

Revolution

PAMPHLET
No 1

10p



Build The Revolutionary Communist Party To Lead The Revolution.

CONTENTS

RESOLUTION OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST).....	page 1
BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!....	page 4
RELATIONS WITH OTHER MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATIONS IN BRITAIN (RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE CFB(M-L) OCTOBER 1975).....	page 16

COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN
(MARXIST-LENINIST)

THE COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

The Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) holds that the central task in Britain today is to build the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, the party of the working class. This revolutionary Communist Party must unite the various struggles of the working class into a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the monopoly capitalist state to set up a dictatorship of the proletariat and build genuine working class socialism.

The Party must be constructed by ideological, political and organisational struggle. By a bold internal struggle the CFB(M-L) has recently decisively defeated serious opportunist errors. One of these was liberalism, which refuses to stand up boldly for what is in the interests of the working class, but believes in unprincipled peace to keep on good terms with everyone. As a result of the internal struggle the CFB(M-L) has taken important steps away from federalism and towards a united and democratic-centralist Party.

The CFB(M-L) is self-reliant in Party-building but it will not be self-sufficient: where it can learn from other British Marxist-Leninist organisations it will do so. We must break down the small group mentality which exists between Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain, and struggle for unity on correct principles so as to build the revolutionary Communist Party as fast as possible.

We have to apply the general truths of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete practice of the British revolution. In the contradiction between theory and practice, at present theory is the principal aspect. However practice is an important second. Training and tempering comrades in practical work is essential to build the revolutionary Communist Party.

The most important practical task is to build bases in the industrial working class. This will make sure that the future Marxist-Leninist Party is a firm proletarian party with deep and unshakable roots in the working class.

'BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!'

For information about the Communist Federation of Britain contact:-

National Secretary
c/o New Era Books
203 Seven Sisters Road
London N4.

For criticisms, correspondence or contributions to 'Revolution' write to:-

The Editor, 'Revolution'
c/o New Era Books
203 Seven Sisters Road
London N4.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The publication of the line of the Communist Federation on Party Building is an important step towards the building of the revolutionary Communist Party in Britain. The adoption of this policy statement is the result of a two line struggle inside the CFB between bourgeois ideas and proletarian ideas. It represents the victory of the line which advocated the defeat of right opportunist errors which were dominant in our past practice. These errors were liberalism, ultra-democracy, small group mentality, empiricism and intellectualism. It clearly states that the principal task in Britain today is to build the new Marxist Leninist Communist Party to lead the working class in struggle to overthrow capitalism. It identifies correctly that the present stage of the revolution in Britain is to rally the vanguard of the working class, to win them to the ideas of Marxism Leninism.

The article which follows the statement explains the two-line struggle which led to the victory of this line, and its struggles to win conviction for the line itself. It argues clearly that the essence of the struggle was to transform the class stand of the Communist Federation.

The present task of the CFB is now to implement this line by continuing the struggle against bourgeois ideology within our ranks, by struggling for unity in the Marxist Leninist movement, and by firmly grasping the task of building bases amongst the working class.

The statement 'Relations between Marxist Leninist Organisations in Britain' was first published in MLQ 11. It is correct that this is reprinted along with the Statement on Party Building. At the present time in Britain the Marxist Leninist movement is weak and fragmented. There has also been sectarianism and small group mentality within the movement, with each group regarding itself as the 'movement' and regarding other groups as enemies. This was an incorrect view, which the CFB also fell into. We now state that the principled position is to strive for the unity of the movement, and with this in mind we will struggle to draw clear lines of demarcation with other organisations and to carry out polemic in order to win higher unity. The aim of the Marxist Leninist Communist Party should be put before the interests of the small groups.

June 1976

BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION

RESOLUTION OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE
COMMUNIST FEDERATION OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

A. United States Imperialism and Soviet Social Imperialism, the main enemies of the peoples and oppressed nations of the world, are in essence 'paper tigers'. The struggles of the world's peoples brings revolution nearer in the heartlands of imperialism where working class militancy is rising.

B. In Britain, the bourgeoisie holds state power but as the crisis of imperialism deepens, the objective contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat becomes openly antagonistic. We will resolutely apply the general lessons of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in Britain to fulfill our main task: building the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party which will lead the masses in revolutionary struggle.

REVOLUTION IS THE MAIN TREND IN THE WORLD TODAY!

C. The dominant ideology in Britain is the ideology of the ruling class: the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology attacks and infects every class and strata and the Marxist-Leninist movement itself. We are therefore carrying through active ideological struggle to defeat bourgeois and petty bourgeois errors which at present are the main obstacles in the fight for a proletarian line.

D. From its foundation the Federation stagnated, and nearly split on a number of occasions. This was because we failed to understand that only active ideological struggle can win principled unity. In the last year active ideological struggle and bold criticism and self-criticism have won substantial conviction that these are the main weapons to destroy bourgeois and petty-bourgeois errors. Some significant victories have been won in the struggle.

E. The principal right opportunist ideological error within the Federation is liberalism. The other errors are the small group mentality, ultra-democracy and lack of leadership, empiricism and intellectualism.

IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE IS THE MAIN WEAPON IN PARTY BUILDING!

F. The error of liberalism. Active ideological struggle is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Federation. Clear lines of demarcation must be drawn in inner-party struggle and erroneous lines must be fiercely combated. In this way we will build a unity that will live and will not perish.

BUILD PRINCIPLED UNITY THROUGH ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE!

G. The error of small-group mentality. The leading bodies and all members of the Federation must boldly struggle against the backward 'mountain stronghold' mentality and narrow local self interest which prevents the clear recognition that national tasks are primary and local tasks secondary. The interests of the Federation as a whole must take precedence over those of the groups, and the interests of the future Marxist-Leninist Party must take precedence over those of the Federation.

