

Lessons of the Class Struggle in Britain and the Battle against Revisionism

The disintegration of the Western imperialist bloc, the intensification of the capitalist economic crisis, and consequently the crisis of State power, all signal the approach of proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries. As Chairman Mao said, we must be good at grasping typical examples, and because of the similar historical development of the United States and Britain, the existence of the labor aristocracy, bourgeois trade unionism, bourgeois democracy, and, most importantly, revisionist "Communist Parties", the recent experiences of the British working class and communist movement have many lessons for U.S. Marxist-Leninists, especially on the relation between the communist movement and the labor movement. Important questions have been raised calling for greater effort in applying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought to concretely formulate correct revolutionary strategy and tactics in capitalist countries.

THE TOTAL CRISIS IN DECLINING IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Its very basis is the necessity of constant expansion and this constant expansion now becomes impossible. It ends in a deadlock. Every year, England is brought nearer face to face with the question: either the country must go to pieces or the capitalist production must. Which is it to be?

F. Engels, in the Preface to The Conditions of the Working Class in England, The Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 3

Since the end of World War 2, the economy of Britain has entered a state of permanent crisis, inevitable because of the decaying, parasitic nature of monopoly capitalism. In the post-war period, the British government has employed "stop/go" (deflationary/inflationary) economic policies in the most sophisticated manner, attempting to save the economy from final doom, but has nevertheless failed miserably with all its Keynesian trickery.

In recent years, the situation has become critical because of chronic problems in the balance of payments, a zero growth rate in real GNP, and about 15% inflation annually. Attempting to lift Britain from the economic difficulties of recent years, the Tory government had to adopt a sweeping plan to "revive" the economy. This included a floating exchange rate (that could at anytime increase or reduce the purchasing power of the British pound depending on the strength of the British economy in the international market), the entering of the Common Market (to guarantee a competitive and "efficient" economy through specialization and the closing down of inefficient plants and factories), imposing the rule of law in industrial relations, and statutory controls on wages and prices. It also called for the encouragement of mergers, the granting of tax incentives for investment, and the establishment of national "planning" goals. All these measures amounted to further plundering of workers.

The combined effect of the oil embargo by the Arab countries and the strikes of workers nation-wide sparked the most recent phase of the British economic crisis. Reacting to the threat of hyper-inflation and nation-wide strikes, the Heath government and the financial oligarchy responded with drastic measures. The bank lending rate was jacked-up to a record high of 13%. Heath declared a national emergency and shortened the work-week to three days, announcing new economic measures to cut government spending, tighten up consumer spending, and increase taxes. But these anti-inflationary policies were not able to curb the inflationary trend of the economy and meanwhile unemployment skyrocketed and industrial production further declined.

It is becoming more apparent daily that the economic crisis of Britain (and Italy) is only an example of what will happen to other imperialist countries. The U.S. has developed similarly to Britain in its economic crisis and governmental policies. After defeat in the Indochina War, and the collapse of U.S. hegemony, the economy headed rapidly towards a state of permanent crisis. In August 1971, in its attempt to curb inflation, the Nixon government announced its New Economic Policy which included the infamous wage and price controls. Although reactionary labor misleaders cooperated with the Nixon government to discourage strikes, after three phases of wage and price controls, it became apparent that only wages and not profits or prices were controlled. Militant strikes broke out everywhere and even the reactionary union leaders such as George Meany were forced to openly condemn the wage-price controls.

Similarly, the oil embargo, monetary crisis, and the resistance of the raw materials countries further intensified the economic crisis. With the growth rate approaching zero (growth rate of GNP according to bourgeois statistics), with soaring inflation, increasing unemployment, and the threat of depression, the economy is threatened with total breakdown. Responding to this threat, Ford has proposed an increase in unemployment, and cuts in social programs, including welfare, daycare, medicaid, and other health and education programs.

MILITANT STRIKES WERE THE ANSWER OF THE BRITISH WORKERS TO THE ATTACKS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DANGER OF FASCISM

Facing critical stagnation and inflation, the British monopoly capitalists attacked both the standard of living of the workers (through forced overtime), and general democratic rights as well. Heath started his phase three wage-price control last October, and wanted to limit wage increases to seven percent while special policies were designed to "curb" labor militancy. The Industrial Relations Acts (IRA) were passed to take away the power of the unions and to punish "irresponsible" unions when they called strikes or when wildcats occurred. Scotland Yard established a special unit to deal with picket violence. Emergency powers were used by Heath later to try to smash the strikes which occurred.

