

# FORUM

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STRUGGLE

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## Comment on the Draft Resolutions for the 29th National Congress

The more important of the two draft resolutions put forward for the National Congress in November is the Political Resolution. This will be dealt with first, leaving the resolution on the Future of the Social Services (which precedes it in the Congress insert of the 21st August Comment) to be briefly commented on afterwards.

### I. WHY THE CRISIS

The Draft Political Resolution begins with the question: Why is there a crisis facing the country today? It should have begun with the question of whether there really is all that serious a crisis for the British Empire or whether a lot of the crisis talk in the capitalist press is not simply intended to serve as an excuse for a drive against the standard of living of British workers.

But starting with the assumption that there is a major crisis confronting Britain, how does the draft resolution account for it? "It is a crisis of British imperialism", the draft says (line 10), because imperialism results in increasing arms expenditure, overseas military spending and overseas financial investment, all of which "finds expression in the chronic balance of payments problem." (line 20).

Since the crisis is a crisis of imperialism, it could have been avoided, the draft resolution implies, if the Labour Government had not continued "the familiar and bankrupt imperialist policy". (line 26)

This is completely unMarxist. Imperialism is not simply a policy which governments can follow or not as they please. Imperialism is the inevitable form capitalism takes in its final monopolistic phase.

By following this bankrupt policy of imperialism, the draft resolution continues (line 36), nothing will be solved and the future

of the Labour Government is endangered.

But since the Labour Government has "turned to the same restrictive measures as the Tories" (line 28), what difference does it make whether it is endangered or not? The "crucial question" (line 40) which one might have expected to be how to defeat imperialism whether implemented by a Labour or a Tory Government is stated instead to be whether "a change in policy (on the part of Labour) can defeat the Tory attempt at a come-back "

In fact, most bourgeois political commentators argue reasonably enough that the Tories could already have brought down the Labour Government if they had really wanted to; but that they have refrained from doing so because Labour has not yet carried out all the unpopular measures like the incomes policy, the investigation of trade unions, the regularising of the labour situation in the docks etc. for which they have received considerable support from the City. This resolution does its best to perpetuate the illusion that the class struggle in Britain is or ought to be reflected in the mock battle between Labour and Tory parties.

## II. THE NEED FOR A CHANGE

The second section of the draft political resolution deals with the need for change.

The three main political parties are criticised (line 56) because, while recognising in their propaganda that great changes are needed, they do not propose a fundamental change "for they are wedded to the present economic system".

But precisely the same criticism can be levelled at the Communist Party of Great Britain as revealed in this resolution. There is no Marxist analysis of what is wrong with Britain in terms of the basic contradictions of capitalism and therefore no conception of how real change might be brought about by mass action under correct leadership.

Instead of such an analysis there is a rag bag of various social ills and some random popular reactions to them (lines 63-99). These include such vague statements as "the social consequences of automation are just beginning to be grasped", or "young people are questioning the old ideas and values more than ever before" or "the commercialisation of culture and the arts is arousing increasing



concern". How, one might ask, could political action for real change be based on such imprecise formulations? And of course the answer is that real change is not envisaged. "The labour movement above all should be the voice and leadership of the movement of protest." (line 102)

In other words the role of a Party calling itself Marxist-Leninist is to lead the labour movement in protest at the way capitalism is "distorting the economy", "restricting social advance" and "intensifying class divisions"! It is just because capitalism does all these things that it can and must be changed. To protest about the inevitable consequences of capitalism is to wish it were something else so that it would not have to be changed.

The greatest confusion in this draft resolution is to be found in the last part of this section on the need for change. How is change to be brought about?— By changing the balance of forces in the Labour movement which means breaking the right-wing domination of the Labour Party. If it were not for this right-wing domination which "presents itself as the alternative capitalist leadership to the Tories" then, presumably the Labour Government could stop following "capitalist policies". (lines 104-106)

Put this conception of the Labour Government as merely led astray by its right-wing is in flat contradiction with its description as "a social-democratic administration of capitalism running the so-called "mixed economy" in close co-operation with the big monopoly capitalists and their expert representatives in the state machine" (line 116). Nothing about a wicked right-wing there, the whole Labour Government is seen as the agent of British capitalism.

And yet, immediately afterwards, we come once more to the old cry that "A Tory Government again would be a disaster. It would represent a victory for big business" (which a Labour Government also represents!)

