

# Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

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## CPGB-ML's reply to the lies and slanders of the CPB

For quite some time, the CPGB-ML has attempted to be included in the annual International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties (ICCWP), based in Athens. Our attempts in this regard have drawn a blank from the working group of the ICCWP.

This year, in response to our request and acting on behalf of the working group of the ICCWP, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) asked the Communist Party of Britain (CPB) and the New Communist Party (NCP), as the 'recognised' parties in Britain, to report on the eligibility of the CPGB-ML for membership of the ICCWP. In response to this request, John Foster, the International Secretary of the CPB, wrote what claims to be a report on the CPGB-ML but is in fact a sly and scurrilous attack on the latter.

We have never been asked by the working group to submit any evidence in our defence; nor have we been officially sent a copy of the CPB's 'report'. Fortunately, we came to have possession of a copy of this report, and we have sent our observations on it to the working party. Hitherto we have received not even an acknowledgement.

In the circumstances, we have no option but to go public and expose the arbitrary and unjust modus operandi of both the working group and the CPB. In order that nobody accuse us of misrepresenting the CPB, we are publishing that organisation's report along with our reply.

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## Report prepared for the working party of the ICCWP by the Communist Party of Britain

September 2008

### What qualifies a party for membership of the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties?

All existing member parties possess:

A living Communist tradition: a significant core of members deriving from communist parties formed within the period of the Third International.

A working class base: influence within the trade union movement and other mass democratic organisations of working people that enables the linking of immediate struggles to wider class alliances and an understanding of capitalist or imperialist state power.

An ability to develop Marxism in the circumstances of their country: a democratic process that can generalise this experience, draw lessons and creatively develop Marxist-Leninist practice through Congresses and programmatic documents.

Our conclusion is that the CPGB-ML does not possess these characteristics.

## Origins

CPGB-ML was formed in 2004 when a group of members associated with Harpal Brar were excluded from membership of the Socialist Labour Party. The group was less than 40 strong. Few if any had been members of the original Communist Party of Great Britain. The CPGB itself was founded in 1920. It provided leadership in the historic struggles of Britain's working class from the 1920s to the 1970s and gave birth to both the New Communist Party and the Communist Party of Britain. The Socialist Labour Party emerged from the Labour Party and has never claimed to be either a Marxist or a democratic-centralist party.

The leadership of the CPGB-ML has its political origins in a 'Naxalite' trend in the Indian Workers Association in Britain. The predominant trend in the IWA is led by the Association of Indian Communists in Britain, affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Between 1991 and 2004, the Association of Indian Communists tried to maintain unity with the Naxalites. This proved difficult because a Naxalite branch insisted on maintaining its own publication, *Lalkar*, edited by Harpal Brar, and projecting its own rather than IWA policies, by, for example, denouncing the reforms undertaken by the Communist Party of China and welcoming India's nuclear tests.

In 2001, *Lalkar* applauded the September 11 attacks. The thousands of workers who died in the Twin Towers were all dismissed as 'bankers' and 'stockbrokers'. All Communists, socialists and progressives who disagreed with this position were accused of siding with imperialism (*Lalkar*, November/December 2001). In 2004, the overwhelming majority of the IWA re-established that organisation without those who published *Lalkar*. Those excluded today lead the CPGB-ML.

## A working class base

The membership of the CPGB ML is not published but it is understood to be less than 50. The CPGB ML produces a magazine, *Proletarian*, once every two months. It has no other publication – although *Lalkar* is still produced by the CPGB ML chairperson Harpal Brar. It runs a website [cpgb-ml.org](http://cpgb-ml.org). This reproduces the content of *Proletarian*, the thirteen leaflets produced by the CPGB ML since the end of 2006 and summaries of eight pamphlets written by Harpal Brar. There is also an Events page: 'Events organised by CPGB-ML, plus events at which CPGB-ML comrades will be attending'. For July and August 2008 (a period which saw mass strikes across Britain's public sector and preparations for the Trades Union Congress and the 20 September demonstration against the war) this page remained entirely blank. The home page states that the CPGB (ML) was formed because "there was no existing party in Britain that carried a consistently Marxist-Leninist, anti-imperialist, anti-social democratic political line."