The workers answered the attacks of the Heath government with militant mass actions. Engineering workers in the government-owned electric power industries banned overtime and weekend work, and were soon followed by the coal miners and railway engineers. The workers were angered by the fact that there had been a massive redistribution of wealth and income in the country, but in the wrong direction. The workers' standard of living fell in 1973 while trading profits were up by 16%, dividend and interest payments by 28%, and the net value of company property by 20%.

In reaction to the work slow-down and especially to the reduction of coal output by 40%, Heath declared a "state of emergency", trying to stir up popular opposition to smash the strikes by reducing the work week to three days. The three day work week caused a sharp increase in unemployment in January, pushing the total number of unemployed and semi-employed to 1.3 million, the highest since the 1930's. For the workers, it meant a savage and direct cut in their wages. Responding to this heavy-handed attack, 270,000 coal miners voted to escalate their resistance into a full-fledged strike, demanding not only higher wages, but also the abandonment of the IRA. These heroic miners, who have had a long history of labor militancy, once again brought the British economy to a standstill. For as the workers' song goes, "all wheels cease to whir when .. the minds will it".

In their newspapers, the monopoly capitalists came

out openly with the position that "if the democratic government cannot run the country, then only the army can run it". Fascist groups representing the interests of monopoly capital are now being formed which advocate physical attacks on striking workers. According to the New York Times (8/30/74), General Walter Walker, the former NATO Commander-in-Chief in North Europe, has formed a fascist group and has openly stated its objectives: "We are not going to sit and watch these political bully-boys, these trade union communists, and "fascists" and those wretched young anarchists bring Britain to her knees...The politicians haven't got the fire in their bellies to tackle the problem, so it is up to us, the people of the land, to prepare for action ourselves."

However, the workers were not intimidated, for they were determined to fight back against the attacks by the government and the fascists. The economic strikes soon became political strikes. Workers were out on the streets rallying and marching, demanding higher wages, a rent-freeze, food subsidies, and nationalization of industries. At this sight, television news reporters from the U.S. were deeply worried and commented on the "coming of Socialism in Great Britain". In the emergency election forced on Heath by the crisis, the British working class showed great spirit, discipline, and solidarity with the striking workers. They forced the monopoly capitalists to give into the miners' demands, and forced the Tory government out of power.

THE TRANSITION TO CLASS WAR: BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

What happened to the 'labor peace' that existed for so long in Britain? Engels, who first pointed out the existence of the labor aristocracy in England, said in 1892:

"The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopolies, monopoly and the English working class has, to a certain extent, shared in the benefits of monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out amongst them: the privileged minority pocketed the most, but even the great mass had, at least, a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason why, since the dying out of Owenism, there has been no socialism in England. With the breakdown of that monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position; it will find itself generally--the privileged and leading minority not excepted--on a level with its fellow workers abroad. And this is the reason why there will be socialism again in England."

(F. Engels, Ibid. p.450)

This is exactly what has been happening in England, and is happening in the U.S. as well. In the first four years of this decade, we saw here in the U.S. an average of 5,400 strikes per year (compared to an average of 3,500 in 1960-64, and 4,700 in 1965-69.). There were 5,600 strikes in 1973, involving 2.2 million workers. These strikes cost monopoly capitalists a total of 27 million work days. The June 12th Wall Street Journal lamented with extreme uneasiness, "From the bakers in Massachusetts to the nurses in San Francisco, from the teachers in Wisconsin to the furniture movers in Pittsburg, strikes are breaking out in many different trades and industries, large and small." The American workers, like their class brothers and sisters in Britain, are striking hard against monopoly capital.

COMMUNISTS SHOULD LEAD THE TRADE UNION STRUGGLE

What is the correct communist strategy for trade union work? First, communists must work in the trade unions. Moreover, they must work not only among the rank and file (the base), but also in the leadership (the superstructure). This is especially important because both Britain and the United States have a long tradition of "pure" trade unionism and collaborationist union leadership. As Lenin teaches us:

There are three basic forms of the proletarian struggle: economic, political, and theoretical. ...the trade union struggle is one of the constant forms of the whole workers' movement, one always needed under capitalism and essential at all times.

Lenin, "To S.I. Gusev" in On Trade Unions, p.155

We must work wherever the masses are to be found.

In our trade union work, the first and most important task is to propagandize, on topical issues and important lessons, to win the workers over from reformism to socialist revolution. We must guard against the straying from communist politics to trade unionist politics.

Lenin states:

The party must exert every effort to educate the workers who belong to trade unions in the spirit of a broad understanding of the class struggle and the socialist aim of the proletariat; but its activities to win a virtually leading position in these unions; and lastly to ensure that these unions under certain conditions, come into direct association with the party.