In fact, the Labour Party alters its nature in this resolution as often as the drafters are caught in the contradiction of both criticising it as capitalist and wanting to be identified with it as a progressive agency for change. Hence the idea of a wicked right-wing; but it may be noted that the present right-wing leadership which has led the Labour Party astray consists of such men as Wilson, Greenwood, Swingler, Harold Davies etc. who in the

past have been praised by the CPGB as stalwarts of the left.

This confusion is also to be seen in the use throughout the resolution of "labour movement", sometimes capitalised, sometimes not, and the "left" also with both small and capital "l". No proper class analysis of this force is ever attempted. It is just some vague, amorphous body which can take whatever shape the drafters of the resolution require at any particular moment for their political manoeuvring.

Where in all this verbiage is any reference to class struggle, to the proletariat and to its vanguard, the Communist Party? All such Marxist concepts have been swallowed up in a lot of loose talk about the labour movement and whether or not it is being betrayed by certain right-wingers. Past Labour defeats are said to be "the verdict of history on those who compromise with capitalism instead of breaking with it". (line 110)

This is precisely the verdict history will pass on this draft resolution.

### III. BRITAIN AND PEACE

The section on Britain and Peace is thoroughly confused by the refusal of the drafters to recognise the relationship between imperialism and war. This refusal stems from their erroneous contention that it is possible to co-exist peacefully with imperialism. Therefore if war is being waged, as in Vietnam, it is not because U.S. imperialism is by nature aggressive but because U.S. imperialism is gratuitously misbehaving and thereby needlessly endangering peace.

Hence such statements as "American aggression is not only a crime against Vietnam, it poisons the international atmosphere and makes any real progress towards international understanding impossible." (line 150) Or, "Every possibility exists to defeat U.S. imperialist policy, and achieve peaceful coexistence." (line 201) as if defeating U.S. imperialism and achieving peaceful coexistence were two separate and equally realisable goals, whereas the only possibility of peace depends on the defeat of U.S. imperialism.

Imperialism is described as "still seeking to dominate the newly independent states" as if this were an incidental aspect of imperialism instead of its essential nature. (line 171)



The same sort of confusion results from failing to grasp the relationship between national liberation struggles and peace. Instead of seeing such liberation struggles as defeats for imperialism which makes war and therefore as blows for peace, this resolution counterposes the two as the need "to prevent a third world war and, while maintaining full support of the struggle for national liberation and resistance to aggression, to strive for peaceful coexistence while imperialism still exists." (line 208) This absurd argument that it is possible to resist imperialist aggression while peacefully coexisting with it is typical of the contradictions into which the CPGB leadership's incorrect analysis of the question of war and peace has landed the drafters of this resolution.

This is why the statement on Vietnam (line 157) is so much weaker than one would expect of a Communist Party. Where is the reference to Vietnam as a focus of class struggle, where the demand for solidarity and all-out support for our Vietnamese brothers who are heavily engaged in defeating the enemy of world peace, U.S. imperialism abetted by British imperialism? This is why the role of British imperialism is underplayed and described simply as "joining in with its own dirty war in Malaysia" (line 170) as if this were somehow fortuitous. This is why the British Government is described as strengthening "aggressive and militaristic circles in the West" (line 220) as if there were good and bad imperialists, reasonable and unreasonable U.S. presidents, nice Johnsons and evil Goldwaters. (This is the same sort of confusion of course as that of distinguishing between the good left-wingers and the bad right-wingers in the Labour Party; and just as Wilson was once a good left-winger so Johnson's electoral victory over Goldwater was hailed as a victory for peace !)

The draft resolution statements on the differences within the international communist movement (lines 232-245) are simply not true. The claim is made that everything is being done to strengthen unity on the basis of the 1957 Declaration and the 1960 Statement; but it must have been forgotten that in those documents revisionism, of the sort found throughout this draft political resolution, is considered the greatest danger to the world communist movement. Moreover, building up Yugoslavia as a socialist country as has been done recently is in flat contradiction with the way Yugoslavia is described in the two documents of 1957 and 1960. Indeed, the Daily



Worker was praising Yugoslavia at the very time when Tito was most actively carrying out Johnson's wish of securing a respite in Vietnam by means of phoney peace negotiations.

The claim to work for unity is also vitiated by the alacrity with which the leadership turned up for the March conference of splitters in Moscow, intended to put China in the dock. It was this open advertisement of the split in the movement which gave the U.S. the green light for stepping up its aggression in Vietnam.