The Communist Party of Britain is also very small by international standards. The CPGB was re-established as the Communist Party of Britain in 1988, all its members having previously been members of the CPGB. Currently the CPB has a registered, dues paying membership of 1,050, representing an increase of around 20 per cent over the past three years. It continues to sustain the only English language daily paper which follows a Communist editorial line and which currently has the support of all major British trade unions, the *Morning Star*.

The style of work of the CPB contrasts strongly with that of the CPGB (ML). The CPB is active throughout the trade union movement from the workplace to the executives of most major unions and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. Our comrades participate directly in the debates among working people that formulate policy and ensure that policy is carried into action on the ground in day to day struggle. Our party and the Young Communist League are also active in the women's, tenants, pensioners, youth and students movements. We are not aware of a presence by the CPGB-ML in any of these areas of political and ideological struggle, particularly the trade union movement.

The political practice of the CPGB-ML involves denunciations of precisely those left-wing and anti-war trade union leaders and Labour MPs who have fought against the imperialist policies of the current New Labour government.

In the view of the CPB it has been this mass-based struggle that has represented the key fulcrum for change within British politics over the past six years. The CPB itself has sought to win the trade union and labour movement to oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to demand the withdrawal of British troops and secure an end to Britain's foreign policy subservience to the US, particularly in relation to Star Wars and the renewal of Britain's Trident nuclear missile system. To this end our party has helped develop the Stop the War Coalition and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in which our comrades hold leading positions. Our party's influence in the trade union movement has been used to win almost all individual trade unions

and the TUC itself to oppose Britain's imperialist foreign policy – as well as mass demonstrations involving millions of people. This in turn has led to a significant and growing section of Labour MPs to oppose the government's war policies. In 2003 over 140 Labour MPs voted against the war.

The CPGB ML has taken no part in this work. It describes those trade union leaders who have led the fight against the government as 'opportunists', 'traitors' and 'apologists for imperialism'. CPGB-ML propaganda denounces the socialist and CPB leadership of the Stop the War Coalition for 'political cowardice of the worst kind', while the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) with its the progressive and CPB leadership is condemned for following a 'narrow bourgeois-pacifist agenda' (see for example, *Proletarian*, February, 2007). It describes the Morning Star as a 'revisionist rag' (Lalkar, January/February 2006). In the main movements in solidarity with Cuba, Venezuela and Colombia, in which CPB members are prominent at every level and have been instrumental in winning wider trade union backing, the CPGB-ML plays no part. Its main involvement outside the CPGB (ML) has been in the establishment of front organizations controlled by the CPGB (ML), notably the Stalin Society.

### **An ability to develop Marxism in the circumstances of their country**

The CPGB (ML) has held four annual conferences or Congresses since its formation in 2004. We have examined the resolutions passed. Most are declarations on international issues. A minority are on specific national issues such as housing or immigration policies. None has had a programmatic character. There is no evidence of any pre-Congress discussion having taken place to enable the membership to generalize and draw lessons from their political engagement. At no Congress has there been any attempt to define a CPGB strategy for political transformation or any attempt to assess and test the party's political practice.

The CPGB (ML) would therefore appear to lack the essential requirements for a Marxist Leninist Communist Party: a political strategy for intervention in the organized working class, the size and weight to do so and the democratic centralist structure required to develop its political practice.

### **A case study in sectarianism: the campaign in Britain against the banning of the Czech Young Communists and state-sponsored anti-Communism**

Where such an approach can lead was revealed in the recent campaign against the attempt to 'criminalise' Communism in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to outlaw the Czech Communist Youth Union.