Lenin, "From A Tactical Platform for Unity Congress of the RSDLP" in On Trade Unions, pp.180-81

As in all mass work, the essence of trade union work is to fully integrate with the masses, to build the rank and file movement. Work in the super-structure, including work in the union leadership, is an absolutely necessary channel for this integration. Any denial of this necessity denies the dialectical connection between the base and the superstructure. Communists should therefore run and be elected as trade union leaders, putting forward communist, not trade union politics. In fighting for the workers' interests, we should unite with every progressive stand that the union leaders take. But we must not rely on these leaders. On the contrary, to accomplish any of our tasks, we must always maintain our political independence and initiative to propagandize and organize. We must also learn how to turn the defensive strategy into an offensive strategy, and on to the onslaught of the bourgeoisie.

At the same time...calls for sustained efforts toward converting the movement, which so far is only a trade union one, into a political and directly revolutionary movement linked with an armed uprising.

Lenin, "Draft Resolutions for the Third Conference of the RSDLP" (2nd All Russia) in On Trade Unions, p.185

Labor militancy in Britain has been the highest among the Western capitalist countries since WW 2. Even according to official figures, which always under-report the real number of strikes, in 1972, a total of 2,080 working days were lost in British labor disputes for every 1,000 workers. By comparison, the Italian figure was 1,680 working days, and the West German one only 5. In the United States, the figure was 870 working days. The principal factor accounting for this high labor militancy is the active participation

of the rank and file workers on the floor level, and the strong shop steward system.

Because of the particular structure of the trade unions in Britain, only the national union leadership negotiates the wages and economic benefits, while disputes over job allocations, dismissals, supervisors, and jurisdictional matters, which accounted for almost one half of the total, are negotiated by the shop stewards on the floor. This structure was pushed originally by the monopoly capitalists in order to prevent the unions from coming into the factory, and to weaken the union by posing the shop stewards of individual factories against the capitalists. However, this structure created a traditionally strong tie between the rank and file workers and the shop steward in their fight against the supervisors and the boss. The strong tie between rank and file and the shop stewards becomes more and more important as the national trade union leadership becomes more and more reactionary, opportunistic, and bureaucratic. As the workers are now confronted with the daily threat of unemployment (especially due to the 'rationalization' policy pushed by the monopoly capitalists), and worsening living and working conditions, the shop stewards led the rank and file workers in militant struggles against monopoly capital and the government.

The long tradition of the opportunist, reactionary trade union and revisionist "CP" leadership in Britain, has given rise to a strong syndicalist tendency among the workers in Britain, and this tendency has a strong influence among the shop stewards. The syndicalists incline toward anarchism, destroy the discipline of the working class struggle, and will only lead the rank and file workers toward a path of total defeat objectively serving the interests of monopoly capital.

Trade unions in the U.S. are much more tightly controlled from the top than their counterparts in Britain. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), created in the 1930's when the labor militancy was rampant, created a strong business-like union structure where election of officers, negotiation of labor contracts, labor organizing and day to day rulings of the union were tightly controlled by the professional trade unionists, who are the labor lieutenants of monopoly capital. The NLRA substituted direct action of the rank and file workers with seemingly orderly legal procedures and thus took away a powerful weapon from the workers. Moreover, the corrupt labor union leadership's ties with the underworld is also a known fact. They sustain each other and in many cases collaborate with one another (like the trucking union leadership with the cargo hijacking business). The international offices of the trade unions in the U.S. have overwhelming power over the local union. The winning of a local election does not even guarantee a better man in the local office. The international office can revoke a charter of a local union, etc. These factors have been real obstacles to the rank and file movement here. However, as workers in the U.S. awaken more and more, the reactionary, opportunistic nature of the trade union leadership will be exposed more and more, and the rank and file will demand changes. The best example is the United Mine-workers Union, where the cold-blooded murder of Yablonsky did not stop the rank and file's democratization movement. The workers are increasingly taking over their struggle into their own hands, and demanding that the unions fight for their rights, such as the wildcats, among steel workers against the no-strike clause, etc. Workers in the U.S., especially the young workers, are also increasingly open to communist leadership, as was shown in the Chrysler wildcat last year. The building of the rank and file movement, and the leadership of the trade union struggle, will become increasingly important for the communist forces in the U.S.