#### IV. A NEW IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

In the section of the draft resolution on a new immediate programme the same contradiction noted before is once again repeated. While it is not expected that "a social democratic Government will introduce socialism" and the Communist Party "has never encouraged any illusions in this respect", the immediate programme which mass pressure on the Labour Government is to bring about (line 261) includes such socialist measures as ending colonial wars, closing down all overseas bases, nationalising land etc. If the Labour Government is a capitalist Government (as the draft resolution has already admitted) how can it be expected to participate in the voluntary winding up of British imperialism?

This new immediate programme is another rag bag of suggestions as to how capitalism might be made to function better by such means as "proper economic planning, special attention to areas of higher unemployment...a national fuel and power plan, integrated transport, guided development of automation" etc. (line 324)

More nationalisation is called for, especially of steel, (line 312) without any reference to the fact that nationalisation carried out by a monopoly capitalist state has absolutely nothing to do with socialism.

Racialism is condemned (line 358) but there is no Marxist analysis of the situation giving rise to it and no proposals as to what Communists can do about it, nor is it mentioned that the Labour Government has revealed itself, in the white paper on immigration, to be every bit as racist as the Tories we are urged to keep out at all costs.

This section ends with a great 'revolutionary' plea for proportional representation as the condition for "democratic advance"



in Britain, and for the ending of the ban which is keeping the Communist Party off the air. (line 367)

(Considering this draft political resolution, it does seem unfair that the CPGB should not be allowed to appear on TV along with the other bourgeois parties.)

#### V. THE LEFT PROGRESSIVE ADVANCE

The first thing that must be said about the section on the left progressive advance and the Communist Party is that no real evidence is given for this great "left progressive advance" in Britain. This advance is made up of: "mass movements on the bomb" (which the Party tried to get in on with its usual band wagon tactics and which, in any case, has declined over the last few years since the phoney test-ban treaty); "mass movements on colonial wars and social questions" (which must refer to a few MCF rallies in Trafalgar Square and several tenants associations); "left developments in important unions" (like the E.T.U. ?) and the "resumed growth of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League (though later the draft has to admit that communist membership has recently declined.)

And what has been the result of this 'tremendous left advance'? It has paved the way for the Labour electoral victory, has put into office a party indistinguishable from the Tories which large sections of big business wanted to see in power any way!

This section is also a tissue of contradictions and verbal juggling. It is stated (line 431) that the urgent need is a "broad popular movement led by the labour movement and including all progressive and democratic sections." The very next line says "already the movement for these aims has developed strongly." Is there such a movement or isn't there? And in terms of class struggle just what is a movement led by the labour movement and including all progressive and democratic sections? Furthermore what is supposed to be the Party's relationship to such a movement? On the basis of this draft it seems that the Party is simply to submerge itself in this vague leftish swell.

The part of this section dealing with the Party and trade unions can only be considered briefly (since it is being dealt with by another article in this issue of Forum). The phraseology is as surprising as in other sections for a document issued by a



supposedly Communist Party. "The Party supports every action of the working people at improving their wages and conditions, including strike action when they have to use this weapon." (line 481) The implication is that strike action is a desperate remedy and, in any case, should be limited to economic questions of wages and conditions of work.

It also states that trade unions "should be more active in the Labour Party at all levels" (line 495) which means that any militancy on the production front should be dissipated in the electoral efforts of the Labour Party. (This is the equivalent of the winding up of factory branches in the C.P. after the War to concentrate on electoral work.) "Particular emphasis", the resolution adds, (line 498) "needs to be placed on the further development of strong workshop and shop steward organisation"; and yet the Party consistently ignored shop stewards in the E.T.U. and only recognised the E.O. for the purpose of political discussion, thus neglecting to build the kind of support at rank and file level which might have prevented the debacle.

The resolution is so obviously not addressed to Communists but to those who might be reading the document over their shoulders that it actually includes this curious statement (line 510): "Anti-communism is a menace to the whole movement, only helps reaction, and should be rejected as sterile, disruptive and dangerous." If the 29th National Congress rejects anti-communism that's at least something !

## VI. THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In the final section on the Communist Party we get the same demand that the Party must work primarily for the unity of the left, never that it should give a lead. "We should continue to support every left movement and left expression." (line 533) Does this include Trotskyists or anti-communist peace movements? The resolution goes on: "We should do all in our power to work with all sections of the peace movement, the committees on Vietnam, the movements against colonialism, and other similar bodies." In other words, get in on everything that's going! Don't give a lead or try to inject any Marxist understanding into these other movements. Just disguise yourselves as vaguely of the left and hop on board!



