

ON "THE WAY FORWARD"

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Introduction

No one who claims to be a Marxist-Leninist will deny that we need a revolutionary party of the working class. Equally, no Marxist-Leninist can disagree that this party will only be forged through struggles involving both theory and practice.

Can we deny that the main task facing us is to form the party and can we refuse to unite when it is not only possible to unite but urgent that we do so? We firmly believe that if those who attend the conference are really determined to unite then we will unite and get on with the real tasks. For after all, the formation of a party is only the first step, the means to an end.

What should follow the conference - a proposal

We propose that after the conference, in the interim period before the formation of a party, in which several different Marxist-Leninist organisations continue to exist, Marxist-Leninists in different organisations or in no organisation begin to work together in an all-round way.

For this purpose we propose the setting up of a new kind of organisation, a kind of joint organising committee, whose central task would be to work to prepare the conditions for a single Marxist-Leninist party to come into being.

This joint organising committee would do the following:

- 1) Draw up a programme of work nationally and locally to be carried out collectively by the Marxist-Leninists.
- 2) Draw up a programme of theoretical work to answer some of the important questions facing the Marxist-Leninist movement - to be investigated by the Marxist-Leninists collectively.
- 3) Work out a Party Programme and Constitution based mainly on the experience of joint work and investigation envisaged in 1) and 2)
- 4) Work towards organising the founding congress of the Party when the necessary conditions have been created.

The joint organising committee should elect, at the conference or at its first meeting, a small functional committee. The joint organising committee should meet within a short time after the conference and at regular intervals subsequently.

The joint organising committee should set up local branches and particular efforts should be made to shift the centre of the revolutionary movement closer to the industrial heartlands of Britain. The joint organising committee should have some provision for finance in the form, for instance, of affiliation fees.

Examples of work which could be carried out collectively by Marxist-Leninists working through such an organisation

- 1) Spreading Marxist-Leninist ideas by means of leaflets, pamphlets, regular publications, pickets, demonstrations, stickers, posters and so on and so forth - i.e. a wide range of work which can be carried out far more effectively by larger numbers of Marxist-Leninists working together than isolated groups working separately.

Two specific proposals: Activities around the coming 60th anniversary of the October Revolution. Mass leafletting (plus posters, stickers etc.) in working class areas, particularly London, to counter the growth of Fascism and make widely known the revolutionary alternative.

- 2) Promote exchange of experiences between Marxist-Leninists so that we can learn from each other and promote positive examples.

- 3) Co-ordinate work - help Marxist-Leninists working in the same area or maybe in a different area but in the same company, industry or T.U. etc. to get together to co-ordinate their work and maybe begin to work out Marxist-Leninist policies for their places of work.

We put these proposals forward as general proposals for discussion and we hope comrades will consider them and put forward amendments and suggestions for improvement - or put forward alternative suggestions on how we may get out of the present state of disunity and go forward towards building a united party of the working class.

In support of the above proposal we would like to make some general points concerning "The Way Forward".

There are numerous contradictions and differences within our Marxist-Leninist movement. We believe that the overwhelming majority constitute contradictions amongst the people and are not antagonistic. What we propose is that they should be handled in such a way that both the work to build the party of the working class and the revolutionary work itself - may go forward.

We also firmly believe that the necessary unity for the formation of the party will be forged mainly through Communists taking part in the revolutionary class struggle together. This is born out by historical experience - for instance the formation of the Party of Labour of Albania as outlined in the "History of the Party of Labour of Albania".

We propose that we should start off on an equal basis and work together. There are important questions of line, of theory to be answered. Let's draw up a list of questions which need to be answered and go about trying to answer them and testing our answers in practice - together. There is work to be done - let's draw up a programme of work of the kind that any one can see has got to be done in Britain today - work that only the Marxist-Leninists and no one else will do - and in a way which will be much more effective and give the proletariat some confidence and cause to listen to us, namely by Marxist-Leninists working together and in harmony, not separately and antagonistically.

Fascism, Unemployment, the Cuts - and so on and so forth - let's not let the revisionists, the Trotskyists, (or the Fascists) get away with fooling the working class on these questions and leading it up blind alleys - let's have our Marxist-Leninist line put over loud and clear on these questions. What is socialism? What is the cause of the difference between China and the U.S.S.R.? - International issues: the two superpowers, the third world, China and Albania - who but the Marxist-Leninists is going to put a correct line on these issues.