Both in the U.S. and in Britain, the influence of the Revisionist "CP" have been relatively strong in the trade unions, compared with the forces of the young M-L forces. However, this influence, as it was shown in Britain, has been primarily concentrated on the top, a-

mong the union leadership. Six out of 27 Executive Board members of the TUC are "CP" members. The vice-president of the most militant miners' union is also a "CP" member. The "CP" has gained control over the leadership of a few big unions during the recent wave of labor militancy. What is the trade union strategy of the revisionist "CP"GB? The strategy is to cash in on the mass struggle, initiated and carried on by the rank and file workers, as well as other left forces, all in order to move the trade union to the "left". This means, of course, to get "CP"GB members elected as the trade union leaders, and to move the TUC leadership to vote for programs that would lead to the "peaceful transition to socialism."

The revisionist "CP" GB is afraid of the rank and file, afraid of the class conscious workers. Although they have supported the rank and file's fights against the Phase III of the Heath government against the Industrial Relations Acts (they have to do so in order not to further discredit itself) in action they have tried to contain the militancy of the rank and file workers. The infamous tactic of the "CP"GB is to call for a one day general strike to force the TUC to the left and to "threaten" the government and the monopolies to give in to its reformist demands. For example, the recent dockers' fight against the Industrial Relations Acts of the Heath government was initiated by rank-and-file shop stewards who refused to bow to the court's diktat and continued to picket the plant. The arrest of five rank-and-file union leaders brought out thousands of workers on the street to protest against the fascist attacks of the government. Instead of fully developing this movement, the "CP"GB instead called for a one-day general strike to demand their release from prison. The same tactic was employed by the "CP"GB to show their support of the militant miners struggles. The one-day strike was clearly only symbolic, used to demoralize and exhaust the real rank-and-file struggle, and most importantly to prevent the conversion of the militant workers struggle to a political and directly revolutionary movement.

SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE IN BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS?

In midst of the nation-wide strike by miners, train engineers, and other supporting workers, Heath called for parliamentary election. * The purpose of the election, as the CPGB(ML) has pointed out, is to shift attention away from the industrial struggle, where workers are unshaken in their defiance of Phase III, to focus it on the Parliamentary arena. Both Heath and Wilson have tried, openly or covertly, to use the mere announcement of an election to persuade the miners to call off their strike. It is clear that the election was intended to distract the working class from real struggle (general strike), and to keep the working class imprisoned in the ideology of social-democracy. The Tories seek a "strong government" to deal with the economic crisis, and with the "extremists" in the unions. The Labor Parties seek to contain the "militants," and to sustain the "moderates." At that moment, should the communists have participated in the election? Should they have supported the Labor Party against the Tories? What were the correct communist tactics that would have advanced the great historical task, the onslaught on monopoly capital?

*In England, the party in power could call a new election anytime. Sometimes the call is forced by the crisis of the state, sometimes the party in power calls for the election to ensure its victory over the other party. Therefore, it is different from the fixed election schedule in the U.S.

The question of communist participation in elections cannot be posed without an understanding of the two steps of the development of the working class movement. Lenin stated:

"The Main thing not everything by a very long way, of course, but the main thing, has been won over, in that it has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government against parliamentarism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat, against bourgeois democracy. Now all efforts, all attention, must be concentrated on the next step -- which seems, and from a certain standpoint really is--less fundamental, but which on the other hand, is actually closer to the practical carrying out of the task, namely: seeking the forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution." Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," p. 96.

"While the first historical task could not be accomplished without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social chauvinism, the second task, which now becomes the immediate task, and which consists in being able to lead the masses to the new position that we can ensure the victory of the vanguard in the revolution--this immediate task can not be accomplished without eliminating left doctrinarism." "Left Wing Communism," p. 98.

In the United States, the rupture from the "CP"USA developed in the last decade and the Marxist-Leninist forces have only started to struggle seriously against opportunism and social chauvinism. Therefore, we are still taking the first step. Without a decisive victory over opportunism within the Communist movement and the formation a new anti-revisionist party, we cannot undertake elections as an immediate task of strategic importance. In England, the revisionist "CP"GB is large, and the Marxist-Leninist movement is still relatively weak. However, the acute class struggle and increasing militancy of the working class signals the approach of a revolutionary period. If the Marxist-Leninist movement is strong and revisionism defeated, then it could be:

"...a question of practical action by the masses the disposition if one may so express it, of vast armies, of the alignment of all the class forces of the given society for the final and decisive battle. In these circumstances we must not only ask ourselves whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of all classes--positively of all the classes of a given society without exception-- are aligned in such a way that everything is fully ripe for the decisive battle ." Ibid

When shall the Communists boycott bourgeois elections?