Some of the excuses given in the resolution for the decline in Party membership are most revealing. "The predominant political feeling in the working class in 1964 was the need for Labour to be returned. Considerable illusions existed about Harold Wilson's political position." (Line 610) But was not the CPGB partially responsible for such political feeling and such illusions? When has a thorough analysis of the Labour Party ever been given by the CPGB leadership? Certainly not in this resolution. There is the same insistence as always on the responsibility of supporting Labour and keeping out the Tories at all costs. There is the same emphasis on electoral work as being of primary importance so that even when the need for factory work is mentioned (line 622) it is not because the neglect by the Party of class struggle has been recognised-- only that the factories haven't been playing a sufficient part in the electoral advance.

And what is the grand conclusion of this whole draft political resolution? "To the extent that we take advantage of the opportunities, and strengthen the activity, organisation and influence of the Communist Party, we shall develop a united left movement which can reverse the present dangerous trends and enable the labour movement to set Britain on a new path." (line 661) There is nothing here about the Communist Party taking its proper place as the vanguard of the working class. It is to become an indistinguishable part of a vague united left movement which will enable the labour movement to help capitalism work better in Britain.

This is not even revisionism. It is liquidationism. The glorious perspective open to Communists in Britain is that once they have shed Marxism-Leninism they will be able to creep unnoticed into the ranks of social democracy.

The first of these two resolutions on the future of the social services is scarcely worth any detailed analysis - because it provides no analysis itself of how these services came into being and what part they play in Britain's capitalist economy today.

The resolution should not be given too much attention because it is largely irrelevant to the real issues and is intended as a distraction from the questions with which communists ought to be grappling.



It reflects the petty-bourgeois attitude of the C.P.G.B. in that it treats people throughout as consumers rather than as producers. Its whole purpose is to indicate in a utopian way how capitalism would behave if it had the interests of the people at heart.

For discussion in the branches of these two draft resolutions the Party leadership has left the minimum time allowed by the constitution. This is understandable since these resolutions cannot stand up to the serious criticism of genuine Marxist-Leninists. It is the responsibility of members who wish to see the C.P.G.B. following a correct Marxist line to demand the fullest opportunity in their branches for considering these draft resolutions, objecting to incorrect formulations and proposing amendments or additional resolutions.

Particular attention should be paid to the confusion of those drafting these resolutions on the major issues of:

Imperialism

Relations with the Labour Party and  
Government

Attitude to the class struggle in Britain.



The Draft Political Resolution and the Trade Unions

Once more in the draft resolutions for the 29th National Congress the leadership of the C.P.G.B. plays down class struggle in Britain by subordinating work on the industrial front to elections. "Our electoral advance," the resolution states (line 624), "requires an extension of our work and influence in the factories." In other words, Communists are urged to work harder in the factories not to help realise the revolutionary potential of the proletariat but simply to gain more votes for the Party on the electoral front. This point is further emphasised when the resolution says: "No amount of work in other fields can substitute for it (electoral work)." (line 595)

A group of Forum trade unionists have been considering practical aspects of the Party leadership's failures in this respect. The following article is a very rough first attempt to crystallise some of the experiences of actual struggle. It suffers from the fact that the writers could only speak from their own limited experience of trade union activity. Some of the formulations need expansion and correction.

But in spite of defects, it was felt that the article was worth publishing from the point of view of stimulating other comrades to test their own experiences and write about them. The fact that the article was not held back till it could be perfected is in line with Forum's policy of regarding its pages as being shared by all those who are concerned with the anti-revisionist struggle. Please let us have your comments, additions or criticisms on these important issues.

Some Practical Questions Involved in T.U. Struggle.

To struggle or not to struggle. Typical Party advice in disputes between workers and management, is caution, for example the advice given by Len Wells when on the EC of the ASCW. According to him one must be very careful about what disputes are entered into, and if the possibility of success is less than 50/50 it is best not to get involved. But militant trade-unionism demands that issues be taken up irrespective of the chances of winning, because workers are being involved in struggle and there are tremendous lessons involved, more than the 3d. an hour demanded, the gumboots wanted because of the conditions on the job, more than the teacups the men were trying to get changed, the toilets rather than the



bucket in the corner. There is a fundamental question here which transcends the immediate issue.

Workers are gaining experience of their own power, developing consciousness of the physical effect produced by the withdrawal of labour, by the attack on the economic prosperity and profit of the employer. Properly organized and fighting in the right way, the workers can dictate terms to any employer. Even when in a particular case the workers are not successful, the consciousness of strength will still be learnt, provided tactics are discussed and the right lessons drawn for a future occasion.

