

REVOLUTION

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

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“FIGHT ON TO UNITE THE MARXIST-LENINIST MOVEMENT”

**PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM
AND THE DUTIES OF BRITISH COMMUNISTS**

**INFLATION IS CAUSED BY
THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM!**

**STRUGGLE TO BUILD
A FINE STYLE OF WORK IN THE LEAGUE!**



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

The Revolutionary Communist League is a national organization with branches in half a dozen towns and cities in Britain. It is dedicated to the task of rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

Since the Communist Party of Great Britain was taken over by a band of revisionists, the working class in Britain has had no vanguard party to lead it. Without a party giving leadership it is impossible to overthrow the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie and the capitalist system; it is impossible to establish socialism and to enforce a dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie to prevent them seizing power back again.

Without a vanguard revolutionary Communist Party the working class cannot sustain their existing struggles against the attacks of the monopoly capitalists through to the end and cannot raise them to a higher level.

For these reasons building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class is the central task in Britain today, the task around which we must arrange all our work.

The Revolutionary Communist League of Britain was founded in July 1977 out of the militant unity forged between two former organizations, the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Unity Association (Marxist-Leninist). This militant unity was won through active ideological struggle, the weapon for ensuring unity.

The Revolutionary Communist League takes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the theoretical basis guiding its thinking. It strives to integrate this scientific theory of the international working class with the concrete conditions of the socialist revolution within Britain.

In its mass work the Revolutionary Communist League concentrates particularly on sinking deep roots among the industrial working class. The Revolutionary Communist League implements democratic centralism in its internal life in a centralized and lively way. It has published a Manifesto as an important step towards the programme of the future revolutionary Party.

The founding of the Revolutionary Communist League is an important advance in rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!

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EDITORIAL

Rebuilding the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class is the main task facing British Marxist-Leninists.

Internationally and nationally the day to day class struggle throws up urgent tasks for Communists. The international united front against the hegemonism of the two superpowers is growing in strength. The third world nations in particular have continued to struggle boldly, and have won some important gains. The third world is the main force against superpower hegemonism. In Britain, as in other second world countries the proletariat is regrouping its forces. Without a revolutionary Communist Party to unite and lead the working class in its internationalist tasks, the full weight of the British working class cannot be thrown into the struggle.

Nationally, the imperialist bourgeoisie continues its policy of forcing the working class to pay for the crisis of capitalism. Resistance to attacks on living standards, unemployment and racist attacks to divide the workers is growing. But it is still fragmented, and sabotaged by the opportunist misleaders of the working class - the revisionists and social democrats. Without a revolutionary Communist Party, which has rallied the best, most class conscious elements of the working class, the fightback of the workers cannot go on the offensive.

This is why rebuilding the party is the main task for the British Marxist-Leninist movement.

There is much work to do before the revolutionary Communist Party is founded. At the present stage uniting the Marxist-Leninist movement is a key task. One year ago, 'Revolution' published the "Call to the British Marxist-Leninist Movement" which called on all Marxist-Leninists to struggle for unity in a single Party building organisation. Since then the policies put forward have been tested in practice, and there is now important experience to sum up.

The article "Fight on to Unite the Marxist-Leninist Movement!" sums up developments since the publication of the "Call to the British Marxist-Leninist Movement" and reformulates the tasks in the present situation.

The hallmark of a serious Marxist-Leninist organisation is its willingness to learn from its mistakes, and to practice self-criticism, in order to overcome them. The article "Proletarian Internationalism and the Tasks of British Communists" criticises a right opportunist error in the work of the RCL. This error was failure to grasp the duty of the Communists in Britain to support the struggle of peoples and nations oppressed by British imperialism, and in supporting in our propaganda only the struggles of third world nations, overlooking the national democratic struggles of the peoples within these countries. In the international united

front against superpower hegemonism there must be both unity and struggle. Unity can only be won through struggle. One aspect of this is that British Communists have the proletarian internationalist duty to struggle firmly against British imperialist exploitation of third world nations. British Communists also have the duty to support struggles in the third world against the vacillation of the bourgeoisie, and against internal repression. Through such struggles the international proletariat will become the leading force in the international united front.

In the course of building the revolutionary Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist theory must be integrated with concrete conditions in Britain. The article "Inflation is caused by the capitalist system!" takes an important first step in integrating theory with concrete conditions in the area of political economy. Bourgeois lies about wages and prices are widespread and powerful. Communists, particularly in the factories, must arm themselves both with theory and with facts to be able to refute bourgeois propaganda about the crisis of capitalism.

The RCL is a young organisation. Comrades in the League must certainly learn all they can from the great traditions of the Communist Party of China, so that the revolutionary Communist Party will be built on firm foundations. One of the most important things to emulate is the fine style of work of the CPC. This is the style of seeking truth from facts, practising the mass line and democratic centralism. The article "Struggle to build a Fine Style of Work in the League", points out that these three aspects are all needed in order to integrate theory with practice.

Editorial Committee

"FIGHT ON TO UNITE THE MARXIST-LENINIST MOVEMENT"

A year ago, just before the founding Congress of the Revolutionary Communist League, 'Revolution' published an important article: "Call to the British Marxist-Leninist Movement".

The article sharpened the criticism of the fast growing errors of the leadership of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). It criticised small group mentality, which has fragmented the British Marxist-Leninist movement so damagingly. It severely warned of the danger of setting up a new federation as a cosy half-way house for the Marxist-Leninist groups and it called for all genuine Marxist-Leninists step by step to struggle for principled unity in a single Marxist-Leninist organisation.

Extracts from the "Call to the British Marxist-Leninist Movement" were published by comrades in several other countries, including China. As the article pointed out:

"The British Marxist-Leninist movement now has 14 years experience. Most of that experience is negative, but one of the strengths of Marxism-Leninism is that it enables us to learn from negative experience."

But we can also learn from positive experience. There have been some important developments in the British Marxist-Leninist movement in the past year. It is necessary to sum them up and in the light of the new situation to reformulate our fighting tasks in building the Party of the working class.

In the last year the Revolutionary Communist League was founded on the basis of the successful struggle for unity between the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Unity Association (Marxist-Leninist). A little later the East London Marxist-Leninist Association dissolved itself and some of its leading members also joined the RCL. This was yet another victory for building the single Party of the working class.

Meanwhile the revisionism of the Birch clique, heading the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) has become even more apparent. Birch has fully exposed himself as a trade union bureaucrat lieutenant of capitalism, an enemy of the great People's Republic of China, and as a toady of the Soviet social imperialists!

UNITE WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE - TO FORM THE SINGLE LEADING CENTRE FOR PARTY BUILDING!

Since the founding of the Revolutionary Communist League in July 1977 increasing numbers of advanced workers and other revolutionary people have recognised that the Manifesto of the RCL is the best thing we yet have in Britain in hammering out the programme of the future revolutionary Party of the working class. They recognise that the RCL has a militant and serious attitude in integrating the

universal revolutionary truths of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete struggles of the British working class. They recognise that the RCL has a militant and scientific style of criticism and self-criticism and that it practices firm democratic centralism. They also see that the RCL is determined to struggle for principled unity in a single organisation with all honest Marxist-Leninists in Britain, and that it knows how to increase the chances of achieving this to the maximum!

In the autumn of 1977 the central committee set itself a target of increasing the membership of the RCL by one third over the following year. On the basis of careful and principled assessment of applicants for candidate membership that target was achieved within only six months. This is an excellent situation for Party-building!

In order to achieve the full potential of the excellent situation all comrades in the RCL must remain personally modest and guard against arrogance and conceit. Otherwise they will start going backwards. It is essential for all comrades to understand how much energetic work we have to do to build the real revolutionary Party of the working class, and to tackle this vigorously. But events of the past year are showing that advanced workers and revolutionary people in Britain are increasingly seeing the RCL as the best centre leading the way forward in Party building. It would be liberal and a form of false petty bourgeois modesty to deny this. It would be treason to the urgent task of rebuilding the Communist Party of the working class and a betrayal of thousands of British Communists and workers who fought their whole lives for the socialist revolution.

But although the RCL may be the best leading centre in Britain (despite having much work to do) it is not in itself the single leading centre. The majority of genuine Marxist-Leninists are still outside its ranks and in other organisations.

Establishing a single leading centre is our specific and immediate organisational task in Party building.

As the "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" explains, a single leading centre is an essential precondition for forging a true revolutionary Party:

"although the First Congress had been held, in reality no Marxist (revolutionary) party was as yet formed in Russia. The congress did not succeed in writing the separate Marxist circles and organisations and welding them together organisationally. There was still no common line of action in the work of the local organisations, nor was there a party programme, party rules or a single leading centre".
(Chapter I, section 4).

Whether or not to form a single leading centre is a major question for the British Marxist-Leninist movement today. Over the next two or three years it is likely to be the subject of a fierce two-line struggle. Increasingly all genuine Bolsheviks, all genuine Marxist-Leninists, will gravitate towards and struggle to establish

a single leading centre for the Party of the working class. But just as increasingly the minority of Mensheviks, of opportunists who are soaked in petty-bourgeois individualism and who do not put the interests of the working class first, will look for one reason after another as an excuse to keep away from the leading centre that is emerging. This process is historically inevitable. All those who earnestly want to see the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class rebuilt must study these facts militantly and soberly, and do all they can to unite the greatest possible number of revolutionary Communists in a single leading centre.

It is always better to have more people for revolution! The central committee of the RCL has firmly pledged itself to struggle for unity with all genuine Marxist-Leninists outside its ranks.

In particular the RCL believes it is very much in the interests of Party-building to devote a lot of energy to winning principled unity with the comrades of the Communist Workers Movement.

The Communist Workers Movement is an organisation of comrades who firmly and correctly split from the opportunist Birch leadership of the CPB(M-L) in the autumn of 1976. Over the last year they have made substantial progress in combating opportunism, in consolidating the CWM on a clear political basis and in grasping the essential organisational principle of democratic centralism.

The RCL and the CWM must unite!

Starting from the desire for unity they must seek common ground on major questions. Already there is a lot of common ground between the two organisations. It is only natural that at present there are also some differences on major questions. These will undoubtedly be resolved if both sides persevere in thrashing matters out in terms of what is in the interests of the working class.

"Struggle is the means to unity and unity is the aim of struggle!"

In struggling for unity between the RCL and the CWM there will be no horse-trading of vital principles for the socialist revolution. Nor will we win unity on the basis of the lowest common denominator.