In 2005 the CPB took the initiative in contacting trade unions and MPs to mobilise opposition to the motions before the Assembly. Numerous articles were published in the daily Morning Star and elsewhere, defending Communism in theory and practice. We galvanised MPs who were members of the European Assembly to provide internal information and to vote against the anti-Communism motions. At the same time, the CPB was also engaged in solidarity with the Czech Communist Youth Union and organising speakers to address meetings in Britain. It arranged for MPs to table and sign a motion in the British Parliament condemning the banning of the union. A protest at the Czech embassy in London, where a deputation of CPB and trade union leaders made verbal and written representations, received wide publicity in Britain and internationally.

The contribution of the CPGB-ML to this struggle was a belated statement reprinted from Greece in *Proletarian* –and a long article in Lalkar (January/February 2006) attacking the CPB leadership for 'Khrushchevite revisionism'. The CPB, in taking its arguments against anti-Communism into the trade union movement, had briefly sought to assess the errors made during the Stalin period in the context of defending the wider historic record of the Soviet Union and contrasting it with the crimes of imperialism. For the CPGB-ML, accusing the CPB of 'doing imperialism's dirty work for it' was far more important than taking part in any campaign to defend the CCYU or defeat the Council of Europe motion. Their chief contribution to the fight against anti-Communism was to launch a lengthy assault on the CPB—the leading force in that fight in Britain.

### **Concluding assessment**

The CPGB (ML) lacks the essential requirements of a Marxist Leninist Communist Party. It was set up without roots in a living Communist organization. It has no base in the organized working class. It shows no evidence of a democratic centralist practice capable of developing a Marxist strategy appropriate to the conditions of its own country.

The hallmarks of its public interventions are sectarianism and attacks on other existing Communist parties in Britain and elsewhere.

We believe that this itself is an important issue for the Working Party. A key principle of the Communist movement today is non-intervention in each other's internal affairs. The CPB has on no occasion made public criticism of the CPGB (ML). The CPGB (ML) made repeated public attacks on our party and has also sought to interfere in its internal affairs.

The editorial in the June/July 2008 issue of *Proletarian* and an article in the August/September issue have sought to use our party's 2008 pre-Congress discussion and the debates at our 50<sup>th</sup> Congress to claim that CPB 'revisionism' is in crisis, that the party is divided into two sections who are at war with one another and to call on our members to join the CPGB (ML). While we can expect such an approach from some Trotskyist and other ultra-left enemies of the Communist movement, we consider it unacceptable from parties which want to be considered as part of that movement. The claims by the CPGB (ML) leadership betray its political failure to understand the practice of democratic centralism and the role of debate in the formulation of policy and the forging of party unity. We ourselves are proud of the healthy vigour of our Congress discussion and see it as stemming precisely from our members all-round involvement in mass struggle.

Capitalist propaganda dwells on divisions within the Communist movement and on the multiplicity of communist organisations. Encouraging the formation of additional very small organisations styling themselves Communist will, we believe, hinder the development of the Communist movement, nationally or internationally. In Britain, recognition of such an organization as the CPGB (ML) would itself undermine the wider standing of the International Conference.

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## CPGB-ML's reply to the lies and slanders of the CPB

October 2008

In his letter to all the members of the Working Party of the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, dated 1 September 2008, John Foster, International Secretary of the CPB (Communist Party of Britain) stated that the International Department of the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) had requested the CPB, as "*one of the two recognised Communist parties in Britain, to draw up a report giving our assessment of the application of the CPGB(ML) for membership ahead of the meetings of the working party this autumn at which the issue will be discussed*", adding that "*this report is now attached*".

Before proceeding with our detailed treatment of the CPB's said report, let it be remarked in passing that it is a grotesquely bizarre procedure whereby our most deadly opponents are given the decisive say on whether or not our party be admitted into the ranks of the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties. Be that as it may. Let us now proceed with a detailed rebuttal of the CPB's report, which is nothing more than a craftily concocted cocktail of malice, distortions, half-truths, and downright lies, attesting more to the dishonesty and pharisaical hypocrisy of the CPB than a "*factual and objective assessment*" of the ideological physiognomy of the CPGB-ML, its connection with the tradition of the Third Communist International, its influence within the working-class movement, its "*understanding ... of imperialist state power*", and its ability to apply and develop Marxism-Leninism in the concrete circumstances of Britain and the world around us.