At the Otis elevator strike the men lost in the end, but in the course of the struggle a united Shop Stewards movement was created up and down the country, whereas a few days previously the Shop Stewards in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Brighton, Glasgow, did not even know each others names.

What to struggle about. Each and every question over which there are differences between the workers and management provides a fit cause for struggle. Sometimes it is the management that picks the quarrel and determines what the battleground shall be, but as far as possible the workers themselves must go over to the offensive. For example a dispute that starts over fringe benefits or overtime should where possible be converted into a struggle on basic rates, because the basic rate affects everyone and will unite all the men, whereas with fringe benefits and overtime this is not the case.

At the present time this means all-out opposition to the incomes policy operated by the Labour Government on behalf of monopoly capital. No question of facts and figures and statistics - the incomes policy must be smashed.

Strategy of the strike weapon. Revisionist leadership has meant that the strike weapon is nearly always limited to defensive use (for example a wage claim resulting from an increase in the cost of living). The Party specifically implies this in the Draft Political Resolution for the forthcoming National Congress in which it talks of the workers going on strike "when they have to use this weapon" (l. 483). This defensive use plays into the hands of the bosses as in disputes over the amount of compensation for redundancy (usually very small anyway), instead of against redundancy itself.



To fight redundancy when the employers would have you negotiate on how much compensation they will pay, means that the workers are choosing the battleground, which gives them the initiative.

The working class must learn to use the strike weapon offensively and flexibly, confronting the employers on a whole range of issues at rank-and-file level rather than through the official negotiating machinery. The Party always prefers negotiations and the rule book because they have the blessing of legality and avoid naked confrontation.

Tactics of solidarity. Certain industries in the highly complex conditions of modern capitalist production are key to the functioning of industry as a whole. These are above all electricity supply, transport and fuel. A correct understanding of this and an intelligent application can provide decisive support for strike action wherever it is taking place. Thus, in a London Transport dispute, the busmen came out on strike but were not supported by the Underground workers, some of whom belonged to the T and GWU and others to the NUR.

At the time the Party-led ETU offered Cousins financial assistance but would not withdraw their men from the sub-stations that supply power for the Underground trains - London Transport could have been crushed like a fly in the hand. But Cousins, a man who has always talked Left and acted Right, did not take up the offer, and the Party-led ETU hid behind the facade of legality and did nothing.

In any one industry the giant firms tend to set the pattern for the rest; if the workers can take ICI to task and win, then most of the other chemical firms will follow on behind. Similarly, if the workers can get a shilling an hour out of Otis elevators, this is the lever to do the same with Express, Hall's, etc. In such cases the need for solidarity action to spread the strike, is paramount. But in the Otis case the Party made no effort among its extensive contacts in other lift firms to get an extension of the strike. The Otis workers stood entirely alone.

Negotiating Machinery and Grass Roots - How to Organize. It is often better to have negotiations direct with the management on the job, but Union officials, including Party officials and those with strong Party backing, always try to get the thing on a national



basis using the national machinery, combined with a recommendation to return to work. The dispute then gets removed from the workers concerned and becomes bogged down in various levels of arbitration, which can go on for twelve or eighteen months with no result - negotiations at local level followed by failure to agree, then to the District, to the Area, to the National Joint Industrial Council. The whole process could not be better designed to take away from the men directly concerned any feeling of power, and to spread disillusionment, frustration and cynicism. Often the management will use the opportunity thus given to them to sack the shop stewards from the job and destroy rank-and-file organisation.

A good example of this is the bonus payments and manning dispute between train drivers and British Railways. After 12 months of fruitless negotiations the drivers finally 'worked to rule' (not a 'go-slow', but an insistence on agreements between management and workers), and were even then jockeyed into returning to normal (!) working by Union officials hiding behind the official procedures and machinery. The Party very often goes along with this as a valid method - 'If we go on talking long enough we shall find a solution acceptable to both sides'.

Another evil of delegated negotiation is when the Union official is called in, goes and negotiates with the management, then comes to tell the men what he has got for them. There is no question of the official first going to the men on the job, finding what it is they want, and acting under their instructions as their paid servant (and Party leaders such as Kerrigan are in touch with Union officials, but not with the rank-and-file.). Examples of the handiwork of such officials, unchallenged by the Party, are (1) in the motor industry where a 42-night week was accepted, rather than arguing for a shorter working week based on four nights: the workers still had to go in five times during the week, and so, if anything, this meant a worsening of conditions. (2) Among gas workers in Coventry a half-hour reduction in the working day was negotiated, enabling them to start at 8.30 instead of 8.00. Because of rush-hour traffic to offices this made no practical difference to the time they had to leave home in the morning. Had the officials taken their instructions from the men, these 'improved conditions' would have been rejected as unacceptable.