Each side will and must argue firmly for what it believes is in the interests of the working class. But it must also be ready to listen to criticism and to make self-criticism when necessary. For example, comrades in the RCL must understand that some of the criticisms by the CWM of the Manifesto of the RCL may turn out to be correct, and at an appropriate time the central committee of the RCL will make any necessary statements on the subject. Providing we persist in a correct spirit the common struggle for unity between the RCL and the CWM will not only win unity within a single democratic centralist organisation: it will win it on a political basis that will further clarify the policies and tactics of the socialist revolution in Britain. It will undoubtedly take us nearer to the Programme of the future revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

The other differences between the RCL and the CWM will be minor. These should be reserved and resolved under democratic centralism within the future single organisation. Democratic centralism is not

a unity of the grave. It presupposes democratic debate under centralised guidance, criticism and self-criticism. Continual summing up of experience and two-line struggles about the correct way to assess the work of the past and go forward with future tasks are an indispensable part of a democratic centralist Communist Party. Minor differences will best be resolved in this manner within a united, single and much larger organisation that is vigorously getting on with the major tasks on which principled unity has already been reached.

The main way of winning unity between Marxist-Leninist organisations is by seeking common ground and struggling for unity on major political principles. But as a subordinate aspect, in order to strengthen the desire for unity and increase the opportunity for comrades at all levels to learn from each others strong points, it is also useful for the two organisations to engage in joint activities on an agreed political basis.

Although the RCL's resources for struggling for unity with other organisations are limited it very much wants to promote the possibilities of winning unity with other Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain in addition to the CWM. It appreciates receiving the publications of other organisations and receipts of comradely letters including those which make serious and militant criticisms, even if we consider the criticisms to be incorrect, so long as the letters start from the desire for unity. We call on all other genuine Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain to unite with the RCL!

The RCL is determined to work tirelessly to unite all who can be united in the vital task of establishing a single leading centre to build the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class in Britain. We call on all comrades and friends to do whatever they can to speed this glorious task. A single leading centre will be built! No tricks of the bourgeoisie, and no manoeuvres by the opportunists can prevent it!

CRITICISE THE REVISIONIST BIRCH CLIQUE!

Birch, the leader of what was once the most respected Marxist-Leninist organisation in Britain, the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), has now fully exposed himself as a thorough-going revisionist. As the article in the last issue of "Revolution" clearly and militantly showed, Birch is no longer part of the Marxist-Leninist movement.

He is a trade union bureaucrat, a labour lieutenant of capital. As a long-standing full time official of the engineering union, the AUEW, he was promoted to the General Council of the TUC, which is now effectively an extra arm of the bourgeois state. He was promoted purely on the grounds of seniority as a trade union bureaucrat. There was a vacancy and he was the oldest candidate: therefore he was automatically appointed. In no way was he elected with the support of the mass of the workers. In no way did he enter the General Council of the TUC as a revolutionary Communist

in order to expose it as a tool of the bourgeoisie. The most revolutionary thing he does is to mutter cynically into the next pint of beer!

In recognition of his services the British imperialist bourgeoisie have now finally entered his name in the pages of "Who's Who" the roll call of monopoly capitalists and their political, economic and cultural servants!

As Lenin wrote:

"Practice has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself".
(Report to the Second Congress of the Communist International 1920).

To take one example, in the Spring of 1977 a wave of strikes by workers against the wage cuts imposed by the "Social Contract" broke out of the straight jacket in which the opportunist leaders had confined the working class. One of these was a strike of maintenance men at Heathrow airport. On Wednesday April 6th, Birch appeared on television as a faithful lieutenant of capital, instructing these maintenance men who had been firmly holding out against a notorious "blacklegs' charter" cooked up by the Government and TUC to continue flights from the airport, to return to work.

What no member of the bourgeoisie could do, Birch did for them and he dressed this treachery up as Marxism-Leninism! The April 25th issue of 'The Worker', the paper of the CPB(M-L), brazenly declared in the title of its main article "No advance without Marxism-Leninism"! And beside a picture of Birch addressing the courageous strikers, the opening sentence of the article declared with thundering hypocrisy,

"What has been demonstrated by the maintenance engineers at Heathrow, as by the tool room engineers at Leyland, is that there is no substitute for straight forward rejection of the social contract as an attack on trade unionism and hostile to the interests of the working class".

The article was a brazen and most "straightforward" justification of out and out treachery by Birch.

How invaluable it is for the bourgeoisie to have such servants can be seen when we recall the crying need for the British working class to have its own revolutionary Communist Party once again to lead it. The value to the bourgeoisie of having such a traitor at the head of the largest Marxist-Leninist organisation in Britain is incalculable.

By his own deeds Birch has made himself an obstacle to Party-building which must be ruthlessly thrown to one side. It is far from enough to dismiss him sneeringly. It is absolutely essential for Party-building that Birch is completely exposed and discredited by a militant and protracted campaign until there is not a single honest Marxist-Leninist left in Britain who can have any doubt

about Birch's true revisionist nature. No one must stand on the fence.

Birch's contempt for the working class is matched by his hatred of socialist China and his love for the Soviet social imperialists. At a time when the two superpowers are the two main enemies of the peoples of the world and the Soviet Union is the more dangerous, Birch raises a haughty hand and forbids us to use the word "superpower" because it is "school-boy slang". (see CPB(M-L) pamphlet "Britain in the World 1977").

"The Worker" hardly ever attacks Soviet social imperialism.

But Birch's true feelings have come out. An article in the March issue of the AUEW journal by him and a fellow engineering union bureaucrat praise the Soviet Union following a visit as guests of the Soviet authorities. The Soviet bureaucrat capitalist class is systematically cultivating trade union bureaucrats in the West as part of their policy of global domination. And, true to his class nature, Birch swallowed the bait whole! There in the article he roundly praises the Soviet Union as one of the two biggest "Industrial Powers" in the world (with a capital 'I' and a capital 'P')! This from the man who forbids us to use the term "superpower". His true class nature as a servant of the British monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie at home and of Soviet social imperialism abroad must be fully exposed.

It is now evident that Birch never made a clear-cut break with the revisionism of the old "Communist" Party of Great Britain. He left the Party late, only in 1967, up to four years after many other Communists had left it following the great struggle in the international Communist movement.

He quickly founded his own Party without drawing a firm line of demarcation with revisionism. He has always shown contempt for the revolutionary theory of the working class - and thereby has surrendered helplessly to bourgeois ideas within the working class movement. He has always bowed before the spontaneous trade union economic struggle. Within the CPB(M-L) he has imposed the dictatorial style of things being decided on the nod of one man. Hundreds of honest and hard working revolutionaries who joined the CPB(M-L) have been lost, at least temporarily, from the revolutionary ranks as a result of the revisionism of Birch.

On his own he couldn't run the CPB(M-L). Around him he has a small mafia-like clique which relies on his dubious prestige. In order to split and disintegrate this ruthless and extremely damaging group of misleaders we must step up the ideological and political struggle against the revisionist Birch clique. The contradiction between the working class and the revisionist Birch clique is one between the people and the enemy. All leading members of the CPB(M-L) must quickly decide whether they are going to support the revisionist Birch or whether they are going to split with him.

At the same time we solemnly declare we will never give up the struggle to win over the great majority of honest comrades of the CPB(M-L) who have been so ruthlessly manipulated by the Birch

clique with such serious harm to the task of building the true revolutionary Party of the working class.

CONTINUE TO CRITICISE SMALL GROUP MENTALITY

Despite the destruction of the Communist Federation of Britain, the Communist Unity Association and the East London Marxist-Leninist Association and the corresponding building of the Revolutionary Communist League, the Marxist-Leninist movement is still deeply divided by small group mentality. The conditions of capitalism themselves constantly give rise to the emergence of small groups. It is therefore essential in a spirit of revolutionary optimism that we wage a militant and persistent struggle against small group mentality.

It is only natural that with the sharpening contradictions of capitalism and in the absence of a true revolutionary Communist Party small circles will come together. These are small circles of friends and associates reaching revolutionary consciousness and earnestly wishing to help the working class forward and to study Marxism more deeply for this purpose.

It is a good thing that such circles come together. It is a sign of the revolutionary period we live in.

But in the tempering and development of each individual comrade as a revolutionary fighter there comes a time when he or she must ask if they are to remain only with a circle of friends or whether they will step forward to join the growing army of the working class. In the final analysis it boils down to a question of whether you are serving yourself or are serving the working class.

As Mao Tsetung penetratingly observed about small group mentality:

"Although on the surface this does not seem to be the pursuit of personal interests, in reality it exemplifies the narrowest individualism". ("On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party". Selected Works Vol I. p112).

The history of the international Communist movement seems to show that a stage of fighting small groups is historically necessary in building the true revolutionary movement. Marx wrote to Bolte the following highly applicable words over 100 years ago:

"The development of the system of socialist sects and that of the real workers' movement are always inversely proportional to each other. So long as the sects are (historically) justified, the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historic movement. As soon as it has attained this naturally all sects are essentially reactionary". (23 November 1871)

Lenin in "What Is To Be Done" and in "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" repeatedly exposes the narrowness and selfishness of small groups. He writes of the "primitive democracy of a primitive circle in which everybody does everything", so opposed to the division of labour necessary in a fighting vanguard of the working class. He writes of the family circles, the friendship circles and of "circle domesticity". Consistent with this the friendship

circles subscribe to "the worldly wisdom of yielding and living in harmony with everyone". Accordingly they manifest extreme elusiveness and vagueness on the principles that must be practised if we are to lead the struggle of the working class to real victory. Instead policy, tactics and priorities are decided by the "wilfulness and caprices characteristic of circles". When a struggle breaks out it is on the basis that so and so is not a nice enough person to be trustworthy in the circle of friends: "free-for-all scrapping" breaks out instead of thrashing questions out militantly and systematically in terms of what is truly in the interests of the working class. Accordingly the logic of the friendship circle inevitably is "either a punch in the jaw or let's have your hand". There is no systematic struggle to hammer out a scientific fighting Programme for the working class. There is no deep desire to build a single fighting Party of the working class.

Instead, in the name of spontaneist activism the circle-mentality bows hopelessly to the selfishness and subjectivism of petty-bourgeois individualism.

All these features can be seen in the British Marxist-Leninist movement today. Undoubtedly some opportunist elements in the movement will be mortally offended by a declaration of war on the small groups, a declaration which seems to them to be very arrogant and aggressive. At the same time we must fully grasp that the great majority of comrades are good, even those who have been severely misled by the influence of revisionists and opportunists. They need militant patient and protracted education. There are several genuine Marxist-Leninist organisations which can be united only by principled and protracted work. And in addition there are a number of organisations calling themselves Marxist-Leninist which, although an opportunist line prevails in them, are basically good.

It will only be over a period of time that it will become clear who are the handful of opportunists irretrievably committed to the historical stage of small groups and implacably opposed to building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class.

For this reason we must persist in helping more comrades by militant and patient education as we continue the protracted, historical task of criticising small group mentality.

All the heroism of the British working class in their fight back against the everyday encroachments of capitalism - such as the heroism of the firemen at the end of 1977 - only underlines more boldly that the central task in Britain today is to rebuild the revolutionary Communist Party.

The three concrete slogans we must firmly grasp to be sure of fulfilling this exceptionally important and glorious task are:

UNITE WITH THE RCL - TO FORM
THE SINGLE LEADING CENTRE FOR PARTY-BUILDING!
CRITICISE THE REVISIONIST BIRCH CLIQUE!
CONTINUE TO CRITICISE SMALL GROUP MENTALITY!

PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM AND THE DUTIES OF BRITISH COMMUNISTS

"Working Men of all Countries, Unite!" - when Marx and Engels put these stirring words at the end of the "Communist Manifesto" they did so because history was demonstrating conclusively that the proletariat is the revolutionary class, that the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is the struggle propelling mankind forward to the Communist society which will liberate mankind from the reign of classes forever. Further, unlike the bourgeoisie, the interests of the working class are not tied to any particular country. The struggle of the proletariat takes place on a world-wide scale to defeat the bourgeoisie on a world-wide scale. As Marx and Engels said:

"The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement".

("Manifesto of the Communist Party", Peking ed., p 49-50)

In the first place these principles mean the simple solidarity of one worker with another, irrespective of nationality. Most class conscious workers understand this easily and readily support the struggles of workers in other countries. Take the recent strike at Grunwicks which has received material support from workers throughout the world, or the strike of the US miners which received similar support. On a higher level of political consciousness, workers have often supported the revolutionary struggles of workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world. In Britain the Lancashire textile workers blacked cotton from the Confederate states during the American civil war, despite the threat to their own jobs. Other workers supported Garibaldi's struggle for a unified Italy. Dockers and other workers blacked ships taking troops and arms to support the British forces intervening in Russia in 1918-21. Much more recently there was the determined effort by British postal workers to black mail going to "South Africa".

Although the world-wide solidarity of workers one with another is the core of proletarian internationalism, it is not the whole of it. As Marx and Engels say in the quote above, the Communists understand "...the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement". As we pointed out in the last issue of 'Revolution' the "line of march" of the proletariat is extremely complicated, with many twists and turns. It is simply not possible for the proletariat to look only at its struggle, and especially not only at the struggle in "its" own country. It must be prepared to ally itself with any other force in order to achieve victory, and it must look at the struggle in "its" own country in the light of the struggle world-wide. In Britain, for example, although our struggle is for socialist revolution, we must also struggle for national independence from the superpowers as an integral part of the revolutionary struggle. Despite the shouting of the super-revolutionaries it is they who are betraying proletarian internationalism by teaching the working class they can conduct their struggle in national isolation.

The neo-Trotskyite "left" opportunist tendency in the international Communist movement is the most serious deviation at present, but there is also the danger of right opportunist deviations.

The most crucial aspect of proletarian internationalism is the unity of the working class with the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed people and nations. In the international united front against superpower hegemonism, the unity of the workers of the world and between the working class and the oppressed people and nations is the kernel of the united front. The RCLB until comparatively recently did not grasp this question firmly, and for the RCLB the tendency on the international situation has been to the right, not the left.

Two connected errors were made, firstly, not grasping the proletarian internationalist duty of the working class in Britain to support the struggles of those peoples and nations oppressed by British imperialism, and, secondly, supporting only the struggles of third world countries and governments, and not the national-democratic revolution in those countries. We shall deal with the second error first.

The working class of Britain must support the struggle of all third world people and countries which are directed against imperialism and superpower hegemonism. The struggle of the OPEC countries for fair prices for their oil, even though those countries are ruled by the bourgeoisie, is a struggle which, as Stalin said, "...weakens, undermines and disintegrates imperialism...". It is therefore, a struggle which must be resolutely supported by the working class. Taken as a whole it is essential that the working class in Britain resolutely supports the struggle for a new international economic order and demands that the British government accedes to the just demands of the third world countries.

NATIONAL-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

The third world nations have two aspects. As the "People's Daily" editorial of I.II.77 pointed out:

"...the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America are revolutionary and progressive as far as their essence and main aspect are concerned..."

(pp 50-51)

Most third world countries have now won formal independence, and are struggling hard for real economic and political independence. As we have said we support any struggle of these countries which is objectively directed against imperialism. The ruling bourgeoisie of these countries though, precisely because it is the bourgeoisie, inevitably vacillates in the struggle against imperialism. A small number of these ruling bourgeoisies is extremely reactionary and are tied in a thousand and one ways to imperialism. Others, especially those in Venezuela, Mexico and Tanzania play an objectively revolutionary role in the world today.

In all of these countries, without exception, the leadership of the proletariat is decisive in them taking a really firm stand against imperialism and hegemonism. It is vital to recognise that the national question is subordinate to the class question. We support only those national struggles which take forward the world-wide struggle for proletarian revolution. The reason that the revolution in third world countries takes a national form is that the main enemy in these countries is foreign imperialism. The fundamental contradiction in all societies between the forces of production and the relations of production manifests itself in these countries, in general, in a principal contradiction between the mass of the people on the one hand, and foreign imperialism, propping up feudal survivals and bureaucrat capitalism, on the other. The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in these countries is therefore a struggle for national-democratic revolution.

The bourgeoisie and the proletariat in all of these countries are struggling for leadership of the masses of the people. Even though many of these third world bourgeoisies struggle hard against imperialism and hegemonism and are therefore progressive, they are fighting against imperialism in their own self-interest and oppose the struggle of the proletariat to intensify and deepen the struggle in their interest and that of the mass of the people. As Mao said of the Chinese national bourgeoisie in the 1920s:

"...the national bourgeoisie...is inconsistent in its attitude towards the Chinese revolution: they feel the need for revolution and favour the revolutionary movement against imperialism and the warlords when they are smarting under the blows of foreign capital and the oppression of the warlords, but they become suspicious of the revolution when they sense that, with the militant participation of the proletariat at home and the active support of the international proletariat abroad, the

revolution is threatening the hope of their class to attain the status of a big bourgeoisie". ("Selected Works", Vol I. p14).

Although the concrete political conditions in the third world today are different from those in China in the 1920s, this quote exactly describes the ideology and consequent vacillations of the third world bourgeoisie as a whole today.

It is essential therefore that the proletariat in these countries raises the banner of national independence and wins over the masses of the people, particularly the peasants, and including those elements of the bourgeoisie willing to fight imperialism, and carries out a thoroughgoing national-democratic revolution in order to achieve genuine national independence. Only then will it be able afterwards to lead the mass of the people against the bourgeoisie in socialist revolution.

The slogan of "*Workers of all Countries, Unite!*" means that the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries must firmly unite with the proletariat of the oppressed nations in their revolutionary struggles. Thus while we support the struggle of the third world countries against imperialism and hegemonism, we support even more the national-democratic revolutionary struggle within those countries. The people of countries like Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Argentina, Chile etc., countries which have won formal independence, are, led by the proletariat and based on the worker-peasant alliance, carrying out valiant armed struggle for revolution in their countries. It is our bounden internationalist duty to support their struggles, struggles which are a component part of the world-wide proletarian revolution!

For a time a rightist tendency on this question existed in the RCLB. It was considered what we should support in our propaganda only the struggle of third world countries, that is, those countries which had won formal independence, and also struggles for national liberation like that in Zimbabwe. It was considered that we should not do propaganda on the national-democratic revolution in those countries which had won formal independence, on the grounds that it is up to the people themselves in those countries to sort out their own internal contradictions. There is some truth in this view, to the extent that even the bourgeoisie in these countries is oppressed by imperialism and can therefore play a revolutionary role, and in many cases is playing a revolutionary, or at least progressive, role. But it is an erroneous view because it negates our internationalist duty to support the struggles of the proletariat throughout the world. It also objectively fails to support the national democratic revolution in these countries by lending credence to these attempts of the bourgeoisie in these countries to portray themselves as indomitable fighters against imperialism, when they are at best a vacillating force, and to suppress the revolutionary struggles in those countries. It therefore hands over leadership to the bourgeoisie, and objectively supports the suppression of the revolution in those

countries. We must understand deeply that even relatively progressive bourgeoisies, like that in Burma, are opposed to the deepening of the revolution and are attempting to suppress it through armed attacks. As Lenin said, Communists should:

"...support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie.."
("Selected Works", Vol.3, p467).

The ideological basis of this error lay in not fully grasping the leading role of the proletariat and thereby one-sidedly emphasising unity in the international united front to the detriment of struggle. The theory of the three worlds is a strategic orientation for the international proletariat and the oppressed people and nations, and provides for them "*...a powerful ideological weapon for forging unity and building the broadest united front against the two hegemonist powers and their war policies and for pushing the world revolution forwards.*" ("People's Daily" editorial of 1.11.77.). In this struggle for world revolution it is imperative, as the CPC says, that "*The proletariat of all countries must make an effort to study and disseminate Marxism-Leninism, play the exemplary role of vanguard in this struggle, fulfil their internationalist obligations and give all-out support and assistance to the people of all countries in their fight against imperialism and hegemonism...*" (Ibid. p48). Only if the proletariat of all countries struggles to take the leadership from the bourgeoisie can the united front be successful. Again to quote the "People's Daily" editorial:

"The world can only advance in the course of struggle, and it is only through struggle that unity can be achieved. If unity is sought through struggle, it will live; if unity is sought through yielding, it will perish. This unity can be achieved and enhanced step by step only in the course of the struggle against national betrayal, appeasement and neo-colonialism and in the course of countering the attacks of the reactionary forces against the progressive forces." (p64).

The international proletariat therefore, whilst firmly upholding and supporting the struggle of the third world countries against imperialism and hegemonism, must strengthen its unity throughout the world, take the lead in fighting imperialism, deepen the revolutionary struggle in all countries, and recognise that the best possible contribution to the international united front lies in the revolutionary seizure of power.

The CPC summed up these principles in the polemic against Soviet revisionism, when it said:

"History has entrusted to the proletarian Parties in these areas (Asia, Africa and Latin America) the glorious mission

of holding high the banner of struggle against imperialism, against old and new colonialism and for national independence and people's democracy, of standing in the forefront of the national-democratic revolutionary movement and striving for a socialist future...

On the basis of the worker-peasant alliance the proletariat and its party must unite all the strata that can be united and organize a broad united front against imperialism and its lackeys. In order to consolidate and expand this united front it is necessary that the proletarian party should maintain its ideological, political and organizational independence and insist on the leadership of the revolution."

("Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement", p204.)

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND NATIONS, UNITE!

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and world-wide proletarian revolution, as Stalin said. One of Lenin's immortal contributions was his all-round development of Marxism on the question of imperialism and in particular his bold struggle against the social chauvinists of the Second International. Imperialism and the oppression of the majority of the world's nations by a handful of "great" powers transformed the national question from a matter of particular internal state questions like those of Ireland and Poland, into a general question of the world revolution. It also transformed the dependant countries from being a reserve of the international bourgeoisie into a potential reserves of the international proletariat. The struggle of the oppressed people and nations against imperialism for national liberation became a component part of the world-wide proletarian revolution. This is why, in struggle against the social-chauvinists of the Second International, the Communist International raised the clarion call "*Workers and Oppressed Peoples and Nations, Unite!*", to replace the old slogan "*Workers of ALL Countries, Unite!*" which the opportunists had dragged in the mud by their social-chauvinism.

