.F. has remarked on the nationalist and other deviations that accompanied the "great patriotic war" and the valiant efforts of the Soviet people and there is no need to re-enumerate them here. M.F. states:

"Although Stalin himself was not swept along on the nationalist tide he did not try to stem it, he even encouraged it. Perhaps there was no alternative, but that begs the question about the nature of the policies prior to the war."

This statement is basically true. There was no alternative, but M.F. goes on to conclude that erroneous policies were followed prior to the war, whereas I have tried to show that, although some mistakes were made, the general line was correct.

Because of the circumstances in the Soviet Union it was necessary to unite the nation in a patriotic war rather than the workers and peasants in a class war against the Fascist invaders. Certainly Stalin encouraged the nationalist emotions, but, as M.F. remarks, he was not swept along with them, and this was because Stalin remained a Marxist-Leninist and was aware, though perhaps not fully, of the dangers inherent in these policies, just as he was aware of the dangers of the bureaucratic style of work prior to the war. Stalin did discourage the excesses of nationalism, for instance, the arch-revisionist Ilya Ehrenburg, whose racialist rantings were mentioned by M.F., was publicly rebuked by Stalin for precisely those rantings. Efforts were made to fight, as far as possible, a class war in parallel with the patriotic war, whilst it is true, as M.F. remarks, that soldiers were released from all socialist obligations, it was not true for party members in the armed forces, and this of course is the reason why the Germans shot all party members on capture, as they did not, for instance, shoot all members of the British Labour party on capture. Leaflets were dropped behind the German lines explaining the class nature of the war, German prisoners were re-educated and special squads of party members infiltrated the German lines and spread Communist propaganda and agitation. Despite these efforts however it cannot be denied that the prevailing line was nationalism.

I have argued earlier that despite all difficulties the party never left off class struggle, but now, in the war situation, a grave mistake was made, in order to forge the maximum amount of national unity, the party leadership, including Stalin, one-sidedly emphasised unity with the non-worker and peasant elements to the detriment of struggle against them. This, together with the effects of the influx of dubious elements into the party after the new constitution of 1936, together with the factors which necessitated a bureaucratic style of work in the 1930's enabled the bourgeois nationalists to seize control of the party and state apparatus by the end of the 1940's. The years from the end of the war were years of tremendous struggle inside the party and it was not until 1955 that the bourgeois elements were finally able to consolidate their rule.

The second world war ended in 1945 with the losses of the Soviet Union, both military and civilian, estimated at twenty million dead and uncounted wounded. The new generation of cadres and militant workers, so carefully built up to replace those lost from 1918 to 1922, was virtually wiped out. As in the civil war it was these cadres and workers who volunteered first and who were in the thick of the fighting, those who were not killed in action were shot by the Germans on capture.

By the end of the war, due to objective circumstances and mistakes of the leadership mentioned earlier, there can be no doubt that the bourgeois elements in the Soviet Union had seized

considerable power and influence both in the party and in the state machine. This influence manifested itself in such bourgeois practices as the agreements at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, the Polish agreements and the outrageous repressions inflicted on Germany. At the same time, the Marxist-Leninists in the party headed by Stalin, Zhandov, Beria and Vyshinsky were able to prevent them from seizing complete control and were able to defend the socialist economic base of the Soviet Union. They were also able to lead the brilliant campaign against the Yugoslav revisionists and to get Yugoslavia expelled from the Cominform. Two quotes from this period demonstrate that the Soviet party opened the polemic against modern revisionism:

"The state sector of the economy is no longer public property, State capitalism predominates in Industry, and private capital is tightening it's grip in the towns and especially in the countryside ...The restoration of capitalism in Yugoslavia is accompanied by shameless demagogy to the effect that all this, if you please, is building socialism, and so on." (12).

and,

"In the sphere of the economy, the fascist Tito-Rankovitch clique took the line of restoring capitalism in town and countryside. They base themselves on the urban bourgeoisie which receives from the Fascist Tito-Rankovitch clique the means of production wrested from the people...In order to facilitate the restoration of capitalism the Yugoslav fascists undertook so-called "decentralization" of the entire national economy, abolished state management of industry, planned production and planned distribution of raw materials and goods. From the pronouncements of Tito, Kidric, and other Belgrade chieftains it follows that the basic law of Yugoslav economy is the capitalist law of supply and demand." (13).

From these quotes it is evident that Stalin and his comrades, far from being responsible for the rise of revisionism, in fact recognised modern revisionism as soon as it appeared and carried out a systematic polemic against it.

The struggle between the bourgeois and proletarian lines in the C.P.S.U. reached it's zenith in 1952/53 and ended with the bourgeois elements in control, although they were not able to consolidate this control until 1955, when they removed the remaining Marxist-Leninists from the central committee.

In the year 1952/53, within the space of a few months, the conspiracy commonly called the Doctors plot was uncovered, which quite clearly showed how the revisionists were working with British and American intelligence and were responsible for the death of Zhandov in 1948, and the publication of Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." occurred. This work exposed revisionist fallacies on the nature of imperialism, on peaceful co-existence and on the laws of value, defended the economic base of socialism in the Soviet Union and advocated eliminating the commodity relationship between the collective farms and society as a whole by taking them into state ownership, as a further step of socialist construction.