The Marxist-Leninist forces are a very small force and even these forces are divided. The voice of Marxism-Leninism is not making itself heard and the Marxist-Leninist movement has made virtually no impact upon the working class. It is a very small force yet its scope for work - and its potential for growth - is enormous. Why should we keep looking for points of disagreement amongst ourselves when workers should get to know - and want to know - about the points we agree on? The workers want to know the way forward, they want to know about socialism, what it is and how you get it (and how you keep it when you've got it). The workers don't want Fascism - nor do they want revisionism, as practiced in the U.S.S.R.

We are absolutely certain that the working class will support an organisation that 1) genuinely unites all the revolutionaries 2) adopts a correct attitude towards the workers and the working class in general i.e. is striving to become a genuine working class party and 3) that is, and is seen to be, not basically self-serving, opportunist, but is really out to serve the working class. There is no such organisation in existence but when one comes into being the working class will definitely support it.

What do we agree on and what do we disagree on? It sometimes would seem from meetings of Marxist-Leninists which are divorced from the practice of class struggle that disagreements are maybe 70% - 90% and agreement only 10% to 30% - but when we take part in the class struggle against the bourgeoisie, the revisionists, the imperialists, we can get things into perspective and see that agreement is maybe 90% and disagreement only 10%. That is why Chairman Mao stressed that "Class struggle is the key link." Precisely what we should be doing is hitting at the class enemy together. It is the class struggle alone - the real class struggle in the real world - which can sort out our agreements and disagreements, our demarcation lines, friends and enemies, as well as many 'theoretical' questions.

Can we work together for socialism? - that is the question. We believe that what is lacking is precisely the style of working together with others with whom one has maybe quite big disagreements on certain questions - and the style of friendly and comradely discussion to resolve points of disagreement. This reflects petty-bourgeois individualism.

It's very easy to say "We disagree - let's split" and for the past 12 years or so Marxist-Leninists have done that and look where it's got us. It's more difficult to say "We disagree on many things but we agree on the most important things - let's unite." The key factor is the will to unite and to resolve differences in a Communist way.

The most important thing, our basic principle, is to "practice Marxism not revisionism" - opposition to revisionism is our cardinal principle because if you don't fight revisionism you can't fight imperialism. - this is where we have to draw the line on the question of unity - between principled unity and unprincipled unity, between principled disunity and unprincipled disunity. We must carry on the struggle against revisionism in all its forms - as much that of the CPBML as that of the CPGB - in the struggle to develop a correct line for the British revolution. Revisionism and Marxism represent an antagonistic contradiction and the struggle between revisionism and Marxism will go on all the time, on just about every question, within the Marxist-Leninist movement as well as outside of it. But just as we should distinguish between the two types of contradictions we should distinguish between those who consciously practice revisionism and serve the bourgeoisie and those who may be influenced by revisionist ideas. - between those who push a wrong line and those who follow it.

There is a lot of talk about 'demarcation lines' in the Marxist-Leninist movement. It is very important to draw demarcation lines and draw the right demarcation lines - behind the correct demarcation lines a party of as many genuine Marxist-Leninists as can be rallied will be built. But demarcation lines should not be drawn all across the Marxist-Leninist movement in every direction - for basically there is only one demarcation line - that between Marxism and revis-

ionism - which reflects the demarcation line between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Shouldn't we try to rally and unite with all those who are willing and able to carry out the tasks demanded of us at this stage. The main test is not what people say when they are at a meeting but what they do amongst the broad masses - that is the criterion of a true Marxist as defined by Chairman Mao: "How does he stand in relation to the broad masses of workers and peasants."

We hope comrades will not come along to the conference with fixed views just to prove others wrong but for discussion i.e. exchanging ideas, listening to others opinions, learning from others, and pooling the collective wisdom and understanding to get to the truth, to arrive at something higher and richer than any one person's individual understanding. There will always be differences of opinion and line as is very clear from the history of the C.P.C. The call for complete 'ideological and political unity' is idealist and metaphysical. Unity is not absolute, it is relative, it develops dialectically from a lower to a higher level. Those who will attend the conference must have a certain level of unity otherwise they wouldn't be there. As for the correct line for the British revolution, this will emerge gradually in the course of the practice of the revolution, i.e. by applying what we know and in the process finding out what we don't know - this understanding likewise develops through practice of the class struggle under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism.

The question of permitting different ideas inside the party and allowing the struggle of ideas to carry on - and knowing how to handle this struggle - is very important for any party and for us today. Different ideas should never be suppressed. When different ideas occur every attempt should be made to reach agreement. If a question cannot be resolved immediately it should be left to be resolved at a later date. If a decision has to be taken on a concrete issue the minority must abide by the decision of the majority but have every right to reserve their opinion and bring it up at a later date. At all times differences in a comradely way in a spirit of finding the truth. Except in cases of proven counter-revolutionary elements people should not be labelled for having different opinions.