Since then, the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed people and nations has reached new heights. In China, Albania, Korea, Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Laos the working class has seized state power and is constructing socialism. In many other countries, particularly the countries of southern Africa, the struggle of the people for national-democratic revolution is nearing success. The third world as a whole, people and countries, is striking tremendous blows against imperialism and hegemonism. Countries like Venezuela and Mexico are leading the struggle for a new international economic order. Countries like Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Tanzania are leading the non-aligned movement against superpower hegemonism. Countries like the Sudan, Somalia and Egypt have fought back hard against the Soviet Union's attempts to transform them into colonies and neo-colonies. Even countries like Iran, Brazil and the Phillipines, countries which have many reactionary features,

are standing up against imperialism and hegemonism through organizations like OPEC and ASEAN. There is no doubt that the third world as a whole and in general has been transformed from a reserve of imperialism into a force which is the main force in fighting colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism.

However, it must also be said that there are many setbacks in this struggle such as the tragedy of Angola. This is in the first place a question of proletarian leadership in the third world countries themselves. It is also a question of the unity of the two great revolutionary movements of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries for socialist revolution and that of the oppressed peoples and nations for national-democratic revolution. Not only is proletarian leadership a necessity for the most thoroughgoing anti-imperialist struggles in the third world, so is the solidarity between these two great revolutionary movements. As Stalin said:

"...the interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies call for the union of these two forms of the revolutionary movement into a common front against the common enemy, against imperialism." ("Foundations of Leninism" Peking ed., p77).

In practice, the revolutionary movement of the oppressed peoples and nations has taken place in the absence of substantial support from the working class of the advanced capitalist countries. The victory of the counter-revolution in Europe in the 1920s, the strength of opportunism in the west and in particular the triumph of modern revisionism, in the Communist Parties after the anti-fascist war of 1941-45, all meant that the working class was not given the thoroughgoing internationalist education necessary for it to fulfill its internationalist duty to render the most selfless support to the struggle of the oppressed people and nations.

Thanks to the growth of Communism in the east, when the focus of contradictions in the world shifted from Europe to Asia in the 1920s, the people of those countries were able to take to the path of revolution and in several cases, notably China, carried out successful national-democratic revolutions. It is also the case though, that the strength of opportunism in western countries facilitated the attempts of the imperialist bourgeoisie to reassert their control of the colonies after the anti-fascist war. To take two examples: it is probable that the heroic armed national liberation struggle of the people of Malaya against British imperialism would have been successful, had it not been for the betrayal of that struggle by the revisionist leadership of the "C"PGB and their total failure to boldly rouse the working class of Britain; similarly, it is probable that the struggle of the people of Algeria against French imperialism would have been more thoroughgoing had it not been for the parallel failure of the revisionist "C"PF to lead the French working class, although here it must be said that

the absence of proletarian leadership of the Algerian revolution was a very big factor.

These failures were failures of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries also. The internationalisation of capital by imperialism, in particular the receipt of superprofits from imperialist exploitation, has enabled the bourgeoisie in the west to postpone the inevitable socialist revolution for decades. In particular it has greatly contributed to the strength of opportunism and enabled the opportunists to seize the leadership of the working class. Each time therefore that the imperialist bourgeoisie manages to retain its hold on a dependant country, as the British imperialists did in Malaya, this is a big setback for the working class in the imperialist country. Conversely, each victory of the national-democratic revolution (and in fact, any defeat of imperialism by the third world) in the dependant countries is a victory for us in the imperialist countries, in that it further weakens "our" imperialist bourgeoisie and brings that much closer the socialist revolution. In recent years the victories of the people of Indo-China have shaken imperialism to its foundations. The coming victories in southern Africa will strike it a mortal blow.

EXPOSE AND DEFEAT BRITISH IMPERIALISM ABROAD!

These questions are vital ones for the revolution in Britain. We must not take the road of social-chauvinism that the "C"PGB took and neglect our internationalist duty to struggle in solidarity with those nations oppressed by British imperialism. In the last issue we made an all-round denunciation of the CPB(M-L) for its stinking social-chauvinism. It is also necessary for the RCLB to make a self-criticism for some errors of this nature. Although the RCLB has never plumbed the depths which the CPB(M-L) has, it has relatively neglected its duties to lead the British working class in struggle against British imperialist exploitation of the oppressed people and nations. In words the RCLB recognised its duties to do this, but its deeds did not live up to its words.

Politically, this error came about because in recognising that Britain is a second world country, subject to superpower aggression and threat, we forgot in practice that Britain's other aspect and its primary aspect at that, is that it is itself a bloody imperialist country which cruelly exploits many third world countries. Ideologically, the error occurred because we had not sufficiently grasped the crucial importance of the unity of the working class of Britain with those peoples and nations oppressed by British imperialism and had not bothered to educate ourselves on this question. Objectively these were serious right opportunist errors which, if not corrected, would have developed into full-blown social-chauvinism.

These errors were quite marked in our practice and propaganda. In "Class Struggle", in the seven issues published from the founding of the RCLB to the Central Committee meeting which decided that

the right opportunism on this question must be rectified, there were eleven articles on Soviet social imperialism in the world, and only four on British imperialism. Although it is essential that militant propaganda is done on the threat from Soviet social imperialism, this balance of articles, especially considering that the articles on British imperialism were secondary articles, forgot that in its international relations Britain is primarily an imperialist exploiter and oppressor. What is quite startling is that two articles on the struggle in southern Africa ('South African Liberation Forces Make Further Advances' in the August 1977 issue, and 'Despite Fascist Repression Azanian People Fight On' in the November 1977 issue) managed to avoid even mentioning British imperialism! It is quite evident that the leadership of the RCLB had seriously neglected its duties to educate the membership of the League on British imperialism. Another example of this error is that although the RCLB had correctly organized a demonstration on the occasion of the 9th anniversary of the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia, it at that time felt it couldn't spare the time to organise practical work to fulfil its internationalist duty to work in solidarity with the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe.

The Central Committee and the whole membership of the RCLB is determined to rectify these errors! In future 'Class Struggle' will follow Lenin's instruction that "*The weight of emphasis in the internationalist education of the workers in the oppressing nations must necessarily consist in their advocating and upholding freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without that there can be no internationalism.*" (Quoted in "Foundation of Leninism", Peking ed., p80). The journal will carry out its internationalist duty to educate the British working class on the fundamental unity of interest of the working class and those nations oppressed by British imperialism. Further the RCLB has taken due note of Lenin's blunt warning that "*it is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressing nation who fails to conduct such propaganda as an imperialist and a scoundrel.*" (Ibid. p 80-81, emphases in the original).

BRITAIN IS A BIG INTERNATIONAL EXPLOITER!

Britain is a second world imperialist country. On a world-wide scale the countries of the second world are lesser enemies than the two superpowers. Over the years the second world countries have gradually lost most of their colonies and have been muscled out of their neo-colonies by the two superpowers. As the CPC says "*On the whole they no longer constitute the main force dominating and oppressing these (the third world) countries.*" ("People's Daily" editorial, p 56). We should therefore not make a fetish out of fighting British imperialism and deeply understand that countries like Britain are countries which can be united with in the international united front against superpower hegemonism. They can though only be united with "*...if the oppressed peoples and nations*

and the British working class firmly struggle against its imperialist nature." ('Manifesto of the RCLB', p7).

Britain is a particularly big international exploiter and oppressor within the second world. It is a very unstable, vacillating and treacherous member of the united front. Even compared with other second world countries like Canada, Australia and Sweden, Britain is very reactionary.

In recent years Britain has been forced by the third world countries to take up a less reactionary position than previously. It has for instance supported the OPEC countries to some extent and was less reactionary than the two superpowers at the UNCTAD conference on the struggle for a new international economic order. We firmly support the British government in these steps but have no illusions that the imperialist nature of Britain has changed. Although no longer a 'great' power, and despite some concessions wrung from it through the struggle of the third world countries, Britain in general plays a reactionary role in the world. It tails behind US imperialism, hoping to get a few crumbs from the rich man's table, and appeases the Soviet Union. It opposes the struggle of the third world because of its imperialist nature, although its weakening position has forced it to support some of their demands out of its own self-interest. To understand this deeply we must look at Britain's position in the world economically.

One of the most characteristic features of imperialism is the export of capital - as Lenin said:

"Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition had undivided sway, was the export of goods. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism when monopolies rule, is the export of capital."
 ("Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism". Peking ed., p 72. Emphasis in the original.)

In 1914, when Britain was the biggest 'great' power, it easily outstripped its rivals in this respect.

Table 1.

Capital invested abroad by the 'great' powers in 1914
 (in millions of francs)

Britain	France	Germany
75-100	60	44

Source: Lenin, "Imperialism", Peking ed., p 74 .

Today, this is no longer the case.

Table 2.

Net Foreign Assets of Various Imperialist Powers in 1977.
 (in millions of pounds)

USA	UK	FGR	Japan	France	Canada	Italy
120,630	85,512	32,603	1,234	6304	3704	1832

Source: International Monetary Fund 'Statistics' 1977.

Britain has now clearly been outstripped by the USA, but remains the second biggest imperialist power in terms of foreign assets. These figures though refer to the total amount of assets owned. That Britain's position as an imperialist power is declining further in relation to other imperialist powers, especially the US superpower, can be seen when we look at the actual outflow of capital in a typical year around the same time as the figures for total capital abroad.

Table 3.

Flow of resources from developed countries to developing countries (1975)
 (in millions of US dollars)

USA	FGR	Japan	UK	France
15,684	4,024	2,905	2,264	1,905

Source: UN 1976 Statistical Year Book

Note: The sources for these tables do not include data on Soviet social imperialism. Whilst they show the position of Britain in relation to US imperialism, and to the other second world countries, they cannot show Britain's relation to the two superpowers.

Although Britain's relative position to other imperialist countries is declining, the great importance to the British imperialist bourgeoisie of superprofits from imperialist exploitation of the oppressed people and nations remains. Over the past twenty years the proportion of such profit to the whole has remained pretty constant. The lesson for us is that fighting such exploitation has not diminished in importance, if we are serious about the socialist revolution in Britain.

Table 4

Profits of British Imperialism from Investments at Home and Abroad
 (in millions of pounds)

	1958	1960	1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976
1.	4137	5177	5325	6595	7058	8464	9681	12320	18219	24342
2.	612	586	659	785	793	947	1253	1444	2746	3306
3.	14.7	11.2	12.3	11.9	11.2	11.2	12.9	11.7	15.0	13.59

Notes: 1= Gross profits from investments in Britain

2= Net profits from investment abroad

3= Profits from investment abroad as a percentage of domestic profits.

Source: National Income and Expenditure 1966-76 (HMSO).

Although a large part of British capital and of its foreign investment income is now in and from other imperialist countries, the majority of it is in and from the third world and other second world countries with which Britain has an imperialist relationship, such as Australia.