The basic justification of rank-and-file organisation - Shop Stewards Committees - is the understanding it gives the workers of



their own power. Shop Stewards Committees cut right across the whole T.U. structure and enable the workers to fight disputes on a factory basis with direct and effective confrontation of the management. Shop Stewards Committees and the workers they directly represent quickly learn from their experience the futility of long-drawn-out negotiations and commissions of enquiry, such as the Jack Commission into BEA and BOAC.

The CPGB pays lip service only to the value of Shop Stewards Committees. Even when the Party was in the leadership of the ETU, it did not bring them into being, and yet they existed all the while in the AEU and the electricity supply industry. The Party has even stood by when Shop Stewards Committees have been smashed and the shop stewards themselves have been sacked from the job as a result of the Union intervening, declaring them 'unofficial bodies' and advising a return to work. This was the fate of Charlie Doyle, and also Kevin Halpin whom the Party once built up as a leading figure.

The need for Genuine Revolutionary Leadership. The essence of revolutionary leadership in T.U. work is to understand the relationship of class forces in any given situation so that the correct tactical lead can be given, bearing in mind the fundamental aims and methods outlined above. Each particular dispute must be seen in relation to every other dispute and also in relation to the political questions involved. To put the struggle on this scientifically precise basis a Marxist revolutionary Party is absolutely necessary, and the core of the Party must be industrial workers in touch with the masses and always learning from them. Only such a Party, with an all-round revolutionary outlook, can effectively guide the working class towards the defeat of monopoly capital both economically and politically, that is by the seizure of State power.

#### THE GREEK PARLIAMENTARY CRISIS

What is happening now in Greece is particularly interesting for British communists, as a practical commentary on the British Road to Socialism. The central idea in the British Road on how we are to achieve socialism in this country is:

"At a time of mounting class struggle, when the entire working class is brought into action and is supported by other sections of the population, a general election fought on the issue of a



socialist solution to Britain's problems could bring decisive results." (p. 10).

Let us look at the current Greek crisis in the light of this idea.

In the 1963 elections Papandreou, a bourgeois liberal, became Prime Minister at the head of a coalition government based on a slender majority (53% of the votes). The Communist Party supported Papandreou, and everyone rejoiced that Greece had turned away from fascism. The Communist Party subsequently won some striking successes in the municipal elections. Papandreou carried out some modest reforms genuinely in the interest of the people in the fields of education and agriculture (or so say the reactionaries), and weeded some fascist elements out of positions in the army and civil service.

When in July this year Papandreou wanted to take over the Defence Ministry himself in place of a 'strong right-winger', a coup was organized by the 'Palace' in collaboration with a small number of M.P.s. who defected from Papandreou's own Centre Union Party. Papandreou was arbitrarily deposed without a shred of legality, and various manoeuvres have been carried through in an attempt by the ruling class to create a parliamentary majority without the Centre Union Party, which has undoubtedly won mass popular backing.

First trick was the appointment of Athaniades-Novas, leader of the breakaway group from the C.U.P., as Prime Minister. He failed to get a parliamentary majority, and so Tsirimokos was chosen by the 'Palace'. It was thought that he might succeed because he had the reputation in certain quarters of being a socialist, and at the same time he boasted that no one knew better than he how to "deal with the Communists". Tsirimokos failed to get a majority. Embarrassment among the bourgeoisie but by no means dismay.

Mass demonstrations were held in the streets of Athens in the face of police violence, demanding an end to the monarchy and general elections. Papandreou supported the second demand. 150 people were injured in the demonstrations and over 200 arrested. Next, outdoor demonstrations were banned, and police stood ready with tear gas and fire engines to enforce the new regulations. It was in this context that Papandreou condemned the use of all violence - by 'rioters' or by the police! Tsirimokos, for his part, threatened to bring in the army to keep public order if the need arose. His 'government' has declared,



"Yes, we do want elections. But not in the way and at the time that Mr. Papandreu wants them, with terrorist groups marching in the streets of Athens. First the terrorist organizations will be dissolved, then there will be elections." (25 Aug.).