- 1) Active boycott as the experience of the Russian revolution has shown is correct tactic on the part of the Social Democrats only under conditions of a sweeping, universal, and rapid upswing of the revolution, developing into an armed upswing, and only in connection with the ideological aims of the struggles against constitutional illusions from the convocation of the first representative assembly by the old regime.
- 2) In the absence of these conditions, correct tactics on the part of the revolutionary Social Democrats calls for participation in the elections, as was the case with the Second Duma, even if all the conditions of a revolutionary period are present. (Draft Resolutions for the Third Conference of the RSDLP, Second All Russia, in On Trade Unions p.185)

The CPGB(ML) called for the boycott of the recent election. The slogans were:

"Don't vote, fight where you are. Don't vote, strike down capitalism. The advanced workers should abstain from voting and by so demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that they do not believe in the parliament and bourgeois democracy, they shall continue with the class war. The Communist should expose the nature of the election and the nature of the Tories and Labour Parties." The Worker 2/21/74

Due to the long tradition of bourgeois democracy in Britain and the U.S., a great many workers still believe in the "democratic procedure" and the parliament(or the Congress). However, as the class contradiction sharpens, bourgeois democracy will increasingly expose its true content--the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it is a long and protracted process of exposure. As long as the workers still believe in elections, in the two-party system, in the bourgeois parliaments, Communists must participate in the elections and the parliament. As Lenin said:

"Participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is obligatory for the party of the revolutionary proletariat precisely for the purpose of educating the backward strata of its own class, precisely for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden, ignorant rural masses." Left-Wing p.52 Peking Foreign Lang. Press

Should the Communists have supported the Labour Party* ? The Labour Party has long ago betrayed the final goal of socialism, and behaves no differently from a bourgeois party. Whether to support the Labour Party against the Tories depends on whether the masses of workers in England still follow the Labour Party, whether the masses of workers have gained an understanding of the collaborationist Party from their own political experience. As long as the Labour Party still has a large following within the working class, Communists should participate in parliament, support the Labour Party to expose it. From within the parliament, they should help the masses of workers to see the results of a Wilson "left" government, especially the total bankruptcy of the transition to socialism through parliamentary procedure.

* The Labour Party was formed in England around the turn of the century by the workers as the parliamentary representation of the trade unions(as Lenin put it). It was the product of the new trade union movement in England: the unorganized and the unskilled workers. The new unions of the unskilled workers were challenging the old dominant craft unions and demanded the independent representation of trade union views in the parliament. It was out of this situation that in 1899 the TUC passed the resolution that led to the formation of the Labour Party.

The LP took shape in its earliest years, as a federal body, numerically dominated by the affiliated trade unions, ideologically dominated by opportunist right-wing politics (a mixture of the traditional Liberal-Labor politics, with Fabian reformism and non-Marxist socialism). When the communist party was formed in 1920, not then Revisionist, the Labor Party rejected its application to be affiliated to the LP. The membership of the LP today is composed of affiliated trade union membership, and also individual members. Due to the historical background of the formation of the LP, and the composition, it remains to be the workers parliamentary representation (although not in its policy). Therefore, it is very different from the two parties in the US, in which neither Republican nor Democratic has a clear-cut class affiliation, with the trade unions or workers; both being dominated by the Bourgeoisie.

What is the Communist strategy in the participation in parliaments if we choose to participate? We should participate on the basis of the Leninist principles of the Third International. The most important thing for Communists is to retain complete liberty of agitation, propaganda, and political activity. We should train our own proletarian "class politicians". We should put up our own candidates in absolutely safe constituencies, and urge the voters to vote for the Labour candidates where we do not have candidates. We must:

"...learn to create a new, unusual, non-opportunist, non-carerist parliamentarism; the Communist parties must issue their slogans; real proletarians, with the help of the unorganized and downtrodden poor, should scatter and distribute leaflets, canvass workers' houses and the cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages; they should go into the most common taverns, penetrate into the unions, societies, and talk to the people, not in learned language; they should not at all strive to 'get seats' in parliament, but should everywhere strive to rouse the minds of the masses and draw them into struggle, to hold the bourgeoisie to its word and utilize the apparatus it has set up, and our efforts must be devoted to fulfilling practical tasks, ever more varied, ever

more closely connected with all branches of social life, winning branch after branch and sphere after sphere from the bourgeoisie." Lenin, Left-Wing p 104-105

But the question is not only whether to participate in parliament or whether to work in the trade unions; the Communist must be able to master all forms of struggle. As the General Line states:

"In order to lead the proletariat and working people

in revolution, Marxist-Leninist Parties must master all forms of struggle and be able to substitute one form for another quickly as the conditions of struggle change. The vanguard of the proletariat will remain unconquerable in all circumstances only if it masters all forms of struggle- peaceful and armed, open and secret, legal and illegal, parliamentary struggle and mass struggle, etc. It is wrong to refuse to use parliamentary and other legal forms of struggle when they can and should be used. However, if a Marxist-Leninist Party falls into legalism or parliamentary cretinism, confining the struggle within the limits permitted by the bourgeoisie, this will inevitably lead to renouncing the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement p.20

THE PROGRAM OF THE "CP"GB:PAVING THE GROUND FOR FASCISM?