BOLDLY COMBAT SMALL GROUP MENTALITY!

H. The error of ultra-democracy and lack of leadership. Leadership is an indispensable factor in party building. At national level the Executive Committee will be built as the leading core of the Federation: the principal weapons are active ideological struggle to win conviction for

the correctness of its line, and bold criticism and self-criticism. The National Committee must be built as the principal arena for two line struggle and to establish its authority for policy making. Group Committees will be built as the leading cores in each group.

FIGHT FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE CFB!

I. The error of empiricism. We must conscientiously and at all times apply Marxism-Leninism to concrete practice. The EC will give a bold lead in establishing a definite plan and direction and to define our priorities.

ESTABLISH A DEFINITE PLAN AND DIRECTION!

J. The error of intellectualism. The characteristic features of intellectualism include trying to solve problems through wide ranging study of many books, setting an impractically large number of tasks without defining which are primary and which are secondary, and arrogantly ignoring the seemingly simple lessons gained by the world Marxist-Leninist movement. We must boldly struggle against intellectualism using the basic Marxist-Leninist texts, with the sole purpose of applying their general lessons to our practice. The most important book for us at our present stage, is the 'Quotations from Mao Tse-tung'. We must militantly take our stand with the working class and not with the intelligentsia and we must be honest and modest in all our work.

TRANSFORM THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE CFB!

K. At the present stage of party building, theory is the principal aspect in the contradiction between theory and practice. Indirect knowledge, the concentrated experience of more than a hundred years of the world Marxist-Leninist movement, is principal, and our own limited direct experience is secondary.

L. Practice will become primary in the course of the struggle to develop and test lines. The prime aim of this practice will be to build Communist bases among the industrial proletariat at the place of work in order to establish and consolidate our roots in the working class. The vanguard of the socialist revolution must be proletarian, not petty bourgeois.

M. Lines so far developed in the Federation have not been generally applied in practice. The main reason for this is not the autonomy of groups but because the authority of the National Committee has not been established through active ideological struggle. We will struggle to establish the authority of the NC as the main arena for two-line struggles and policy making. The power of ideas will be transformed into the power of authority. The two-line struggles must be carried out across group lines and within groups, and in these struggles any local loyalties must be criticised as examples of small group mentality. The ultra-democratic practice of attempting to determine policy by means of General Meetings of the whole membership will cease. At our present stage NC members will continue to be elected from the groups. However they must not be elected as delegates but as leading cadres struggling to build a national leadership in the interests of the working class. The struggle against mandating NC members helps defeat small group mentality. Groups must elect their leading cadres as NC members and each will have a vote.

BUILD THE NC AS THE LEADING BODY OF THE CFB!

N. The EC will be composed of those comrades who are best at boldly applying Marxism-Leninism to concrete practice and who are firmest in their proletarian class stand. Leaders must not be elected or recalled lightly: cadres and their training are a decisive factor once a political line is determined. Their method of election is not of major importance but that laid down by the National Constitution is at present the most appropriate. The principal tasks of leadership are, firstly, working out policies, and secondly, setting tasks and assigning priorities to use cadres well. The EC will do this by boldly winning conviction for its correct policies and proposals, and by urging the lower levels to combat ultra-democratic errors by showing a willingness to understand and implement. The EC will work hard to overcome contradictions between itself and the lower levels by correct leadership, bold criticism and self-criticism.

BUILD THE EC AS THE LEADING CORE OF THE CFB!

O. The Marxist-Leninist principles summarised in this report are applicable to the party building tasks of the whole Marxist-Leninist movement. In our relationships with other Marxist-Leninist organisations we must firmly apply these principles and struggle with these organisations to win conviction on these principles. In this we must be self-reliant and not self-sufficient.

SELF-RELIANCE NOT SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN PARTY-BUILDING!

P. Past errors in the Federation led to pessimism and Menshevism. A bold, firm and principled struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois errors has resulted in a qualitative change in the Federation. The lessons learnt will help carry forward the main revolutionary task of uniting the Marxist-Leninist movement to form a new Marxist-Leninist Communist Party which will lead the working class in revolution to smash the bourgeois state, overthrow the capitalist system and build a new Socialist Britain.

BUILD THE MARXIST-LENINIST COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!

Resolution of the Third Conference
of the CFB(M-L), February 1976.

BUILD THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it in practice fulfils its obligation towards its class and the toiling masses. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reason for it, analysing the conditions which led to it - that is the earmark of a serious party; that is the way it should perform its duties; that is the way it should educate and train the class, and unite the masses".

(Lenin 'Left-wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder', Peking edition, p50)

The central task in Britain today is to build the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. The spontaneous struggles of the working class against exploitation and oppression continue non-stop as British imperialism sinks even deeper into decay. This decay is the result of the inherent contradictions of monopoly capitalism, intensified by the blows inflicted by anti-imperialist forces of the Third World and the cut-throat competition from other imperialist powers.

But the spontaneous struggles of workers and progressive strata cannot on their own bring about the real answer to imperialist exploitation and oppression in Socialist revolution. The working class must have its own party to lead and unite all these different struggles into a conscious revolutionary movement to seize state power from the bourgeoisie. After the revolution, the class will need the leadership of the Party to build Socialism and forcibly prevent the bourgeoisie from staging a come back.

The genuine party of the working class must be the vanguard of the working class, a disciplined body, capable of leading the struggles of the working people and selflessly serving the masses. It must be the most far-sighted protector of the long term interests of the working class and at the same time must unite with the masses in their immediate struggles. The working class Party must wage an unending battle against all bourgeois ideas which creep into it and paralyse the class. It must grasp proletarian ideology and firmly hold to correct communist theoretical principles drawn from the experience of the communist movement, and methods of work, tested over scores of years. These are essential weapons for the working class to overthrow the bourgeoisie. This proletarian ideology, which both sums up the most scientific analysis of the world and which unashamedly serves the working class, is Marxism-Leninism.

Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung are the great historical leaders of Marxism-Leninism, the champions of the working class in its long struggle with the bourgeoisie. Tremendous victories have been won. In the Russian Revolution of 1917, the working class seized power in the first Socialist state in the world. As a result of the victory of the Revolution in 1949, China, a country with one quarter of the world's peoples, is advancing under the leadership of the great Communist Party of China and its chairman, Mao Tse-tung, in building Socialism.

So powerful is the world wide Communist movement that the imperialists and other bourgeoisie have had to attack it and not just head on, but also by attacking it from within. They have tried to twist Marxism-Leninism and rob the working class of proletarian ideology by 'revising' it, 'modernising' it, making it more 'realistic', in order to disarm the working class.

In this way the Soviet Union, the first Socialist state, which the imperialists could never take by frontal attack has been seized from within by a revisionist clique representing a new bourgeois class. The USSR

is now one of the two superpowers of the world, a social imperialist state, socialist in words and imperialist in deeds, and the most dangerous source of war in the world.

At the same time as the revisionists stole power in the Soviet Union, revisionists grabbed control from genuine proletarian revolutionaries in most of the Communist Parties throughout the world, despite fierce ideological battles. These revisionist 'Communist' parties are now dangerous enemies of the working class, in words talking of Socialism, but in practice everywhere disarming the working class and delivering it up into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

In Britain, as in all other countries of the world, the genuine proletarian revolutionaries, inspired by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and the Party of Labour of Albania, have fought against revisionism for the principles of Marxism-Leninism and have struggled to establish once again in each country the genuine revolutionary Communist Party, without which the working class cannot carry out the Socialist revolution.

THE STRUGGLE IN BRITAIN TO BUILD THE MARXIST-LENINIST COMMUNIST PARTY

After many years of revisionism in the Communist Party of Great Britain it is not possible to establish a genuine revolutionary Communist Party overnight. It is not correct just to declare the Party to be in existence and call on the working class to support it. A long process of struggle is necessary to tear up the twisted roots of revisionist lines and methods. A long struggle is necessary to train and temper proletarian fighters in Marxism-Leninism, to attack bourgeois ideology in their ranks wherever it is found, to work in a united, disciplined way practicing democratic centralism, to carry forward the long term interests of the working class and at the same time to lead immediate mass working class struggles - in a word to be a genuine vanguard of the proletariat.

The Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was founded in September 1969 to build the revolutionary Communist Party. It consisted of five groups doing local mass work in different cities in Britain. The CFB published a monthly propaganda and agitational paper, 'Struggle', from December 1969. From the spring of 1972 it also published a theoretical journal, 'Marxist-Leninist Quarterly'.

However, for most of its existence the CFB's work was primarily negative. Despite some advances and much dedicated selfless work the CFB stagnated from its beginning. It failed to win ideological unity among its different groups and it failed to build a strong leadership. It seemed it could not advance beyond the federal stage. In July 1974 'Struggle' stopped publication after 56 issues. The external cause of its collapse was a sharp rise in printing costs but the internal cause which was more important, was the inability of the CFB to solve its contradictions and overcome its weaknesses. By the end of 1974 it seemed only a matter of time before the CFB disintegrated.

As the crisis of the CFB deepened the internal contradictions became more acute. A fierce two line struggle on the way forward broke out. This was independent of the will of any individual. One line took a correct working class stand and the other line took a petty bourgeois stand.

The purpose of this article is to explain the great successes of this two line struggle and the importance of the resolution passed at the second

session of the Third Conference of the CFB, held in February 1976. This resolution marked the decisive victory of the struggle within the CFB.

THE TWO LINE STRUGGLE IN THE CFB (M-L)

The first session of the Third Conference met in March 1975 in a state of demoralisation and great theoretical confusion. All the groups presented reports and resolutions to the conference. There were at least four major contradictions.

All comrades agreed that the CFB had to have a more democratic centralist organisation. Some wanted to pass a resolution declaring this to be in existence and to punish those who defied it. This was known as the organisational approach. Others said it was necessary to 'put politics first', and to build organisational unity only on the basis of ideological unity. The situation was so confused that some of these (second) comrades, despite their words, went on to put their main emphasis on organisational changes of the constitution.

Another contradiction was over theory and practice. Most comrades said that what was needed was more practice. "The main weaknesses of Marxist-Leninists at the present time is that we have no real roots in the proletarian struggle", they said. Other such statements were "Collective practice is primary" and "building of bases in the localities must be a priority for the Federation as a whole".

A third contradiction was over whether the groups were primary of the national CFB was primary. Most said the groups were primary. "The best way to build the CFB is to build the constituent groups", they said. They complained about the amount of time national work took up.

A fourth contradiction was about the leading comrades in the CFB. Comrades from some groups made sharp criticisms of them but refused to take national leadership positions themselves.

The first session of the Third Conference was deeply split and unable to solve the contradictions. The only unanimous decision was to meet again at a later date. However, despite these negative features, the meeting was a turning point for the CFB because at it a strong correct Marxist-Leninist line for overcoming the weaknesses of the past was first put forward nationally. Although at first in a small minority within the CFB, in the months after the first session, this line won overwhelming support. It has fundamentally solved the contradictions, has united the organisation in a militant unity and has ensured it will play a progressive part in building the revolutionary Communist Party, the central task in Britain today. The victory of this correct line has been a vivid demonstration of the truth that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything".