### Qualification for membership

The CPB, in its report on the CPGB-ML, lists the following three pre-requisites for membership of the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties (ICCWP hereafter), which, it boldly asserts, "*All existing member parties possess*".

1. "A living communist tradition: a significant core of members deriving from Communist Parties formed within the period of the Third International;
2. "A working class base: influence within the trade-union movement and other mass democratic organisations of the working people that enables the linking of immediate struggles to wider class alliances and an understanding of capitalist or imperialist state power.

3. "An ability to develop Marxism in the circumstances of their country": a democratic process that can generate this experience, draw lessons and creatively develop Marxist-Leninist practice through Congresses and programmatic documents".

Having listed these qualifications for membership of the ICCWP, the CPB – surprise, surprise! – says: *"Our conclusion is that the CPGB-ML does not possess these characteristics"* on which characteristics it then goes on to elaborate in an attempt to show their absence in the case of CPGB-ML.

## Origins

Having correctly stated that the CPGB-ML was formed in 2004 after Harpal Brar (currently its chairman) and a large number of his comrades were *"excluded from the membership of the Socialist Labour Party* [be it said in parenthesis that excluded is hardly the apt expression for the illegal and arbitrary expulsion of these comrades by Arthur Scargill and his hatchet men and women] ... *Few if any had been members of the original Communist Party of Great Britain"*, which had *"provided leadership in the historic struggles of Britain's working class from the 1920's to the 1970's"*, whose offspring were both the NCP (New Communist Party) and the CPB, whereas, states the CPB report with smug scorn, the Socialist Labour Party (SLP hereafter) *"...emerged from the Labour Party and has never claimed to be either a Marxist or a democratic-centralist party"*.

The CPB, with characteristic selective amnesia, 'forgot' to make even a cursory reference to some of the most important facts and points of principle which have direct bearing on the question under consideration. First, the most important thing is not whether many or any of the members of the CPGB-ML had been members of the original CPGB (although some had been) for, after all, there were plenty of members of the original CPGB who became rotten to the core liberals, hundreds of whom went on to liquidate the CPGB, having condemned the Great Socialist October Revolution as *"a mistake of historic proportions"*. The important thing is whether the CPGB throughout its existence, as well as the parties such as the CPB and NCP, stayed loyal to the principles and traditions of the Communist International.

With the adoption in 1951 of the *British Road to Socialism* (BRS), the CPGB had stepped on to the slippery slope of opportunism and had been rolling down to the bottom at an accelerating pace, which culminated in its liquidation in 1991. The formation of the CPB in 1988, far from resulting in a clean break with the rotten parliamentarism and peaceful road to socialism advocated by the BRS in 1951, as well as by its several subsequent and even more wretched versions, with its utopian – not to say revisionist – schemes of reforming the bourgeois state out of existence through a combination of securing a Labour-Communist majority in parliament and extra-parliamentary mass pressure, merely served to continue, albeit with some insignificant changes of formulation, the revisionist ideology and programme of the BRS.

What unites the CPB and the old CPGB as from the mid-fifties of the last century is the central thesis that socialism can be achieved in Britain by peaceful means and without resort to armed struggle and civil war; that through the winning of a parliamentary majority by the Labour and Communist Parties, the British parliament can be made to serve as an instrument for ushering in socialism; that the resistance of the British ruling class can be overcome by filling the top posts in the government, armed forces, police and judiciary, etc., with men and women loyal to socialism, a measure which – it is claimed – would ensure that socialist measures enacted by parliament are carried out in practice and that the state machinery serves as a servant of the people and their needs.

The above propositions constitute a total departure from, and a complete break with, the fundamental teachings of Marxism and the traditions of the Communist International, discarding as they do all that is unacceptable to the bourgeoisie, that is, the use of revolutionary violence for the overthrow of the capitalist state machinery and its replacement by a state of the working class – the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As early as 1852, on the basis of the concrete historical experience of the French Revolution of 1848-51, Marx reached the conclusion that, whereas all previous revolutions had perfected the state machine, the task of the proletarian revolution was to *"smash" the "bureaucratic-military machine"*. Further, in the aftermath of the Paris Commune of 1871, Marx declared: *"one thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes"*.