In this period of mass upsurge in Britain, the working class movement is facing a danger within its own ranks: the class-collaborationist revisionists of the "CP"GB. In order to combat its deadly poison in practice, we must understand the nature of the venom. We must subject the revisionist program to a thorough dissection using the blade of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought.

The revisionist programs see "that the transition between capitalism and socialism will involve various stages and take some period of time. At each stage, therefore, there is necessarily a widening of the areas of conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class, and an escalation of the forms of that conflict", and that "At a time of mounting class struggle--a socialist Labor and Communist majority could be returned to

Parliament, and a socialist government established." (from the revisionist Marxism Today March, 1974)

Typical of all revisionists, there is no mention of the armed seizure of state power by the proletariat, the smashing of the bourgeois state, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The road to proletarian dictatorship is reduced to the parliamentary road, to the "decisive election". As the Chinese comrades pointed out in the General Line, page 3,

"In the last analysis, it is a question of whether or not to accept the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, whether or not to recognize the universal significance of the road of the October Revolution" Using these criteria, the "CP"GB road to socialism is out and out parliamentary cretinism (as Lenin put it) and ... is nothing but the revisionist path of "peaceful transition to socialism".

The "CP"GB program of "peaceful transition to socialism" is an offspring of the reactionary "structural reform" theory as proposed by the modern revisionist Togliatti. In criticizing the structural reform theory, the Chinese comrades have said:

"In short, the Italian road and the structural reform of Togliatti and other comrades amount to this- politically, while preserving the bourgeois dictatorship, 'progressively to change the internal balance and structure of the state' and thus 'impose the rise of new classes to its leadership' through the 'legal' means of bourgeois democracy, constitution, and parliament (as to what is meant by 'new' classes, their exposition has always been ambiguous) and economically, while preserving the capitalist system, gradually to 'restrict' and 'break up' monopoly capital through 'nationalization', 'programming', and 'state intervention'. In other words, it is possible to attain socialism in Italy through bourgeois dictatorship, without going through the dictatorship of the proletariat." (pp.252-53)

In further polemics with Togliatti, they continue:

"Contrary to Leninism, Togliatti and the other comrades maintain that socialist relations of production can gradually come into being without a socialist revolution and proletarian state power, and that the basic economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied without a political revolution which replaces the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the starting point of the 'Italian road' and the 'theory of structural reform' of comrade Togliatti and the others." (p.256, "More on the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Us" in Whence the Differences? New Era, Bath)

The revisionist "CP"GB calls the present period 'the middle stage' or the 'stage of advanced democracy', and says that the primary task is "to make inroads into the power of monopoly capitalism". Following in the revisionist footsteps of the renegade Togliatti, they push for a "left government" and "nationalization". Let us now examine the nature of their program. The position of the "CP"GB on the building of the left government and the Labor Party states:

"As 'communists' we sincerely desire the strengthening of the left trends within the Labor Party; When the Labour Party rejects reformism, moves into the attack on capitalism, ends the ban and proscriptions against the left, it will insure itself a vital role in the building of socialism." (from the revisionist British Road to Socialism, p.24)

The crux of the question is which class does the Labor Party serve? Even if the grip of the "right wing" of the Labour Party is broken, what evidence is there to allow the proletariat to pin its hopes on the Labour Party for the building of socialism? The Labour Party long ago abandoned any revolutionary prole-

tarian program and degenerated into a bourgeois party representing the interests of the British bourgeoisie. Last winter, Labour Party boss Wilson was competing with Heath on the issue of who could best contain working class militancy. Accusing Heath's policies of providing fertile ground for the growth of trade union militancy, Wilson promised the British bourgeoisie that Labour Party policies would sustain the "moderates". At this very moment, Wilson is again running on the same issue. "Only the Labour Party's commitment to social justice and social change can convince the unions to moderate their demands" said the New York Times (9/6/74). After a few months of powerful militancy, the labor movement slumped. Wilson was able to mobilize the "moderate" forces in the TUC to defeat the left and win near-unanimous support for the position of the Labour government, which asked unions to voluntarily restrain their wage claims. The Manchester Guardian commented that "Leaders of the Trade Union Congress unanimously declared their intention of being good boys." Is it not clear why the bourgeoisie would permit the Labour Party to have a temporary parliamentary majority and to form a government? Is it not clear that the Labour Party in power can "only maintain and consolidate the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and cannot in the least alter the position of the proletariat as an oppressed and exploited class?" (in Whence the Differences? p.274)