The central theme of the correct Marxist-Leninist line is the statement by Mao Tse-tung at the beginning of his article 'Combat Liberalism'. "We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organisations in the interests of our fight". Active ideological struggle is the weapon for ensuring unity. The reason why the CFB had no unity is because it did not practice active ideological struggle but practiced liberalism. This was the key principle that comrades grasped, first in ones and twos, then in entire groups, then unanimously throughout the whole CFB after a year of struggle.

Active ideological struggle did not just win unity; in Mao Tse-tung's

words, it ensured unity. The only comrades with whom unity was not won were those who refused to struggle, and left instead. The experience of the two line struggle fully proved Mao Tse-tung's words and showed that active ideological struggle is the unbeatable weapon in winning unity in the revolutionary ranks, an essential task of Party building.

The correct Marxist-Leninist line in the internal struggle called on all comrades to grasp the causes for the stagnation of the CFB and to overcome them. One essential method of ideological struggle is the practice of criticism and self-criticism. The correct line called upon every group and every individual to take part in the criticism and self-criticism to understand and overcome the causes of the stagnation.

Comrades identified five major errors that existed throughout the CFB and crippled its work. These errors were hunted down by means of criticism and self-criticism. They are liberalism, small group mentality, ultra democracy, empiricism and intellectualism. These will be explained more fully later. Other errors existed too but the continuing successes resulting from the campaign against these five errors shows that they were correctly identified as the major errors of the CFB at the time, while other errors were secondary.

At first some comrades objected to naming the errors. They called it 'labelling' and said that it was dogmatic. They said that criticism and self-criticism is a fine thing but it should 'be specific' - that it should only deal with the details of the mistake. But this argument of theirs was a way of preventing the organisation from arming itself against these errors. Of course it is necessary to understand how the error manifests itself in each particular case but it is essential for all comrades to be able to identify the general error by name, in order to hunt it down consistently.

Take small group mentality for example. There had been many cases of small group mentality in the history of the CFB and they had been criticized often. But they were criticized only as particular mistakes and not identified as examples of the general error of small group mentality. The failure to identify this error by name severely weakened all previous efforts to overcome the backward aspects of federalism and to strengthen democratic centralism in the CFB.

Through ideological struggle and through correctly relating the general error to particular cases, and the particular cases to the general error, all comrades in time grasped the importance of identifying and naming the five major errors. This was a further important victory for the correct Marxist-Leninist line.

The correct line insisted that it was not enough just to identify and hunt down the five main errors; it was essential to grasp their class character. They are all ideas that cripple the cause of the proletariat and gladden the bourgeoisie whenever the ruling class sees these errors in the ranks of the working class. These errors are un-proletarian ideas and their class character is bourgeois and petty bourgeois.

At first some comrades wanted only to talk of 'mistakes' - accidental slip-ups - and were offended when they were criticised for having committed bourgeois and petty bourgeois errors. But, with struggle, ideological education and bold criticism and self-criticism, they became convinced.

Bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas continually worm their way into the working class and the ranks of Communists as long as class society

exists. The five main errors within the CFB are examples of this fact. It is important for comrades early on to be trained and tempered in grasping that this is not just a struggle against mistakes but a class struggle against bourgeois ideology. It is essential to grasp that the vanguard of the working class must be militant, united and armed with proletarian ideology in order to lead the Socialist revolution.

The two line struggle in the CFB was not original. It repeated many previous struggles against bourgeois ideology in the Communist movement. There will be many more. But in order to help comrades who are not themselves in the CFB to grasp more clearly the nature of the ideological struggle, it is right to give examples of the five main errors.

THE FIVE MAIN ERRORS

Liberalism

Liberalism was the most serious error within the CFB because liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace. Without fundamentally defeating liberalism it would have been impossible to defeat any of the other errors. It was because of the deep liberalism of the old CFB that so many errors had flourished unchecked.

One example of liberalism was that many comrades thought unity would be won by 'sharing experiences' and 'collective practice'. This denied the need for ideological struggle to win unity. Another example was that although at times comrades talked about 'ideological struggle', they really meant 'ideological discussion'. They would talk around the subject in order to stay on good terms instead of thrashing matters out for the sake of real unity.

To overcome this liberal error the correct line pointed to Lenin's famous statement: "Before we can unite and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation" (What is to be Done? Peking edition, p26)

The importance of drawing lines of demarcation became a banner in the struggle with liberalism. As a result of this, CFB statements have become concise, and every word has a definite meaning. The resolution of the second session of the Third Conference was deliberately made concise in order to draw firm and definite lines of demarcation.

Another banner in the struggle against liberalism bore the words 'bold criticism and self-criticism'. Many comrades used to reluctantly admit the need for criticism and self-criticism but would complain about sectarianism if the criticism was bold. This was a form of liberalism. To checkmate it, the correct line made use of the words of the constitution of the Communist Party of China, 'Be bold in making criticism and self-criticism'. (Chapter II Article 3.5). Far from causing sectarianism this quickly united the great majority of comrades in a comradely spirit of unity and determination to get rid of weaknesses whoever had them.

Small Group Mentality

Because the CFB started as a federation of small groups it was one especially dangerous weakness that small group mentality had never been firmly combated by name.

The line of some of the comrades at the first session of the Third Conference, that the 'best way to build the CFB is to build the constituent

groups', is an example of small group mentality. It meant giving priority to group work instead of national work and resenting having to give up leading comrades to national work.

Against this the correct line firmly argued that the central task in Britain today is to build the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class. Without strong national leadership, local work cannot progress and will not contribute to this overall task. Therefore national work has to come first, although local work is an important second.

Another example of the small group mentality was the argument repeatedly made that we have to 'recognise' the CFB is a federation. Of course it is true that the CFB was a federation. But what did recognise really mean? It meant that we should not combat small group mentality: on the contrary we should give in to it and not struggle to build national unity.