"Take for instance the distinction between agriculture and industry. In our country it consists not only in the fact that conditions of labour in agriculture differ from those in industry, but mainly and chiefly, in the fact that whereas we have public ownership of the means of production AND OF THE PRODUCT OF INDUSTRY, in agriculture we have not public BUT GROUP collective-farm ownership. It has already been said that this fact leads to the PRESERVATION OF COMMODITY CIRCULATION, and that only when this distinction between industry and agriculture disappears can commodity production with all it's attendant consequences also disappear." (14). (My emphases - N.R.).

This quote shows that Stalin was aware not only of the next necessary step in socialist construction but was also aware of the errors of the then embryonic revisionist political economy.

In 1952 Stalin, for the first time since the death of Lenin, did not give the political report to the delegates to the party congress, it was given instead by the revisionist Malenkov, this might not normally be thought to have any significance, but in the light of the situation of the party and of the events of the next few months, might it not be that Stalin was not allowed to give the report? In the next few months, in a manner most fortuitous for the revisionists, the leading Marxist-Leninists in the party were to die sudden deaths. Stalin died, allegedly from a cerebral haemorrhage, though there is considerable circumstantial evidence that he was murdered, in March 1953, Beria was shot without trial. Abakumov was shot after a secret trial in 1954 and Vyshinsky died in mysterious circumstances in New York in 1954. These, not coincidentally, were the people attacked by Khrushchov in his secret speech at the twentieth congress.

Within a few months of Stalin's death the struggle against the Yugoslav revisionists abated and by 1955 there had been an open reconciliation. At the same time the "anti-party" group of Molotov, Kaganovitch and Voroshilov, who had belatedly woken up to what was going on and who were publicly supported by Mac on his visit to Moscow in 1955, were purged from the party. The revisionists had consolidated their control of the party and the counter-revolution was complete.

This article is in no way intended to be a comprehensive survey of the reasons for the degeneration of the Soviet Union, but is merely an attempt to refute some apparent errors in M.F.'s article and to raise what seem, in my opinion, to be more likely reasons. In summary I would say that the tasks of building socialism in the Soviet Union would have been enormous under any circumstances. As Lenin said:

"The more backward the country which, owing to the zig-zags of history, has proved to be the one to start socialist revolution, the more difficult it is for her to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations." (15).

In the actual situation in which the workers seized power the task was rendered doubly difficult:

"We began our revolution in unusually difficult conditions,

condition: ... as no other workers' revolution in the world will ever have to face." (16.)

I have tried in the course of this article to outline what were the reasons for the bourgeois counter-revolution, and it may well be that, given the objective circumstances of the period of socialist construction, such a counter-revolution was inevitable, which is in no way to accept Trotsky's concept that socialism cannot be built in one country. In regard to the "question" of Stalin it may well be that some mistakes of Stalin and other leaders of the Soviet Union were contributory factors to the rise of revisionism. What is certain however is that the factors outlined in this article, which were factors outside their control, had far more impact and that Stalin and the other leaders devoted their lives to the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union and to its defence from the internal and external enemies. The following seems an apt quote to end this contribution to this important debate.

"Stalin's life was that of a great Marxist-Leninist, a great proletarian revolutionary." (17).

N.R.

NOTES

1. Lenin - The immediate tasks of the Soviet government.
2. Stalin - Speech at the plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B). March 3rd 1937.
3. Stalin - Mastering Bolshevism. 1939.
4. C.P.C. - On the historical experience of the dictatorship of the Proletariat. 1956.
5. Lenin - Speech at the fourth congress of the Communist International. 1922.
6. Marx and Engels - The Communist Manifesto. 1848.
7. Lenin - Speech at the seventh all-Russian congress of Soviets. 1921.
8. Stalin - Leninism. 1940.
9. Stalin - Against vulgarising the slogan of self-criticism. 1928.
10. Stalin - Speech to the fifteenth congress of the C.P.S.U.(B). 1927.
11. Stalin - Speech to the eighth congress of the all-union Leninist Young Communist League. 1928.
12. Cominform newspaper "For a lasting peace" Sept. 1st 1949.
13. Cominform newspaper "For a lasting peace" April 6th 1951.
14. Stalin - Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. 1952.
15. Lenin - Speech at the extraordinary seventh congress of the R.C.P.(B). 1918.
16. Lenin - Speech at the extraordinary sixth congress of Soviets. 1918.
17. C.P.C. - "On the question of Stalin". 1963

NEW ERA BOOKS

MARXIST-LENINIST LITERATURE

Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR; Stalin. 10p

Manifesto of the Communist Party; Marx/Engels. 7½p

On the Struggle Against Revisionism; Lenin. 10p

Imperialism & State and Revolution; Lenin. 10p each

From Marx to Mao Tse-tung; George Thomson. 50p

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