The other aspect of the program, nationalization (sometimes called a "program for expansion") was adapted by the "CP"GB in 1967. It involves nationalization of electronics, computers, fuel and insurance, urban land, all foreign-owned or controlled monopolies, control of capital investment, limiting inessential imports, ending sterling as a reserve currency, and ending overseas military expenditure. Price controls would be enforced. There would be workers' "right of control on all matters affecting employment." The strategic aim of the nationalization program of the "CP"GB would be the control of (1) key internal and external financial flows, and (2) basic services to the people and the economy; and (3) sectors decisive for capital formation. (from revisionist Marxism Today, August, 1974) And the "CP"GB says "There is no question that such a policy would fundamentally change the relations of production (revisionist Marxism Today, Aug. 1974, our emphasis)

But will doing all or any of these things bring the working class closer to socialism? Obviously not! As Marxist-Leninists, we must combat this pernicious revisionist theory of "structural reform through nationalization". Engels pointed out that the nature of socialized "state ownership" in capitalist countries does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. The workers remain oppressed as wage-laborers, as proletarians. In refuting this erroneous line, the Chinese Communist Party said:

"State-monopoly capitalism is monopoly capitalism in which monopoly capital has merged with the political power of the state. Taking full advantage of state power, it accelerates the concentration and aggregation of capital, intensifies the exploitation of the working people, the devouring of small and medium enterprises, and the annexation of some monopoly capitalist groups by others, and strengthens monopoly capital for international competition and expansion. Under the cover of "state intervention in economic life" and opposition to monopoly, and "using the name of the state to deceive, it cleverly transfers huge profits into the pockets of the monopoly groups by underhand methods."

Whence the Differences? p.284

This is the essence of the "structural reforms through nationalization" of the Labour Party.

Nationalization is usually pushed in a crisis situation both by the monopoly capitalists and by sham "socialists". The bourgeoisie pushes the nationalization programs in order to bail out decaying industries, and to further the plundering and exploitation through the hands of the State (as shown by the nationalization of the passenger railroad system in the U.S., the Penn Central, and the Rolls-Royce Air Craft Division in Britain.) The sham "socialists" push nationalization as a solution to capitalist crisis, but really help to bail the capitalist out of his desperate situation. They use it to try to trick the masses into believing that socialism can be achieved through "gradual reform", and to push their thoroughly reactionary, revisionist line of "peaceful transition" to socialism. Workers in nationalized industries in England such as mining and transport, after a period found that conditions were harder under the control of the government. Whether Tory or Labour, the government guarded the profits of the capitalist class from inroads by wage-hikes even more fiercely than any individual employer could.

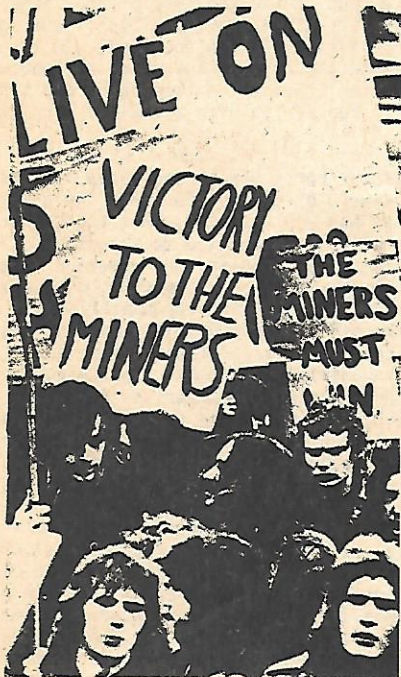
As communists, we must ruthlessly expose this mechanism for transferring the losses of monopoly capital to the "public" in the name of the "people's welfare", of shifting the working class' fight against the monopoly capitalists to the "public". In this fight, we must expose the out and out class collaborationist policies of the trade union leadership and the revisionist "CP" to replace genuine socialism with state monopoly capitalism.

The Labour Party has by and large adopted the program put forward by the "CP"GB under the pressure of the militant workers' strikes. But the Labour government is by no means committed to socialism. The solution, as they say, lies in the "creation of a new industrial climate in which the skill and ingenuity of the British people can be fully mobilized for constructive purposes" and this would be brought about by the repeal of the Industrial Relations Acts and the development of industrial democracy. The Labour government has proposed a National Enterprise Board and a three year planning agreement with the largest companies in order to consolidate and prolong the capitalist system through "rational" planning and state intervention.