Small group mentality severely crippled the work of the CFB and had led to gross opportunism. At policy making meetings it was usual for the groups to engage in horsetrading until a majority could be put together on a composite resolution. For example at the Second Conference (Special General Meeting) held in February 1974, 3 groups opportunistically combined to ensure that the Soviet Union was not directly described as being Social Imperialist or as having a new bourgeois ruling class. (This can be seen in the statement on the international situation, published in MLQ 7). This opportunist line on Social Imperialism has now been completely overthrown.

Another example of the way small group mentality led to horsetrading and unprincipled compromises is the CFB resolution on voting Labour in the October 1974 General election. This right opportunist resolution was unanimously overthrown by the National Committee in March 1976.

As a result of the fundamentally successful struggle against small group mentality, an important further conclusion was drawn. In paragraph G of the conference resolution, after stating that 'the interests of the Federation as a whole must take precedence over those of the groups', the words were added 'and the interests of the future Marxist-Leninist Party must take precedence over those of the Federation'. The CFB has not conducted a basically successful struggle against small group mentality in order to consolidate itself as a small group opposed to the other British Marxist-Leninist organisations. On the contrary it will firmly combat any tendency towards this.

Ultra-Democracy

Deep errors of ultra-democracy ran through the CFB from the beginning. Ultrademocracy denies the importance of building leadership for the working class. Leadership was never thought before to be important within the CFB. The resolution of the Third Conference is the first CFB statement to say that 'leadership is an indispensable factor in Party building'.

Mao Tse-tung describes ultra-democracy as 'letting the lower levels discuss everything first and then letting the higher levels decide'. Until February 1976 the supreme policy making body of the CFB was the 'General Meeting' of all the membership. So the principle was not only to let the lower levels discuss everything first but also that the lower levels themselves should decide! Not one CFB General Meeting ever succeeded in solving a problem in a correct way.

Another example of ultrademocracy, which teamed up here with small group

mentality was that the comrades sent by their groups to the NC were seen as mere 'delegates' of their groups and not as comrades who had to give leadership to the whole Federation in the interests of the working class.

A glaring example of ultra-democracy was that at the first session of the Third Conference, the NC had prevented the EC from presenting a leading report. The result was chaos: every group arrived at the conference with its own report.

One ultra-democratic argument that cropped up in the two line struggle and is common in the Marxist-Leninist movement, says leadership cannot be built until ideological and political unity has been won. It ignores the fact that leading comrades are trained and tempered through the struggle for ideological and political unity, and through criticism and self criticism. It also ignores the fact that ideological and political unity can be won only if comrades combat ultra-democracy and come forward to give leadership on what is the correct line. The argument that leadership cannot be built until ideological and political unity has been won is a way to stop us combating ultra-democracy and building strong proletarian leadership as much as we can.

The resolution of the Third Conference firmly states the importance of building proletarian leadership and sums up the essence of leadership as 'working out ideas and using cadres well'. It states that the Executive Committee will be built as the leading core of the CFB and the National Committee as the leading body. NC members must represent the interests of the working class, and not be delegates of their groups. As a result of the two line struggle great progress has been made in carrying this out and implementing greater democratic centralism on the basis of ideological conviction.

Empiricism

'Empiricism mistakes fragmentary experience for universal truth', Mao Tse-tung says in 'On Coalition Government (Selected Works Vol III p 264). Empiricism denies the leading role of proletarian revolutionary theory and relies only on direct experience, ignoring the vast indirect experience of the International Communist movement, won over decades, often at a very high price. Empiricism exalts direct experience and guarantees that the theoretical ideas of an organisation will be those its members pick up spontaneously in the course of practical political work; these are overwhelmingly the ideas that normally prevail in capitalist society, the ideas of the bourgeoisie. As a result the organisation becomes deeply corrupted by bourgeois reformism, bourgeois trade union politics, social democratic ideology and other forms of bourgeois ideology.

The CFB used to talk about combining theory with practice but in fact it really put practice first and fell into empiricism. This is the real meaning of the statements made at the first session of the Third Conference that 'Collective practice is primary'. This is the meaning of the argument that the most important task at the present time is to build a local base in the working class.

Mao Tse-tung says it is necessary to integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution in every country. Instead the CFB used to talk about 'developing theory' - that is to say developing its own theory, separate from the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism and on the basis of its direct experience alone. Theory 'developed' in this way can only be another form of bourgeois ideology dressed up in opportunist clothes.

One variation on the empiricist line of developing 'our own' theory said that Marxist-Leninist theory is very good but it is not relevant to this country. For example they claimed that the 'Quotations of Mao Tse-tung' are very good but are written for Chinese conditions and should not be applied to Britain. It is true that the 'Quotations' were collected with Chinese political conditions in mind but their principal aspect is that they sum up concisely most of Mao Tse-tung's theoretical teachings, based on the history of Marxism-Leninism and the world Communist movement over many decades.

In the contradiction between theory and practice, which is primary? Certainly Marxist-Leninists hold that generally, practice is primary. But in certain conditions the principal and secondary aspects can be reversed. What is the situation in Britain today? Mao Tse-tung provides the answer to this question in 'On contradiction', near the end of section 4. (Selected Readings, p94):-

"The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy."

This is the situation in Britain today.

In order to train and temper the future Marxist-Leninist Party it is essential to engage in practice; but to make this the principal task today is to commit unmistakeable errors of empiricism.

As a result of the campaign against empiricism the CFB has already grasped correct lines on Social Democracy, bourgeois nationalisation and building bases within the industrial working class.