Table 5

British Net Investment in Various Regions in 1975

(in millions of pounds)

W.Europe	N.America	Africa	S.Africa	Latin America	Mid. East	Other Asia	Aust
201.3	307.7	133.7	152.7	107.1	3.1	46.9	119.7

Source: Business Monitor.

Much imperialist exploitation of the third world countries and peoples is done through unequal trading relationships, from the imperialist practice of buying raw materials cheap and selling finished goods dear, and thereby perpetuating the underdevelopment of the oppressed nations. Here again we can see that although Britain has declined in relation to other imperialist countries, it is still a big imperialist power.

Table 6

Trade of Major Imperialist Powers, Jan-March 1976

(In million US dollars)

	World		OECD Countries		Developing countries	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
USA	27530	26993	15032	15818	11752	9124
Japan	14753	14395	5726	6701	8180	6303
FGR	19950	23413	14559	17419	4242	3876
UK	13602	11502	8940	7676	3492	3076
France	15424	13561	10645	9378	4164	3283
Italy	9596	8001	6189	5639	2824	1661

Source: OECD Summary of Trade

The general picture from all this economic analysis is of an imperialist power, though not a superpower, which makes immense profits out of its imperialist plunder of third world and other countries. It is scarcely surprising then that in relation to the third world, Britain plays a very reactionary role in the world today. We must deeply understand that, as Lenin said, "*Politics is the concentrated expression of economics*". It is Britain's considerable interest in the perpetuation of the imperialist system that accounts for this reactionary stance. It is likewise the knocks and blows which Britain has received from the people of the world, particularly the third world, its relative decline as an imperialist power, and the threat posed by the two superpowers, especially Soviet social imperialism, which accounts for the fact that Britain can no longer play the reactionary role it did twenty, and certainly sixty years ago. The lesson of this is that the potential which Britain has as a second world country to play a progressive role in the world today, can only be realised by firm, resolute and unwavering struggle against it, and not by letting it off the hook and capitulating to it. At the same time we support whatever progressive

measures the British government does take in the world today. Here we must stress that in the international united front, the third world people and countries are the main force in combating imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism, not just hegemonism alone. Only if we grasp this fact can we properly evaluate the nature and role of second world countries. The fact is well illustrated by the particular case of Zimbabwe.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM - THE MAIN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE

Not only are some second world countries like Britain big international exploiters, it is also the case that some of them are the main enemy of particular third world countries.

"Rhodesia" was colonised by British settlers in 1890 and named so after Cecil Rhodes, the bloody international criminal and arch-imperialist. "Rhodesia" became a part of the British Empire during the "scramble for Africa" in the 1890s, when the European colonial powers, greedy for sources of raw materials and outlets for the export of capital, carved up Africa between them. It only became firmly established as a colony through the bloody suppression of the resistance of the people of Zimbabwe in colonial wars in 1896/97.

Although the British imperialists granted "Rhodesia" "self-government" in 1923, it is still a British colony. The British government granted self-government to the settlers in "Rhodesia" in order to handle the contradiction with the settlers to their advantage, to allow them freedom to get on with farming and some manufacture, while retaining control of mining, big farming including tobacco, and big manufacture. By 1965 British imperialism was in the middle of a process of shifting from a colonial to a neo-colonial strategy in Africa, under the pressure of the liberation and independence movements and the challenge of US imperialism. In "Rhodesia" it tried to maintain a direct colonial rule, because of the contradictions with the settlers, and colluded with the settlers in the "Unilateral Declaration of Independence" in 1965.

At the time of UDI British imperialism was clearly the main enemy of the people of Zimbabwe. It was the occupying colonial power, the power which controlled the state apparatus of police, army and judiciary. It was the power which had to be smashed for the people of Zimbabwe to be free. Stemming from its hold of state power it was also the biggest exploiter of the people of Zimbabwe, as can be seen from the following tables. It is also the case that Zimbabwe was particularly important to the British imperialists, accounting for 7.7% of all British imperialist investments abroad in 1965.

Table 7

UK Private Direct Investment in Africa in 1965 (excluding "South Africa")

(in millions of pounds)

Nigeria	"Rhodesia"	Ghana	Kenya	Tanzania	Malawi	Uganda	Zambia
96.7	62.0	53.4	43.2	9.3	8.4	8.0	7.8

Source: Board of Trade Journal, January 1971.

Table 8
UK Trade with Africa in 1965
(in million US dollars)

	"South Africa"	"Rhodesia"	Sudan	Libya	World Total
Imports	749.2	89	47	62	16711
Exports	584.2	84	22	207	16318

Source: Board of Trade Journal, January 1971.

Table 9
Main Trading Partners of "Rhodesia" in 1965

	UK	Zambia	Other Europe	"South Africa"	Japan	Malawi	USA
Exports	21.9	25.3	16.5	9.0	5.2	5.2	2.4
Imports	30.4	—	15.2	22.9	5.5	—	6.8

Note: Most of the trade grouped under Zambia, "South Africa" and Malawi is in fact with subsidiaries of British companies in those countries.

Source: Quarterly Economic Review, 3rd Quarter 1977.

Since UDI, despite the pretence of sanctions, British imperialist economic and political control of Zimbabwe has largely remained intact, although it is increasingly being challenged by US imperialism, with Soviet social imperialism waiting in the wings. British imperialism has continued to pour capital into Zimbabwe. The following table gives only direct British investment as the imperialists now channel most of it through "South Africa".

Table 10
Direct Investment by UK companies in Zimbabwe
(In millions of pounds)

1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
9.5	8.1	8.5	9.3	12.2	13.9	11.1

Source: Department of Industry Business Monitor.

Although other imperialist countries, particularly the USA, have channeled capital into Zimbabwe, Britain has retained the lion's share since 1965.

Table II
Banks in Zimbabwe

Deposits and Advances, and Market Shares of Each
(in million Rhodesian dollars)

	Total Deposits		Market Share		Total Advances		Market Share	
	1965	1974	1965	1974	1965	1974	1965	1974
Standard	72.0	160.0	47.0	41.2	51.3	129.4	47.9	43.0
Barclays	60.9	128.8	39.7	33.1	38.0	89.3	35.4	29.7
Rhobank	11.1	68.9	7.2	17.7	8.7	57.9	8.1	19.2
Grindlays	9.4	31.2	6.1	8.0	9.2	24.4	8.6	8.1

Notes 1. Barclays is a subsidiary of the British bank Barclays Bank International Ltd.

2. Standard is a subsidiary of the British bank Standard and Chartered.

- Rhobank is a subsidiary of the Netherlands Bank of "South Africa".
- Grindlays is a subsidiary of the British bank National and Grindlays.

Source: "Rhodesia - Economic Structure and Change" - Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria 1976.

Behind political events and actions we must look for economic interests. The British imperialists are playing the major role in the bourgeoisie's attempts to retain control of Zimbabwe because they have the lion's share of imperialist interests there and also because they still hold state power there. The Smith settler regime is in the main shielding and representing the interests of British imperialism there.

A problem of analysing economic and political interests in Zimbabwe is the role of "South Africa". "South Africa" has invested much capital in Zimbabwe in recent years and controls many companies there - out of the twelve top companies in Zimbabwe, seven are registered in "South Africa". But this is quite misleading. As Britain is also the main exploiter of the people of Azania (being responsible for over 60% of all foreign capital invested there and around 20% of foreign trade), much exploitation of Zimbabwe by "South Africa" is in reality exploitation by British imperialism. This is illustrated by the fact that many companies operating in Zimbabwe, and which claim to be "South African" are in reality "South African" subsidiaries of British imperialist companies, for example Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa and Whites South Africa Portland Cement.

SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE

The struggle of the people of Zimbabwe, led by ZANU and the Patriotic Front, for national democratic revolution, is a component and very important part of the world proletarian revolution. For the working class of Britain this is a particularly important question. It is our bounden duty to render the fullest possible support to the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe if we are to fulfil our internationalist duty. It also is in our own self-interest. When the revolution in Zimbabwe is victorious it will strike a mighty blow at our common enemy, British imperialism, and bring that much closer the socialist revolution in Britain. Likewise the solidarity of the British workers with the Zimbabwean revolution will hasten the victory of that revolution. Our two revolutions support each other and are indispensable to the final victory of each other.

We must firmly grasp Lenin's words that:

"The revolutionary movement in the advanced countries would actually be a sheer fraud if, in their struggle against capital, the workers of Europe and America were not closely united with the hundreds upon hundreds of millions of 'colonial' slaves who are oppressed by capital". ("Selected Works", Vol 3, p406).

It is for these reasons that the RCLB has launched a campaign of solidarity work with the struggle in Zimbabwe. This struggle will continue in various forms until the final victory of the Zimbabwean national democratic revolution and into the period of socialist revolution in

Zimbabwe. We are determined not to follow in the social chauvinist foot-steps of the "C" PGB! We are determined to unite closely with our class brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND NATIONS, UNITE!

BRITISH IMPERIALISM OUT OF ZIMBABWE!

VICTORY TO THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION OF ZIMBABWE!

VICTORY TO THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL UNITED FRONT
AGAINST SUPERPOWER HEGEMONISM!

INFLATION IS CAUSED BY THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM!

Inflation, and what causes it, are class questions. A correct understanding of this can only be reached through fierce struggle against bourgeois deceptions and lies that inflation is caused by working class struggle for higher wages.

Inflation of the currency, and price rises are the weapons of the capitalist class to shift the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the workers. This crisis is an endemic part of the capitalist system and is inseparable from capitalism itself. It is a product of the system based on the exploitation of workers by the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie. Ever since capitalism began it has been plagued by crises.

The working people are oppressed daily by inflation. From week to week the hard earned wages of the people buy less and less. In Britain, in 1977, wage increases were limited to 10% but prices were rising at a rate of 17% in the middle of the year. Chancellor Healey was claiming that his wage "restraint" policies would bring the rate down to single figures "by the end of the year". The rate of increase was still 12% in December 1977. At the same time profits were rising by an average of 40%.

Inflation is an incurable disease in capitalist society. The monopoly capitalist governments have cynically followed policies which cause inflation, while claiming to do everything in their power to combat it. As the Manifesto of the RCLB points out:

"During this raging inflation of the currency the giant monopoly capitalist companies have merely to put up their prices to compensate themselves for the fall in the value of money. But the working class has to fight hard for each wage rise it gets. At the same time the imperialist bourgeoisie conducts a protracted political campaign to convince people that workers' wage rises are the cause of inflation. They say that workers may increase their wages by only a few percent when the currency is falling in value by 15-20%. This is their way of cutting the living standard of the workers and shifting the crisis of capitalism onto the backs of the working class." (Manifesto p.13).

It is the task of communists to vigorously expose the reactionary policies and ideas of the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie. We must do this to arm the working class with a scientific consciousness. The truth is a powerful weapon and the Marxist method provides the key to this truth. We cannot repeat this too often.