What does this all boil down to? Undoubtedly in Greece there is "mounting class struggle", coupled with popular demand for a general election and a mass desire for radical social change. The bourgeoisie are resisting these demands, first by parliamentary manoeuvring designed to fool the people, second by using the police to break up popular demonstrations, third by threatening to bring in the army. Throughout they have shown not the slightest concern for democratic institutions of their own making. They are quite determined not to hold a general election which "could bring decisive results". And since the bourgeoisie hold State power, they should not find it too difficult to ensure that an election does not take place.

Great opportunities exist for the revolutionary movement in Greece at the present time provided a many-sided struggle is developed, of which parliamentary struggle is only one aspect.

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#### LENIN AND GALLACHER

As much has already been written in obituary notes on the recent death of William Gallacher, it is not intended here to do likewise. Instead it would be both more fitting and useful to examine and quote some of Lenin's comments on Gallacher and his political position just prior to the formation of a Communist Party in Britain.

It is well known that Gallacher had already made a name as a fine working class militant, his hatred of the ruling class was implacable, this was recognised by Lenin in "Left Wing Communism." Revisionists and right wing reformists of all kinds, see in "Left Wing Communism" (even those who get beyond the first page) only one thing, the advocacy and the necessity to participate in Parliament under certain circumstances. But what should also be noted is that Lenin after applauding Gallacher's "noble, proletarian hatred" calling this the "beginning of all wisdom" goes on.... "But the writer (W. Gallacher) apparently does not appreciate that politics



is a science and an art that does not drop from the skies, that it is not obtained gratis, and that if the proletariat wants to conquer the bourgeoisie it must train its own, proletarian 'class politicians', and such as will be no worse than the bourgeois politicians." We should learn from this advice of Lenin, that revolutionary spirit is not enough to lead the masses in a revolutionary struggle, that politics must be studied.

We know that Lenin and also Stalin were masters in the art of politics, defeating the West European bourgeois politicians on numerous occasions, therefore the anti-revisionist movement should learn from these examples, and should be consciously developing politicians.

Lenin's advice of 1920 should be taken seriously in 1965 by anti-revisionists. Because the working class movement is once again in the position of the 1920s when a revolutionary Marxist party has to be formed anew, because of betrayal by revisionists. The fact that practically this cannot yet be raised, but is dependent upon the prior development of Marxist groups, shows how much conscious work there has yet to be done by hard study, by "combined action and mutual discussion" (Communist Manifesto). All of us, by the most critical opposition to revisionism in all forms, must set ourselves the task of servicing our apprenticeship to Marxism. So that a Marxist party can be formed in Britain and as Lenin advised to make a complete break from the Labour Party as a "thoroughly bourgeois party" (Lenin)

But does the British Communist Party even as regards Parliament take the advice that Lenin gave in 1920?

Lenin advises the British Communists to take part in a general election with one main theme; to show the British Government as a 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie' and as a counterpoise to this to imbue the working class in one way or another, with the idea of setting up their own dictatorship .. "only workers' Soviets, and not parliament, can be the instrument whereby the aims of the proletariat will be achieved." (Left Wing Communism). Elsewhere Lenin explains that the latin phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat', must be translated into popular language in some sort of concrete slogan... like a "Workers Government".



Lenin further says that due to lack of space and time he cannot expand on the point that the Bolsheviks did not conduct election campaigns in the customary bourgeois sense, but in a revolutionary fashion.

The British Communists have not taken Lenin's advice on any of these things. Do they speak about a Workers Govt.? Indeed not, they talk about one or other variety of a Labour Govt. Do they conduct elections in a new way? Of course not, not only do they do that in the 'old way' but they have turned Lenin's "party of a new type" into a party of the old type. Everything is done within the confines of bourgeois democracy. And naturally within this bourgeois democracy the Labour Govt. and Labour Party are treated as somehow or other to be an expression of the working class movement and susceptible to its pressure.

Such is some of the advice of Lenin not only in 'Left Wing Communism' but in many works, advice which has been deliberately ignored, no worse - deliberately garbled and distorted, by the British Communist Party.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

(Readers of Forum will know that our journal was started to encourage comrades to discuss vital issues confronting all Marxist-Leninists - vital issues which were deliberately distorted and discussion stifled by the CP leadership. Over the last few months, with our policy of stimulating analysis and comment before the National Congress of the Party which has found expression both in articles appearing in our journal and supplements, we have begun to receive many letters from comrades. Each month, therefore, we shall try to include as many as possible. In accordance with Forum policy, we do not print the names of our contributors.)



(1) Comrades:

Johnny Gollan made a statement during his Caxton Hall meeting on Vietnam, the logic of which bears close scrutiny.

He said and I quote:-

"We shall work night and day to unite the socialist camp."