Intellectualism

Intellectualism is a widespread collection of ideas typical of the intelligentsia, the stratum in between the working class and bourgeoisie who mainly do mental work. Intellectualism is seen in the divorce between theory and practice, being 'good at words' and bad at practice and writing in a confusing way which is useless as a guide for practical work.

Because the intelligentsia does mental work, intellectualism believes what is real is in the mind alone. "Marxist-Leninist Quarterly" made severe intellectualist errors in being a 'forum' for 'discussion' of 'interesting' political questions instead of a fighting journal arming the proletariat with revolutionary theory to be used in the class struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Articles were woolly and confused, there were many footnotes and conclusions were not drawn sharply.

Because the intelligentsia is a stratum caught between the working class and the bourgeoisie, intellectualism prefers to deny the existence of the class struggle and believes that all problems are theoretical or technical ones alone. It denies that in a class society everyone lives as the member of a particular class and every kind of thinking without exception is stamped with the brand of a class.

Intellectualism fails to take a clear proletarian stand. Marxism-Leninism has two features: it openly declares that it is in the service of the proletariat and it also is 'the most complete, progressive, revolutionary and rational system in human history'. Intellectualism relentlessly

attempts to drive a wedge between these two aspects and to treat Marxism-Leninism as a purely scientific question separate from a firm proletarian class stand.

Because the intelligentsia is fairly quick at understanding new ideas it tends to play a relatively large part in the early stages of a revolutionary movement and may bring its errors of intellectualism into the organisation on a large scale. As a result of the two line struggle it became clear that this was a major cause of error in the CFB.

One example of intellectualism is that there is no reference to the working class in the statement on Party building by the Joint Committee of Communists (the organisation from which the CFB was founded). Also 'Origins and Perspectives of the Marxist-Leninist Movement in Britain', previously the main policy statement of the CFB, has an introduction which again does not mention the working class. 'Origins and Perspectives' does not state that the Party that is to be built must be a Party of the working class.

It would be a big mistake to see these omissions as mere accidental oversights; they are sharp examples of the intellectualist error of failing to take a bold and open proletarian stand. One of the tasks of the CFB in the months ahead will be to make a thorough assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these founding documents.

Another example of intellectualism is that until 1976 the CFB never sang the Internationale, the battle hymn of the working class.

A common example of intellectualism within the CFB was to take on an impracticable number of tasks and be unable to carry them out. There was also a deep intellectualist arrogance about learning and grasping the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Because the 'Quotations of Mao Tse-tung' are short and quickly read; they were held to be beneath comrades' dignity. It is true they are short and quick to read, but they are difficult to grasp and apply consistently. Applying them must be the main task of the CFB in the field of study.

As a result of the campaign against intellectualism, all comrades, both those from the working class and those from intellectual backgrounds, have united in striving to take an open, conscious proletarian stand, to write and speak simply and clearly, to study in order to apply in practice and to decide on realistic tasks and carry them through to the end. In particular comrades from the intelligentsia must be ready to go through a long period of remoulding and to learn modestly from working class comrades.

In the field of practice, the Conference Resolution states clearly that the first priority is to build Communist bases in the industrial working class in order to establish and consolidate roots in the working class. The Marxist-Leninist Party must be built as the vanguard of the working class. The struggle to do this will be a protracted one but with Marxist-Leninist ideology and methods of work, with ideological struggle and criticism and self-criticism, it can and will be done.

CONCLUSIONS AND RESULTS OF THE TWO LINE STRUGGLE

This has briefly described the five main bourgeois and petty bourgeois errors, liberalism, small group mentality, ultra-democracy, empiricism and intellectualism, and given one or two examples of them. It is not possible to give more here out of the scores of examples. The campaign within the

CFB against these errors won overwhelming support because many examples of them were found and because criticising them by name clearly helped to isolate and defeat weaknesses that had held back the work of the CFB for many years.

As the Resolution points out, they are right opportunist errors. There is a reason for this. The main errors in the British Marxist-Leninist movement in its earlier years were left opportunist. The CFB over-reacted to these and without thinking fell headlong into right opportunism. As Chou En-lai said in the Report to the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party of China, 'one tendency covers another'. In criticising the left sectarian style of all-struggle and no unity, the CFB fell into liberalism. In criticising the left adventurist error of declaring the Party to be in existence without having built it over a period of time, the CFB tolerated and excused small group mentality. In criticising commandist methods of practising democratic centralism, the CFB fell into ultra-democracy. In over-reacting to left dogmatism and sloganising, the CFB made errors of empiricism and intellectualism. This teaches us yet again that the future Marxist-Leninist Communist Party must be built by means of consistent struggle against both left and right opportunism. While combating one error we must guard against the opposite error coming in by the back door.

Mao Tse-tung does not say Communists must wage active ideological struggle for its own sake or for self-cultivation, but to ensure unity in the interests of our fight. Within a relatively short space of time the ideological struggle in the CFB has brought about a big increase in its fighting ability. The organisation has already overcome certain long standing contradictions such as the question of Social Democracy. Organisationally as a result of winning an understanding of the importance of leadership, advances have been repeatedly made in implementing democratic centralism and overcoming federalism.

The struggle against the five main errors cleared small mountains of rubbish out of the CFB and won overwhelming unity. A minority left who did not desire unity and who did not struggle to win it and overcome the errors of the past. The Glasgow group left early on in the two line struggle shortly after the first session of the Third Conference. They left making the empiricist error of stating that at this stage practice is primary and that "to build a true national Marxist-Leninist movement, the beginnings must arise from group's common practical work". This also makes errors of small group mentality in failing to grasp that building the Party is the central task.

The Coventry group left relatively late in the struggle after failing to correct their liberalism, ultra-democracy and small group mentality. They also tail behind the opportunists in the working class by not combating Social Democracy boldly and by supporting bourgeois nationalisation. These errors are explained in more detail elsewhere.