We must arm the working class with this understanding. But we must also study to deepen our own grasp. We must study political economy. As Mao says:-

"..we are confronted with arduous tasks, and our experience is far from adequate. So we must be good at learning." (Quotations p 304)

We must learn in order to apply. This is true in the study of political economy as in all other areas of life. We must understand, not only

terms and phrases and general laws, but must also grasp the standpoints and methods of the Marxist-Leninist teachers in solving problems, so that we too can solve the practical problems thrown up by the day to day class struggle in Britain. We should learn also from the negative example of the revisionists, who, using the terms and phrases of Marxism, advance the view that the crises of capitalism can be 'managed' by greater state expenditure and printed money.

BOURGEOIS LIES ABOUT WAGES AND PRICES.

The bourgeoisie argues that "we are paying ourselves too much". This is the root of inflation as far as they are concerned. To meet their arguments head on it is necessary to put some questions to them. Who is "we"? Who pays who? And how much is too much? Marx himself used this method in his pamphlet "Wages, Price and Profit". There is no better starting point for studying Marxist political economy. This is particularly so because in it Marx was exposing the ideas of a certain Citizen Weston, whose importance for today's Communists is that he was using the same arguments as present day opportunists within the working class. Marx characterised the argument of Citizen Weston as follows:-

"He pleads against a rise of wages or against high wages as the result of such a rise. Now, I ask him, what are high wages and what are low? Why constitute, for example, five shillings weekly low, and twenty shillings weekly high wages? If five is low as compared with twenty, twenty is still lower as compared with two hundred. If a man was to lecture on the thermometer, commenced by declaiming on high and low degrees, he would impart no knowledge whatsoever. He must first tell me how the freezing point is found out, and how the boiling point and how these standard points are settled by natural laws, not by the fancy of the sellers or makers of thermometers." ("Wages Price and Profit" Peking Ed pp 25-26)

The argument of the bourgeoisie and their accomplices, the labour lieutenants of capital, is just the same.

To destroy the argument, Marx showed that labour is a commodity under capitalism and as such it has a price, and that we must understand how this price is determined before declaiming that the price is too high.

The bourgeoisie argues that the price of labour, like all other commodities is determined by supply and demand. If the price of labour is too high, then unemployment will result, because the demand for labour will fall. This is argued at a time when higher priced labour (skilled labour) is in great demand, and unemployment hits hardest at the semi-skilled and unskilled. However supply and demand can only explain fluctuations or temporary rises and falls in the price of labour. It can explain why prices are above or below the actual value of a commodity, but it cannot explain how that value is arrived at in the first place. As Marx points out:

"Reduced to their simplest theoretical expression, all our friends arguments resolve themselves into this one simple dogma: "The prices of commodities are determined or regulated by wages" (p 28 original emphasis)

The bourgeoisie also says that wage rises cause price rises. In other words the price of one commodity (labour) determines the prices of all

other commodities. Since price is determined by value, the argument says that the value of labour determines all other values. But the bourgeoisie cannot answer the key question however. "How is the value of labour arrived at?"

Marx went straight to the heart of the question. What is the value of a commodity and how is it determined? In speaking of value here, we are referring to exchange value - the proportional quantity in which a commodity exchanges with other quantities. We can exchange a number of gallons of oil for a number of tons of steel, or for a number of tons of wheat. Using the intermediary of money, we can exchange one pound note for a certain amount of tea, or a number of loaves of bread. But to determine what regulates the quantities in which different goods can be exchanged we must grasp what it is that they have in common.

This characteristic is labour. It is only labour, measured out by the hour or day, that gives each commodity its exchange value. The relative values of commodities are determined by the respective amounts of labour which it has taken to produce the commodity. This is qualified by only one thing: that the labour used must be socially necessary. That is, if a man using outdated techniques takes twice as long to produce a chair as a man using modern techniques, the first chair will not be twice as valuable as the second.

It is labour-time that determines the value of a commodity. What then determines its price? The price, taken by itself, is only an expression of the value in money terms. For example, the values of all commodities in Britain used to be expressed in gold prices. The use of gold or money in general - developed as a convenient way of expressing all commodities in terms of a single commodity - gold. The value of gold itself was set by the socially necessary labour time needed to produce it. Thus all commodities were expressed as quantities of equal social labour.

Market prices are different. In general, the price of all commodities of a particular type is the same, regardless of the conditions in which it is produced. One petrol company may be more efficient than another, and may produce petrol more cheaply. Nevertheless the prices of the two must be the same, or the more expensive will not sell. The market price expresses the average amount of social labour needed. Also, market prices will fluctuate. When demand is high they will rise, and when it is low they will fall. But they only fluctuate around their value. In the long term, commodities are sold at their value.

The price of labour, wages, is determined in the same way. The price is the monetary expression of the value of labour power. And the value of labour power is determined by the value of all the items which are needed to maintain and support the worker and his family. Food, clothing, housing, travel to work, health care and education - all these are necessary for the existence of the working class.

Looked at in this way, we can see that it is a lie that a rise in the price of one commodity - labour - causes a rise in the prices of all the others. This is a lie which conceals the true nature of capitalist social relations. Under capitalism the worker must sell his labour power in order to live. He must do this because the means of production are owned by the capitalist class. The worker sells his labour power to the capitalist and receives back roughly the value of the labour power he sells. But he does not receive the value that his labour power can produce. He

works part of the day to produce the value of goods needed for his existence, and the rest of the day to produce surplus value which is the source of the capitalists' profit. It's this "exchange between capital and labour" on which capitalist exploitation rests. As Marx summed it up:-

"Upon this relation, therefore, between the employing capitalist and the wage labourer the whole wages system and the whole present system of production hinge." (p. 56)

This is the truth that the bourgeoisie tries desperately to conceal. It is the very cornerstone of Marx's economic doctrine, and the key which must be grasped so that we can expose bourgeois lies about wages prices and profits.

WAGES AND PROFITS

The theory of surplus value shows that it is the working class which produces the total value out of which wages and profits are taken. "We" do not pay "ourselves". The capitalist class pays the working class, but pays them only enough to keep them in existence, and pockets the rest. In other words it pays the working class only a part of the value which the workers themselves have produced. There is thus a small particle of truth in the argument of the bourgeoisie, for they certainly "pay themselves" too much! What is the correct view then of the relationship between wages, prices and profits? It is clear that a general rise in wages would not affect the value of the commodity produced, because the quantity of labour contained in the commodity would stay the same, whatever the price of the labour which produced it. But a general rise in wages would lead to a fall in the general rate of profit. This too would not affect prices. But it would decrease the share of the capitalist, and increase the share of the worker.

Wages and prices change because of the incessant class struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie. This is based on the very fact of existence of the wages system. The working class has struggled throughout its existence, both in the trade unions, to try to raise its standard of life, and politically, e.g. to limit the length of the working day. And the capitalist class has responded in full measure, by speeding up work, and by introducing new machinery to increase productivity and to reduce the labour force.

When productivity rises the share of the worker will decrease, because less labour-time is needed to produce each commodity. The same thing occurs as a result of speed-up. The working class will answer by firm struggle to maintain its standard of living and to protect employment. This is at the very heart of the class struggle.

The general crisis of imperialism has sharpened all these contradictions. As a result the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie has used the weapon of inflation; it has devalued the currency to force the burden onto the working class. This is the key to understanding why inflation is so chronic in monopoly capitalist society.

The bourgeoisie, in its confusion, treats price rises and inflation as the same thing. Marx drew a clear line of demarcation between them. He said:-

"The value of necessaries, and consequently the value of labour might remain the same, but a change might occur in their money prices, consequent upon a previous change in the value of money" (p.65)

A change in money prices is caused by a previous change in the value of money. Inflation occurs because the currency is depreciated, Money represents less value, therefore prices must rise if they are to express the values of commodities.

Wage increases do not cause price rises. Inflation of the currency causes prices to increase, forcing the working class to insist on a proportionate increase in wages, or- in Marx words- *"..he must be content to be paid with names instead of things"* (p.65) He goes on:-

"All past history proves that whenever such a depreciation of the money occurs, the capitalists are on the alert to seize this opportunity for defrauding the workman" (p.65)

In the general crisis of imperialism the monopoly capitalist class has indeed been on the alert to defraud the working class; and has pursued policies to ensure that the depreciation of money occurs at an increasing rate.

THE CRISIS OF IMPERIALISM AND INFLATION IN BRITAIN.

In the era of imperialism all the fundamental contradictions of capitalism have been sharpening. British capitalism, once the strongest imperialist power is now one of the weaker, caught in competition with the two superpowers, and with lesser powers such as West Germany and Japan. British imperialism is also being stripped of its plunder of third world countries. In particular the rich hunting grounds of Azania and Zimbabwe will soon be closed to the British monopoly capitalist companies.

As contradictions have matured and sharpened the state has been forced to play a greater and greater role in the imperialist economy.

"The monopolies make use of the state power to promote actively the concentration and centralisation of capital and to strengthen the might and the influence of the biggest monopolies...."

The monopolies use the state Budget to plunder the inhabitants of their own countries through taxation, and also to receive contracts from the state which bring them huge profits. On the pretext of "encouraging business initiative" the bourgeois state pays out enormous sums to the biggest employers in the form of subsidies."

(p.325)

Increasingly only the state can provide the huge sums needed to stay in competition with other monopoly capitalist economies. Whether the form of assistance is nationalisation as in the case of British Steel and British Leyland, or takes some other form the essence of the matter is the same. Capital is concentrated and centralised, and the working class is exploited still more intensely.

This is why the state is now responsible for around 40% of investment in Britain today! Look at the example of the National Enterprise Board. This was set up in 1974 to provide "assistance" in the form of investment and in some cases to take majority share holdings, as in the case of

British Leyland. Its annual budget in 1977 was £274,000,000. It has investments in twenty three countries, and substantial holdings in the Rolls Royce Aero Engine Group and Ferranti.

Again, look at the assistance provided to the US imperialist firm, Fords. This company has been granted £70,000,000 from the state to develop a new plant in South Wales, where it can take advantage of cheaper labour costs and so exploit the workers of South Wales to its advantage. ("Class Struggle" October 1977). Look also at the massive assistance promised to Poland in return for a shipping order placed in British yards. All these are prime examples of the use of the state by the monopoly capitalists.

They are also prime examples of the plunder of the British people. All this expenditure must be financed through budget deficits. The state undertakes to spend far more than it receives, and then makes up the difference through borrowing abroad or by increasing the money supply. This is a policy of deliberately depreciating the currency by issuing notes which do not represent any real value in the form of increased production, and are consequently worthless. Despite the hypocritical vows of the Labour Government to reduce inflation, this trend is continuing. The recent budget in April provides clear proof that the monopoly capitalist state plans to continue inflation. The bourgeois press trumpeted the fact that Healey "gave away" £2,000million through "tax cuts". At the same time he planned a deficit of £8,500 million which will be made up through borrowing and through increasing the money supply by 8-12%. Healey expects a rate of inflation of 7-8% by 1979, and intends to limit wage increases to 7%. This would mean a "rise" of less than 5% in take home pay.