Historical experience has since fully confirmed the teachings of Marxism. In defiance of these teachings and flying in the face of reality, the old BRS, as well as the CPB's own programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, peddle the illusion that the proletarian revolution in Britain would not have to bother about such things as overthrowing the capitalist state and smashing

it; that, on the contrary, the British proletariat could simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it in its own interests; that it could get by without establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. And yet this gentry desire to be treated as Marxist-Leninists, 'forgetting' that *"only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested ... opportunism does not extend the recognition of the class struggle to what is the cardinal point, to the period of transition from capitalism to communism, to the period of the overthrow and the complete abolition of the bourgeoisie. In reality this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic in a new way (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie"* (V I Lenin, *State and Revolution*, Aug-Sept 1917).

Only those who suffer from the incurable malady of *"parliamentary cretinism, which holds those infected by it fast in an imaginary world and robs them of all sense, all memory, all understanding of the rude external world"*, can subscribe to the BRS thesis of there being a peaceful parliamentary road to socialism.

Only those who forget that *"there can be no peaceful development to socialism"*<sup>ii</sup> can mindlessly propagate the twaddle about there being a peaceful road to socialism. In the conditions of capitalist imperialism, of unprecedented militarism, the strangulations of oppressed nations and weak countries, the wholesale furious struggle between the imperialist countries for the redivision of the world, *"...the very thought of peacefully subordinating the capitalists to the will of the majority of the exploited, of the peaceful, reformist transition to Socialism, is not only extreme philistine stupidity, but also downright deception of the workers, the embellishment of capitalist wage slavery, concealment of the truth. The truth of the matter is that the bourgeoisie, even the most educated and democratic, now no longer hesitates to resort to any fraud or crime, to massacre millions of workers and peasants in order to save private ownership of the means of production. Only the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the confiscation of its property, the destruction of the whole of the bourgeois state apparatus from top to bottom – parliamentary, judicial, military, bureaucratic, administrative, municipal, etc., right up to the very wholesale deportation or internment of the most dangerous and stubborn exploiters – putting them under strict surveillance in order to combat inevitable attempts to resist and to restore capitalist slavery – only such measures can ensure real subordination of the whole class of exploiters"*.<sup>iii</sup>

In view of the above, it is firstly clear that even if one were to accept for the sake of argument that a 'significant core' of the CPB membership is derived from the old CPGB which was *"formed within the period of the Third International"*, neither the CPGB after the mid 1950s, nor the CPB from its very inception, have been loyal to the principles and traditions of that International.

We in the CPGB-ML, on the other hand, deeply honour and cherish the fundamental principles which underpinned and guided the activities of the Comintern. We have deep respect for the fidelity to Marxism-Leninism displayed by the CPGB between 1920 and the mid-1950s, for the selfless spirit in which its membership engaged in the noble task of the liberation of humanity from the clutches of imperialist exploitation, war and oppression. Precisely for this reason we adopted CPGB as the name of our Party, adding the suffix ML to distinguish ourselves from a tiny clique of counter-revolutionary Trotskyites who had rushed to grab this name at the time of the CPGB's liquidation by its eurocommunist leadership of renegades.

Second, the leading core of our party has been active in the communist, anti-war and anti-imperialist movement in Britain for over four decades. If these comrades did not join the CPGB, it was mainly because the beginning of their political life happened to coincide with a time (the mid-1960s) when the CPGB was already in an advanced state of degeneration and decay. There was nothing to be gained from joining a party with which one had violent disagreements because of its propagation of the peaceful parliamentary road to socialism, the jettisoning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the glorification of social-democracy, and acting as an obedient servant of Khrushchevite revisionism and a conduit for propagating the anti-proletarian filth against three decades of proletarian dictatorship in the USSR, during the time that J V Stalin was the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as well as against the Communist Party of China led by Comrade Mao Zedong – unless, of course, one was possessed of an incurable desire to join for the sole purpose of being expelled, as a great many good and honest comrades already had been.