A few, but only a few, individual members of the CFB also left, when the waves of criticism began to lap around their feet. Instead of struggling to overcome errors and being prepared to make bold self-criticism, they got out.

It is a loss that this minority were not won over to the correct line but it is a loss only from the point of view of numbers. From the point of view of the political strength and unity of the organisation, it is a gain. Since they did not desire unity and did not struggle for unity on a principled basis, it is better that they have left. A clean split is far better than an opportunist unity in building the Party.

The struggle against the five main errors of liberalism, small group mentality, ultra-democracy, empiricism and liberalism, therefore brought large gains all around. The Resolution of the Third Conference of February 1976 marked the decisive defeat of these errors.

That does not mean that they have been wiped out. These errors have their material base in capitalism: they will repeatedly recur. They linger on within the organisation in many hidden ways. Therefore no comrade in the CFB should sit back and relax. On the contrary the key to further progress in building the revolutionary Communist Party is to be wide awake and to **CARRY THROUGH THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FIVE MAIN ERRORS!**

This self-criticism has been made not for subjectivist reasons as if the CFB is humbly kneeling in the confessional box, but because the open correction of past errors is essential for training comrades both inside and outside the organisation. Communists become tempered in the struggle to overcome errors. Self-criticism is an unbeatable weapon because it enables us to keep what is right and to get rid of what is wrong. By persisting in this method the ranks of Communists will grow in strength.

The two line struggle within the CFB has underlined two main lessons:

1. Active ideological struggle ensures unity.
2. It is important for Communist to identify bourgeois and petty-bourgeois errors by name and hunt them down, in order to overcome weaknesses holding back their work.

The CFB and the British Marxist-Leninist Movement

The CFB has adopted a policy of self-reliance in Party building. It will use its limited resources in a correct manner to build the Party as quickly and as correctly as possible. At the same time it will not be self-sufficient. It will learn from the positive points of any other British Marxist-Leninist organisation. The struggle to unite the Marxist-Leninist organisations on a correct basis is greatly in the interests of the working class and must be carried out energetically. The CFB has learned the truth that active ideological struggle ensures unity. If we start from the desire for unity and persist in active ideological struggle we can ensure a united Marxist-Leninist Party in Britain. This will take time but there is no doubt it will be achieved once we start on it.

The CFB urges fellow British Marxist-Leninist organisations to learn from its own past negative experience and be on their guard against errors like the five described by the CFB in order to make a better job of the central task of today, building the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class. It urges them to study the CFB statement on relations between Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain and publicly to declare support for the principles laid down there. Above all it is important to start from the desire for unity and to struggle for the unity behind correct principles using the powerful weapons of active ideological struggle and bold criticism and self criticism.

The CFB pledges itself in accordance with the necessary priorities, seriously and systematically to struggle for unity behind correct principles with all those Marxist-Leninist organisations that genuinely start from the desire for unity.

The CFB urges those individuals who grasp the need for the Marxist-Leninist Party but are not yet in a Marxist-Leninist organisation to support the building of the Party by taking a firm decision to work with a Marxist-Leninist organisation in a systematic and self-disciplined way. It is essential to combat the error of individualism, to take this decision seriously and carry it out.

At present there are a confusing number of different Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain. This is a temporary phase. Individual comrades must study the party building lines of these organisations and ask to work systematically with the one that is the most correct.

At present British Marxist-Leninist organisations have big weaknesses. This is unavoidable and it will take struggle over a fairly long period of time to get rid of them. It is therefore important that a Marxist-Leninist organisation not only has a good party building line but also has a healthy inner life of active ideological struggle, criticism and self-criticism in order to get rid of weaknesses as soon as possible.

It takes a long time to grasp the principles of Marxism-Leninism and apply them in practice. Individual comrades should combat individualism and learn from the leadership of more tempered Marxist-Leninist organisations. At the same time they will come across errors. They should point these out clearly, not in a carping way or to justify the fact that they are working only as individuals. They should point them out to help the organisation and the Marxist-Leninist movement make a better job of building the revolutionary Communist Party.

The CFB has policies for working with individual non-CFB comrades and gradually raising their level. After due investigation and a period of joint work the CFB will invite to join its ranks those comrades who have a sound grasp of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and who have a firm proletarian class stand.

The CFB calls on all fellow Marxist-Leninist organisations and all comrades to grasp the truth that the central task in Britain today is to build the revolutionary Communist Party of the working class, to take up active ideological struggle to ensure unity in carrying out this task and to practice bold criticism and self-criticism in order to get rid of weaknesses and errors.

BUILD THE MARXIST-LENINIST COMMUNIST PARTY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION!

ON RELATIONS BETWEEN MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATIONS IN BRITAIN

The principal task in Britain today is to build the Proletarian Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. We must be absolutely clear about this, otherwise we will muddle along blindly and not carry out the task.

The Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain has been split into many small bodies. The chief ideological errors have been sectarianism and liberalism. There are therefore two main principles for building the party at this stage: to start from the desire for unity, and to fight for principled unity behind correct ideas through active ideological struggle.

The following is a resolution of the National Committee of the CFB(M-L) combating empiricism and other opportunist errors in our past relations with other Marxist-Leninist organisations.

We urge other Marxist-Leninist organisations to study this statement carefully, declare their support for it, and put it into practice by combating sectarianism and using active ideological struggle.

If we firmly grasp the principal task, and persevere in doing what is right and correct what is wrong we will inevitably build a victorious Proletarian Marxist-Leninist Communist Party.