The bourgeoisie have already reacted strongly against the proposal put forward by the Labour government. And the Labour government, bowing to their masters, has already watered down the original program and has made significant concessions to the bourgeoisie. Mr. Lever, Wilson's principal economic advisor, promised that "there would be no confrontation with business" and that "the government intends that all acquisition will be on a voluntary basis." The government will not interfere in the board's day-to-day management." (Manchester Guardian, 8/24/74) What, in essence, does nationalization program amount to? It is, at best, an efficient state monopoly capitalism, with the sanction of the TUC, the "CP"GB, and token workers' representation in each enterprise. At its worst, the nationalization program will be the haven of bankrupt industries that the bourgeoisie could rely on to bail it out, or even to make profit from (as it often happens).

It was correct for the CPGB (ML) to point out that "The Labour Party is the main vehicle for the advancement of the corporate state; a fascist rule which seeks to destroy the weapons of workers' struggle and to subjugate the working class." The CPGB (ML) goes on to say, in the same issue, "the TUC tries to bargain away the workers' struggle for the kind of illusory 'workers' participation' which the government is only too eager to grant" (The Worker, 7/25/74) But will there be a historical situation in which the communist may put forward the program of nationalization and left govern-

ment as a transitional demand? It could be possible only during a revolutionary situation, when the communist forces are not yet prepared for the decisive battle, and when the bourgeoisie is sufficiently weakened by the revolutionary struggles carried on by the proletariat, and the petty-bourgeoisie are sufficiently neutralized. The communist forces in the left coalition government (usually in the minority) could propose the nationalization of banks, of multinational corporations owned by foreign capitalists, multinational corporations owned by British capitalists, etc. in order to change from a defensive strategy to an offensive strategy for socialism to have a fuller control over all economic life, in order to prevent, or lessen the sabotage of the monopoly capitalists thru fiscal and monetary manipulations. The communist should propose that the nationalized banks, corporations, factories, etc. can be placed under the control of the working class (i.e. non-government, non-bureaucratic forces) which, however, must consist of the so-called "lower estates" of the oppressed and exploited classes.



The economic crisis has become catastrophic. Unemployment has been growing at a monthly rate of nearly 100,000 since July. The bourgeoisie is getting ready for the counter-revolution. On the one hand, it allows the Labour Party to form the government so that the militant worker's strikes, the labour unions, and the left forces (including the "CP"GB) can be curtailed and restrained; on the other hand, open fascist organizations have been formed to prepare to crush the workers and the left forces. Two fascist organizations were formed this year under two "distinguished" retired soldiers, General Walter Walker and Colonel David Sterling. They are rallying their forces under the banner of "unswerving loyalty to the Crown," to "defeat the forces of social and economic disorder - the forces of the left." (Manchester Guardian, 8/31/74)

Mr. Sterling openly said that his organization, "GB 75", will take over factories, power stations and essential services in the event of a general strike, that his members would also "round up" workers who sit in their factories or who oppose the "GB 75" volunteers. The bourgeoisie is armed and ready. The question is: Is the proletariat armed ideologically, organizationally, and militarily? Can the revisionists still feed the illusion and lies about "peaceful transition to socialism" to the proletariat when the bourgeoisie is sharpening their knives, gathering their arms? Can we still ask the workers to "patiently" wait for the collaborationist Labour Party to "commit" itself to the building of socialism? Can we limit ourselves to militant mass action, the nation-wide strike alone, without the arming of the proletariat, without any plan for military insurrection? No, we cannot! We have the bloody history of Chile as part of our experience. The proletariat must assume power through armed insurrection!! The international bourgeoisie will not sit and wait for the "left government" to nationalize their multi-national corporations! They will not sit there to see the symbol of "Western civilization" go socialist!! They will be ready to crush any serious attempt by the proletariat to fight for socialism in Britain. The "peaceful transition to socialism" programme of the "CP"GB will only pave the way for fascism, not socialism.

The capitalist countries in the world are facing a world wide crisis and the main trend of the world is revolution. The great disorder internationally, and within the capitalist countries has provided an ever more favorable condition for proletarian revolution. Britain, being the oldest imperialist country, and one of the weaker links among the Western capitalist countries may well be the first capitalist country in which socialism could triumph. Our direction of the main blow must be directed toward the revisionists and the labor misleaders.

We must expose their bankrupt line of peaceful transition to socialism, and put forward the line of armed proletarian uprising, smashing the bourgeois state machine, and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The historical alternative for Britain or the U.S. is clear. It is not between "advanced democracy" or fascism. It is instead between socialism or fascism!!