This remark could only be made by a cretin or a treacherous opportunist with his eyes on the coming Congress election; for if you are part of a movement and a controversy arises causing a split, resulting in two opposing forces you must naturally take your position accordingly, for or against. To talk about uniting the two forces suggests neutralism; to be neutral automatically places you outside the movement; to be outside the movement denies you the right to use the title Communist Party, for the communist party is the standard within a country of the International Communist Movement; but it is not enough for communists to rally around their standard like a flock of brainless sheep. That standard must first stand on its proper base, the base on which is ingrained the fundamental principles and policies of Marxism-Leninism. If through removal the standard becomes contaminated and destroyed then it is the duty of all sound Marxists to replace it.

Members of the CPGB who are remaining loyal to the party even though they see the streaks of opportunism and other failings in the leadership would do well seriously to re-consider their motives. You cannot remain true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and not criticise and allow for self-criticism of your own and other individuals' weaknesses.

There is no room for infallible complexes to develop in the communist movement. Marxism-Leninism is a progressive movement which has for its objective a communist



society which means ultimately a classless society. This objective should be borne in mind constantly by individual comrades of the party at all levels of development.

London, N.W.3.

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(2) Dear Comrades,

I was loaned a copy of The British Road to Where? I found it very interesting. It mentions Gallon's article in Marxism Today which I think I am correct in stating has been issued as a pamphlet which in appearance and content has been described as the "Son of the British Road" !

This pamphlet's most outstanding contribution to the controversy in our party and in the international Communist movement is the way in which Gallon distorts Lenin's position on the question of 'peaceful transition.'

He does so by describing how, at one stage prior to the seizure of power the possibility of the Soviets taking power peacefully was postulated, provided the Mensheviks and S.R.s broke with the bourgeois parties and goes on to claim that it was only after the threat of counter-revolution led by the right wing Generals that Lenin decided on insurrection. This potted version of the history of the October Revolution might be amusing if encountered in the pages of Readers Digest but is quite alarming when found in a serious Marxist? magazine.

For it completely ignores the fact that the articles, speeches etc. of Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were devoted to the prime task of isolating the compromising Mensheviks and SRs from the cadets on the one hand and from those sections of the masses that were deluded by the compromises on the other, not to mention the most important fact, that the Soviets were themselves the embryo dictatorship of the proletariat with



armed forces at their command, for of course one can talk about peacefully forcing somebody to hand you his gun, if you already have a gun pointed at his head.

Salford, (Lancs.)

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(3) Dear Comrade,

As a CP member, I am becoming increasingly confused by the incorrect line our party seems to be taking. Yet it is impossible in my area to seek guidance from anyone without being palmed off with excuses and generalisations.

Kirkby.

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(4) Dear Comrades,

There is a point about the 1945-onward position to which I think there is interest in drawing attention. There was, if I remember rightly, the illusion at the time that the New Democracies represented a new and easier transition to socialism as against the Russian path. Following from this there were attempts made to model plans a la New Democracies and much energy was devoted to distorted planning which should have been devoted, I think, to explaining why you cannot plan in a capitalist economy. There was of course a double illusion here - the New Democracies did not get socialism the easy way -- and England was not a country in transition to socialism. The illusion of the peaceful road of the New Democracies still lingers.

At the bottom of p.5 (British Road to Where) I think one could also draw attention to the immediate reaction

of the bankers to even Mr. Wilson's poor efforts to better workers' conditions. It was precisely the same as in 1931. If as the revisionists say, there has been a change in the position since those days someone must have forgotten to tell the bankers. It is a real up-to-the-minute example of the power beyond parliament. The failure is not Wilson's but of any party which puts its faith in parliament and has not prepared for instant combat with the real seat of capitalist power.

Manchester.

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## THE JOURNAL EXISTS :

- (1) to open a forum for all views and experiences of comrades inside and outside the Party, long denied expression by the revisionist leadership;
- (2) to help carry out the work of exposing revisionist errors in the class struggle in Britain, and develop inner-Party struggle, thereby assisting in the international struggle against revisionism;
- (3) to carry this out without dictating a 'line', and in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist principle of gathering the revolutionary forces - a task never carried out by the revisionist leadership;
- (4) to exclude all Trotskyist views as disruptive of this hard task;
- (5) to preserve anonymity (a) to protect comrades in the Party from attack by the revisionists (b) to avoid the suggestion of leadership by any contributor, or contributors who are able to name themselves since at this early stage of the struggle complete equality of exchange and mutual criticism are necessary.

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