But the bosses' mouthpiece, the 'Financial Times', is confident that the money supply will increase more than planned (the rate of increase is always in excess of government targets) and that the rate of inflation will also be higher. In other words, the bourgeoisie through its government, has "given away" a paltry sum, fully confident that it will rake it back in again by keeping the rate of wage increases below the rate of inflation.

Successive governments have constantly depreciated the currency, allowing the monopoly capitalists to compensate themselves by increasing prices. At the same time the working people have been forced to pay by having their wages held down.

Rate of Increase of Money Supply and Price Increases 1971-75

Year	Money Supply	Prices
1971	13%	9.4%
1972	25.8%	7.1%
1973	27.6%	9.2%
1974	12.6%	16.1%
1975	7.6%	24.2%

(Figures from 'Financial Times' 13th July 1976)

The monopoly capitalist class has certainly been on the alert to defraud the British working people.

The bourgeoisie has also been quick to use taxation to plunder the British people even further. While average gross pay seems to have been keeping in step with price rises since 1974, as a result of determined struggle by the working class, the real value of take home pay has been declining since 1973 (Financial Times 16/2/77). This has been caused directly by the fact that inflated money wages bring more people into the tax bracket. In 1939, 4,000,000 people paid income tax now 20,000,000 do so. As a result of this direct taxes now provide 51.5% of all state income. Of this taxes on personal income provide 39.1%, employees National Insurance contributions provide 7.7%. Taxes on companies provide only 4.6%! The working people are forced to accept cuts in their living standards in order to pay for the crisis of the bosses' system.

The working class, through its labour, provides the profit for the bourgeoisie. The state grabs further funds through taxation. What is left to the working class is increasingly eaten away by inflation. This is how the working class is forced to pay for the crisis of capitalism.

SOCIALISM IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

The bourgeoisie and their accomplices try to stem the tide of working class struggle by saying that the working class is the cause of the crisis. It calls on the working class to make sacrifices to get imperialism out of its crisis. The task of Communists is to draw a firm line of demarcation with these lies. We must repeat again and again that the struggle to defend living standards, and against increased exploitation are a just reaction to the attacks of the monopoly capitalists. Such struggles are inseparable from the wages system, because the fixing of the actual rates of wages is always the outcome of class struggle. It is a question, as Marx pointed out, of the relative strengths of capital and labour.

In this struggle, economic struggle alone is not enough. In Marx words "*in its merely economic action capital is the stronger side*". The fight for a rise in wages is at most a struggle to maintain the value of labour, not to actually increase it. This is why the working class should not be misled by the opportunists into exaggerating the importance of the economic struggle:

"Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair days wage for a fair days work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'" (p78)

It is also why the working class should not be misled by the slogan 'For a return to free collective bargaining' - used by the revisionists and others. The working class can never be 'free' to negotiate wages with the capitalists because they are enchained by the capitalist wages system itself. The only way the working class can defend its standard of life is by waging firm class struggle.

This is why the RCLB campaigns to turn the unions into fighting

class organisations, using as one of its slogans "Make the bosses pay for their crisis". We must win the advanced workers to an understanding of the need for a revolutionary Communist Party which will end the system of capitalist exploitation. Only then will the working class and working people be free from the shadow of inflation.

Socialist China provides living proof of the truth of this. On the eve of liberation in China the country was experiencing the worst inflation in world history. After liberation between November 1949, and March 1950 the situation was stabilised and some prices began to fall. Since then Peoples China has experienced no inflation. There are no internal or external debts, and no personal income tax:

"The building of a socialist system enables China to conduct the production circulation and distribution of commodities, as well as currency issue, under a unified state plan. Production is no longer aimed at making profits or confined to what is profitable. Instead it serves socialist construction and satisfies the needs of the people".

(Why China Has No Inflation. FLP Peking 1976, p31).

STRUGGLE TO BUILD A FINE STYLE OF WORK IN THE LEAGUE!

Theory and practice are two contradictory aspects of a single entity. Between theory and practice there is both struggle and unity. Although at any one time either one or the other will be the principal aspect of the contradiction, and will therefore be the decisive aspect, the one which determines the nature of the thing and therefore the emphasis of our work, it is essential that we grasp deeply that there is also unity between theory and practice. In Stalin's well-known words:

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

("Foundations of Leninism". Peking ed., p22)

Our task therefore in building the Party and leading the revolution is to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the concrete practice of the British revolution. In order to do this we struggle to build a fine style of work that seeks truth from facts, practices the mass line and uses democratic-centralism.

SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS

Our main enemy at present in integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with our concrete practice is subjectivism. Subjectivism is characterised by a breach between a person's subjective view of the world and the real objective world, and between knowledge and practice. In the final analysis, ideas are only of any use when they correspond to reality. i.e. when they accurately reflect the real world and can be used to direct practice and change the world. Such ideas are correct ideas. In the struggle to ensure that our ideas are correct ideas we must struggle against dogmatism and idealism on the one hand, and against empiricism on the other. All of these are forms of subjectivism and are therefore ways of thinking which will cause errors in our work. These errors represent different dangers for different comrades and for different levels of the League. We must be particularly vigilant for these errors catching us unawares and even taking different forms in the new situation where the League is putting increased emphasis on practice.

Dogmatism and Idealism

Marxist-Leninists in Britain, including the RCLB, are relatively divorced from the working class and have a relatively high proportion of intellectuals in their ranks. Whilst some initial success has been gained in becoming more closely integrated with the struggle of the working class and in transforming the class character and composition of the RCLB, it would be most unwise to underestimate the danger of dogmatism and idealism inherent in our current situation. Dogmatism and idealism are particularly dangerous for comrades in leading positions who are frequently not as deeply integrated with the struggle of the working class as are comrades in lower levels or among the rank-and-file.

Many comrades have got quite a lot of book-knowledge and know Marxist theory in the abstract. Without a firm understanding that the only true knowledge is drawn from objective reality and tested in practice, it is relatively easy for these comrades to make errors of dogmatism. Dogmatism treats Marxist theory as lifeless dogma, divorced from the real world and unconnected with practice. It fails to understand that the only correct ideas are those which conform to reality and which can therefore change the world.

It is quite easy for many comrades, particularly those from the intelligentsia, to seize ready-made formulas and quotations from the Marxist classics and wave them around like talismans, neglecting to study them closely and test them in the light of the concrete conditions of the British revolution. To take a concrete example: the RCLB's correct policy of devoting all resources in mass work to the working class, particularly the industrial working class, is based on the similar line of Lenin in "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats". In applying this line it is necessary to grasp that the concrete conditions of Britain today and of Russia in 1897 are very different. It would be quite possible to interpret this line in a very narrow sense of doing only factory work, forgetting for instance, the very high level of permanent unemployment in Britain today, a factor which did not exist in Russia in 1897. In line with its resources therefore the RCLB does some mass work among the unemployed workers. This is a concrete example of the fact that:

"All correct ideas depend on time, place and conditions; otherwise they would be metaphysical." ("Peking Review". 18.11.77.)

The line of "integrating theory with practice" is a powerful weapon against dogmatism. As Mao said:

"How can those who have only book-learning be turned into intellectuals in the true sense? The only way is to get them to take part in practical work and become practical workers, to get those engaged in theoretical work to study important practical problems!" ("Rectify the Party's Style of Work". "Selected Readings", p215)

Over a period of time, through engaging in practice in many different spheres of Party-building, intellectual comrades have gradually changed their way of thinking and have grasped more firmly that knowledge derived from books must be studied in the light of concrete reality and verified in practice.

Idealism is very closely connected with dogmatism and both are forms of subjectivism, but whereas dogmatism is chiefly characterised by aimless theorising and the reciting of formulations and quotations parrot-fashion, idealism assumes that whatever is in the head is correct and forgets that in general practice is primary. Idealism forgets that correct ideas "come from social practice and from it alone." (Mao: "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?" "Selected Readings", p502).

Some comrades who have a tendency to idealism have a tendency to stick to their subjectively conceived ideas in complete disregard of practice. It is not possible for a line, policy or plan to completely conform to reality. Often our initial plans will have many defects in them - there will be many factors we have neglected to take into account

or which we could not possibly be aware of. This is why our policies, lines and plans are changed when practice shows either that they were in error or did not take into account some unforeseen factor. It is essential that we are prepared to adjust our ideas when practice shows up imperfections in them. In Mao's words:

"... men's original ideas, theories, plans or programmes are seldom realised without any alteration... ideas, theories, plans or programmes are usually altered partially and sometimes even wholly, because of the discovery of unforeseen circumstances in the course of practice." ("On Practice". "Selected Readings", p78).

An example of this type of necessary adjustment to policy is the policy on the relationship between propaganda and agitation adopted by the RCLB at its founding Congress. The CFB and the CUA, correctly recognising that propaganda is the decisive thing at the stage of rallying the vanguard, had used to think that propaganda should dominate our publications. Practice, and learning from the experience of other Marxist-Leninist organisations, particularly the CP(M-L)US, showed though that the vanguard can only be rallied in the course of struggle against the monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie. It is therefore essential to unite with the mass of workers in their struggles. To carry out this change of policy it was also necessary to grasp that quantitatively agitation should dominate our publications. As the RCLB Manifesto says *"agitational articles... dominate our political paper quantitatively, propaganda articles play the decisive role."* (p25).

This process of adjustment must go on, otherwise our lines and policies will become increasingly divorced from reality, and therefore our practice will not meet with success. Some comrades have not deeply grasped this fact and have a tendency to stick to their original plans come hell or high water.

As important as the adjustment of line, policy and plan in line with experience, is conscientiously striving to ensure that in the first place our line, policy and plan corresponds as much as possible to reality. Here investigation, close study and analysis are essential. Lenin said that concrete analysis of concrete conditions is *"the most essential thing, the living soul of Marxism."* Investigation, close study and analysis are essential to the spirit of seeking truth from facts. It is necessary to study a thing, whether it be a factory, a particular struggle, an area of work we are leading or a policy decision, in considerable detail. We must strive for all-roundedness, looking at as many aspects of a thing as possible and having a good grasp of the particularity of contradiction. As Lenin said:

"in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and 'mediations'. We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity." (Cited in "Quotations from Mao Tsetung", p218)

Investigation is an aspect of this style of work that we must grasp more thoroughly. This is important for all comrades, but particularly for those with leadership responsibilities. Without the most thorough possible

investigation of actual conditions, it is impossible to lead practical work well. As Mao so clearly put it:

"Everyone engaged in practical work must investigate conditions at the lower levels. Such investigation is especially necessary for those who know theory but do not know the actual conditions, for otherwise they will not be able to link theory with practice. Although my assertion 'No investigation, no right to speak', has been ridiculed as 'narrow empiricism', to this day I do not regret having made it; far from regretting it, I still insist that without investigation there cannot possibly be any right to speak." ("Quotations", p230, and "Selected Works" Vol.3 p13).