Principles

1. The British imperialist ruling class is in greater and greater crisis. The British working class is rising in militancy and revolutionary spirit. The principal task in Britain today is to build the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. Guided by Marxism-Leninism this Party will lead the British working class to overthrow the bourgeoisie in socialist revolution and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.
2. The Marxist-Leninist Communist Party will be built in the struggle to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete practice of the British revolution.
3. The key to this task is to handle correctly the contradictions within the Marxist-Leninist movement in Britain. The essential thing is to start from the desire for unity behind correct principles. The serious study of Marxism-Leninism and the correct practice of the mass line are also very important.
4. Ideological and political unity behind correct lines and policies will not be won passively, but must be won through struggle, through active ideological struggle against the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas which are the prevailing ideas in capitalist society.
5. Contradictions must be handled by bold but not sectarian criticism and self-criticism. The development of comradely links must be assisted by means of exchange of views and comradely assistance.

Policy

In the past we have made certain errors of liberalism and sectarianism on this question. As one of a number of Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain we now state the following policy, in order to take Party building as the principal task in Britain today, a task that must be achieved primarily through active ideological struggle.

1. To fight to win recognition and conviction in relations with other Marxist-Leninist organisations that Party building and the development of the programme are the two most important tasks facing Marxist-Leninists in this country.
2. To oppose liberalism and draw firm and definite lines of demarcation in order to develop the struggle for unity behind correct principles. To combat errors of left and right opportunism through active ideological struggle.
3. To distinguish between friends and enemies of the working class. To distinguish between opportunists, and those who have made opportunist errors but who can still correct them through struggle.
4. To handle contradictions with other Marxist-Leninist organisations in Britain by criticism and self-criticism. To set an example in bold objective self-criticism.
5. In assessing the work of other organisations to distinguish between achievements and shortcomings and not to overstate or understate either. To combat the sectarianism of overestimating our own strengths and underestimating our own weaknesses and overestimating those of others. We must assess the strengths of organisations in terms of the correctness of the lines, policies and tactics. We must not think that numbers in themselves are a sign of political strength.
6. To follow as long as necessary in the CFB(M-L) the principle of self-reliance but not self-sufficiency in Party building.
7. To exchange views and experience with other Marxist-Leninist organisations and be ready to learn from what is correct in their line and practice.
8. To give comradely assistance for the sake of the proletariat and the future proletarian Party.
9. To aim for ideological and political unity on the basis of ideological and political struggle.
10. To take organisational steps appropriate to the degree of ideological and political unity that has been won.

National Committee of the CFB(M-L)

New Era Books

A PROPAGANDA WEAPON IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MARXIST-LENINIST COMMUNIST PARTY!

REVOLUTIONARY THEORY - *"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."* (Lenin.)

NEW ERA BOOKS stocks and distributes MARXIST-LENINIST CLASSICS, the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. The ideology of the class conscious workers is Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought, and the principal aspect of party building in Britain today is to build theory from the historical experience of the international Communist movement.

CHINESE AND ALBANIAN BOOKS AND PERIODICALS give a lead in applying Marxism-Leninism to the present struggle against imperialism and social imperialism, and for the building of socialism through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CFB(M-L) AND OTHER MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATIONS IN BRITAIN advance the struggle for the principal task of building the Marxist-Leninist party in Britain.

PUBLICATIONS OF MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES are an important source of revolutionary theory, for *"theory is the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect."* (Stalin.)

PROGRESSIVE LITERATURE New Era Books stocks ANTI-IMPERIALIST BOOKS, PAMPHLETS AND JOURNALS, which publicise the great achievements of countries fighting for independence, nations fighting for liberation and people fighting for revolution throughout the world. They expose and condemn the vicious nature of imperialism and social-imperialism.

Literature on the struggles of the working class against exploitation, racism and for women's emancipation, and progressive novels, document the class struggle in Britain and abroad.

New Era Books also stocks handicrafts, posters and artwork from the socialist countries which emphasise and publicise the achievements of socialism in a concrete way.

NEW ERA BOOKS
203 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD
LONDON N4.
Tel. 01-272-5894.

Nearest Tube - FINSBURY PARK.
Opening hours 10 - 6pm.
Monday - Saturday.
Late Night Thursday till 7.30pm.

CLASS STRUGGLE

Today the two superpowers, Soviet Social Imperialism and United States imperialism threaten the peoples of the whole world. The two superpowers speak 'detente' and prepare for war.

British imperialism, wounded and limping, still throws its weight around, tries to oppress and exploit countries like Ireland, the Arab countries, Southern Africa, and Iceland. At home it steps up its attacks on the working class with massive job cuts, pay cuts, and cuts in essential services, in a desperate attempt to resolve the crisis of decaying capitalism.

There is only one answer to these problems. The working class itself must come forward, lead the people in opposition to the superpowers, and overthrow the British imperialist ruling class by force.

The working class must speak out loud and clear. It must speak out in its own voice, the voice of no other class. It must speak out strongly to rally its forces and build a truly revolutionary Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class.

'Class Struggle' is being published to help the working class rally its forces and build that revolutionary Communist Party. It is the organ of the National Committee of the Communist Federation of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

'Class Struggle' is primarily a propagandist paper aimed at the class-conscious vanguard. Its main aspect is to present 'many ideas to the few', to win over the advanced workers to Marxism-Leninism.

The central task of building the revolutionary Communist Party guides every aspect of the paper. In the task of rallying the working class vanguard to build the Party, it serves the central mass work task: building Communist bases in the industrial working class.

It shows how the working class and progressive forces fight back against oppression and exploitation. 'Class Struggle' upholds Comrade Mao Tse Tung's profound analysis of the present era:

COUNTRIES WANT INDEPENDENCE!

NATIONS WANT LIBERATION!

PEOPLE WANT REVOLUTION!

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO 'CLASS STRUGGLE' ARE AVAILABLE FROM NEW ERA BOOKS
£1.60p a year.