All comrades in the League with leadership responsibilities must struggle hard to master investigation work and deeply understand that they cannot lead practical work if they rely solely, or even mainly, on what is in their own heads, not troubling themselves to study actual conditions or to learn from others.

Empiricism.

Although the League is now putting a lot more emphasis on practice, we must not make the mistake of assuming that the ideas and experience which stem from direct experience are necessarily correct or universally applicable. Empiricism forgets this and mistakes fragmentary experience for universal truth. For comrades from a working class background, who are perhaps not as well acquainted with theoretical texts as comrades from the intelligentsia, and for comrades whose main area of practice is mass work, empiricism is a particular danger.

It is quite incorrect to construct theories, lines, policies and plans simply on the basis of a limited amount of direct experience. Such direct experience must be viewed in the light of Marxist theory. Theory is the concentrated expression of the experience of the working class movement of all countries, taken in its general aspect. Therefore when we look at our particular experience in one factory, in one branch or in one field of work, and compare it to theory, we are, in reality, comparing a strictly limited amount of direct experience to a vastly greater amount of indirect experience. It is essential to grasp that all theory comes from practice and that most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience. Provided that this experience has been summed up correctly, it is an invaluable guide to practice.

We must also grasp the leading role of theory. Practice cannot possibly be successful if it is not consciously led by theory. We will be blind, half-baked revolutionaries, stumbling around in the dark if we neglect theory. Stalin described well how indispensable theory is:

"...theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realise not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well-known thesis that: 'Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.'" ("Foundations of Leninism". Peking ed., p22 (Emphasis in original)).

In order to be able to seek truth from facts we must have a good grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as an ideological and theoretical system. Only if we have a good grasp of Marxism can we seek truth from facts, only then can we come to correct conclusions, guided by the general principles of Marxism, from our study of concrete reality, and not unwittingly come to incorrect conclusions guided by bourgeois ideology because our grasp of Marxism is weak.

Marxism consists of three basic elements, philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism; we must study them hard and understand them thoroughly. The study of Marxism takes two different forms. Frequently, we study concrete policies or lines in order to understand them and how to carry them out, or we study some Marxist text in order to elucidate and solve a problem. The other form is when we study basic principles of Marxism in order to deepen our knowledge of Marxism for the purpose of increasing our ability to take part in and lead the class struggle. The amount of practical work we do means that the former type may well quantitatively dominate our work, but in the long term the latter is more important. All comrades must conscientiously strive to set aside some time for private study of the basic Marxist texts in order to increase their ability to integrate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the concrete practice of the British revolution. This is most important for helping us to practice Marxism and to combat and prevent opportunism and revisionism, especially within our own ranks. As Hua Kuo-feng recently said:

"While the study of concrete policies and work directives is naturally very important it cannot substitute for the study of basic principles. One important reason why some of our comrades committed mistakes of one kind or another and even allowed themselves to be misled is that the basic principles of Marxism had not really taken root in their minds and were blown away by a gust of wind. We must follow Chairman Mao's consistent teachings, study Marxism painstakingly and cultivate the habit of reading. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is an extremely rich treasure house of theory, it is an integrated scientific system. In the course of studying, we should strive to grasp all facets of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought in their entirety and not in bits and pieces, grasp them as they are and not as one wants them to be, and grasp them concretely and not abstractly." ("Peking Review", 21.10.77., pp9/10.)

Dogmatism, idealism and empiricism are all forms of subjectivism. In fighting for a fine style of work we are fighting for a style of work which unites theory and practice. In Mao's words:

"It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying it." ("Rectify the Party's Style of Work". "Selected Readings", p213).

A good teacher by negative example of all of these errors is an article in the December 1977 issue of "Class Struggle" entitled "Firemen Determined to Win". This article ended with a good spirit in saying:

"The firemen are fully prepared for a long strike. 'It's going to be a long, hard, bitter struggle'. With their high level of unity, and tremendous morale, with overwhelming public support, and with their determination not to be sold out, they are sure to win."

But as we know the firemen lost. We cannot expect to be soothsayers, but with a better grasp of the basic Marxist world outlook, we would have anticipated the defeat of the firemen. As it stood we made errors of dogmatism, idealism and empiricism in the article. In the first place the article didn't grasp that in the present stage, when the unions are led by opportunists, most economic struggles are being lost because of the absence of Marxist-Leninist leadership. It was dogmatist in applying the basic principle of having faith in the masses by assuming that the masses will win all battles. It was idealist in thinking that because the firemen wanted to win, they would win. It was also empiricist in looking only at the relatively good situation in one city and not relating that to the struggle as a whole.

These errors are not serious in themselves but they are good examples of the sort of errors we must be conscientious in struggling against in fighting to seek truth from facts.

THE MASS LINE

Closely connected with seeking truth from facts is the question of the mass line. We must all have real conviction that *"the masses are the real heroes, whilst we ourselves are often childish and ignorant."*

A correct line or policy is one which both corresponds to the objective needs of the masses and one which also enjoys their support. We must not beat workers over the head with Marxism-Leninism nor must we conjure up lines and policies out of our heads. On the other hand we must not tail behind the spontaneous level of consciousness of the working class.

In all of our practical work we must struggle hard to master the mass line. All comrades should make friends with the workers, solicit opinions and listen carefully to their views. We must listen carefully to what everybody has to say, including non-proletarian elements. We must carefully evaluate these views and opinions, study them in the light of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and draw appropriate conclusions. In studying them we must discard the dross and keep the true, to get to the essence of what workers say. One comrade thought that all the workers in her section were very anti-union because they said so. But in reality they were hostile to a very bad steward and supported the union when given good leadership by a new steward. Here we have the problem of the contradiction between the appearance and the essence of a thing. Only by studying the thing closely can we see the essence of a thing beneath its appearance. In order to understand the essence of a thing we must also have the spirit of relying on the masses, and not just on what is in our own heads:

"Objective reality is exceedingly rich in content and very complex; if we want to understand the objective world correctly, we must rely on the wisdom and experience of the masses. The wisdom of an individual is always limited whereas that of the masses is inexhaustible. It is far, far from enough to rely only on the practical experience

of a few leaders; not until we have learnt from our subordinates and from the masses, have concentrated their experience and knowledge and, together with them, have repeatedly tested, enriched and revised it in practice, can we do our work well." ("Peking Review", 18.11.77. p7).

Over a period of time if we are conscientious about applying the mass line we will develop correct policies which enjoy the support of the masses correspond to their objective needs, develop their ideological and political consciousness and propel the revolutionary struggle forward. In doing this we must consciously guard against commandism on the one hand, and tailism on the other.

A practical policy which runs far ahead of the consciousness of the masses is an incorrect policy. Such policies alienate us from the masses and hand over leadership of the working class to the opportunists, and therefore to the bourgeoisie. We know for instance that in order to build socialism we must seize state power by armed struggle. We do not though issue calls to man the barricades, but put forward policies which correspond to the objective level of development of the class struggle and to the consciousness of the working class. Such a policy is the call to "Turn the unions into fighting class organizations."

On the other hand a policy which does not take the class struggle forward and develop the consciousness of the masses, or which tails behind the level of consciousness of the backward elements, is also an incorrect policy. Although we do not issue calls to man the barricades we do do propaganda on the historical inevitability of the demise of capitalism and the rise of socialism. What the masses think is not always correct. In fact under conditions of capitalism, they will be frequently incorrect. Therefore many policies which do correspond to the objective level of development of the class struggle are policies which we must fight for if they are to gain the support of the masses. Take the case of immigration controls. It is vital in the current situation where the bourgeois state is using racism to divide the working class and is strengthening its repressive apparatus, to fight against immigration controls. This is not a demand which will immediately win the support of the mass of workers, yet only this demand can unite the working class and defeat the attempts of the bourgeoisie to split the working class. The demand can only be won by patiently educating the mass of workers, including the racist ones, on its objective necessity.

Similarly, we must not think that we can formulate all, or even most, of our policies on the basis of listening to the opinions and demands of the masses. By themselves the mass of workers will develop only trade union consciousness. Communist consciousness comes from without, from those who are already Communists. The theory that the working class will spontaneously develop Communist consciousness is a theory which denies the leading role of theory and the Party as Stalin clearly pointed out:

"The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to giving the spontaneous movement a politically conscious, planned character. It is opposed to the Party marching at the head of the working class, to the Party raising the level of the masses to the level of political consciousness, to the Party leading the movement;

it is in favour of the politically conscious elements not hindering the movement from taking its own course; it is in favour of the Party only heeding the spontaneous movement and dragging at the tail of it. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious element in the movement, the logical basis of all opportunism." ("Foundations of Leninism". Peking ed., pp23/24. (emphasis in original)).

The relationship between adopting policies which correspond to the objective needs of the masses and yet which enjoy their support was concisely summed up by Mao:

"We should help the masses to realise that we represent their interests, that our lives are intimately bound up with theirs. We should help them proceed from these things to an understanding of the higher tasks we have put forward, the tasks of the revolutionary war, so that they will support the revolution and spread it throughout the country, respond to our political appeals and fight to the end for victory in the revolution." ("Quotations", p133).

DEMOCRATIC-CENTRALISM.

An integral aspect of a fine style of work is a healthy system of democratic-centralism. Unless we have a good system of democratic-centralism which can speedily concentrate correct ideas upwards and channel correct leadership downwards, we cannot seek truth from facts or apply the mass line. In short we cannot have a fine style of work.

Our system of democratic-centralism is in the main working well but it can definitely be improved. Two aspects need particular attention.

The leadership at branch level must be more conscientious about passing up criticism and ideas from the rank-and-file. Through the Branch Committees the Central Committee is in contact with the whole membership. It is essential therefore that Branch Committees listen attentively to the opinions of the rank-and-file. Branch Committees must not only concentrate correct ideas, but pass important criticisms on, even when they think them to be incorrect.

Rank-and-file comrades must be conscientious about applying the mass line in their mass work. Leading committees can set an example in seeking truth from facts and applying the mass line, but what is decisive is the rank-and-file who are actually carrying out the line of the organisation collectively, and who are most in contact with the masses. Through the Branch Committees the Central Committee is in contact with many thousands of workers. The amount of investigation that can be carried out by the Central Committee is strictly limited by objective factors but if the rank-and-file is conscientious about applying the mass line and seeking truth from facts in its mass work, and if the Branch Committees are similarly conscientious with what the rank-and-file has to say, then the Central Committee is able to concentrate the views and experience of these many thousands of workers. Our democratic-centralist system must be like a smooth-running up and down escalator system taking ideas and experience up and leadership down.

We are a young organisation - we have a golden opportunity to build

a really strong revolutionary Communist Party with deep roots in the working class. We can only do this if we build a Party that has the same fine style of work as the Communist Party of China - a style of work of seeking truth from facts, and practising the mass line and democratic-centralism. Let's take that golden opportunity to build a Party that is at one with the working class and the mass of the people and therefore can lead them in revolution.

NOTES

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