Third, the SLP, unlike the CPB, the NCP and myriads of Trotskyite outfits, was distinguished by its correct and bold assertion that the Labour Party, far from being the instrument of socialism, was actually a capitalist party, just like the Tories and Lib-Dems. In this stance, it was closer to the CPGB of the 1920s and 1930s and way ahead of all other organisations and

groupings on the left, including the CPB. We have little reason to be ashamed of our membership of the SLP, which at the time seemed to offer an opening to develop a vibrant working-class party, unfettered by the reactionary motley crew, including the CPB and NCP, who continue to regard the imperialist Labour Party as the Party of the British working class which can be reclaimed for the British working class to usher in socialism.

That Arthur Scargill, through the establishment of the SLP, made an organisational break with the Labour Party is, and always will be, to his credit, putting his head and shoulders above the Trots-revisionist fraternity – including the CPB. That he proved unwilling, or incapable, of taking the next necessary step (that of making a political breach with social-democracy), that he and his hatchet men illegally hounded out of the SLP those who had methodically worked for the SLP to make such a breach, not only revealed the shameful limitations of Scargill's political and ideological horizons, but also effectively killed the SLP. Those who had fought for the SLP to follow the traditions of the Comintern, in matters of organisation, politics and ideology, on being illegally expelled, regrouped and founded the CPGB-ML, which is unashamedly proud of the glorious heritage of the Third International, as well as of the CPGB from 1920 to the mid-1950s, and strives with all its strength to rescue and carry forward that heritage in the present difficult conditions of colossal renegacy, when many of the communist parties are communist in name only.

### **CPB's exercise in deception**

The CPB in its report goes on to spread some fairy tales about the political origins of the CPGB-ML, asserting that these lie in a 'Naxalite' trend in the Indian Workers' Association (IWA) in Britain. Let the CPB speak:

*"The leadership of the CPGB-ML has its political origins in a 'Naxalite' trend in the Indian Workers Association in Britain. The predominant trend in the IWA is led by the Association of Indian Communists in Britain, affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Between 1991 and 2004, the Association of Indian Communists tried to maintain unity with the Naxalites. This proved difficult because a Naxalite branch insisted on maintaining its own publication, Lalkar, edited by Harpal Brar, and projecting its own rather than IWA policies, by, for example, denouncing the reforms undertaken by the Communist Party of China and welcoming India's nuclear tests.*

*"In 2001, Lalkar applauded the September 11 attacks. The thousands of workers who died in the Twin Towers were all dismissed as 'bankers' and 'stockbrokers'. All Communists, socialists and progressives who disagreed with this position were accused of siding with imperialism (Lalkar, November/December 2001). In 2004, the overwhelming majority of the IWA re-established that organisation without those who published Lalkar. Those excluded today lead the CPGB-ML."*

We are not convinced that the CPB, let alone the people to whom this report is addressed, understand the meaning of the word 'Naxalite', or know much about the history of the Association of Indian Communists (AIC) as well as of the IWA, how these two organisations came to be split, resulting in two AICs and two IWAs, how and why the two IWAs were reunited and how, finally, they split again. It would take a small pamphlet to explain all this. What is clear is that the CPB is either ignorant of the facts or is engaged in a deliberate exercise in deception, secure in the belief that the recipients of this report, being quite legitimately not acquainted with the politics of the proletarians of Indian origin in Britain, would swallow this fictional account hook, line and sinker.

Space and time do not allow us to deal now with these questions of history. We shall, however, say this: It is not true that the leadership of CPGB-ML has its origins in a 'Naxalite' trend in the IWA, as is the assertion of the CPB. The political origins of the CPGB-ML's leadership lie in the trend represented by the Comintern throughout its existence – a trend the CPGB followed faithfully during that entire period. In the leadership of the CPGB-ML there are only two Indians, and they by no means represents the 'Naxalite' trend. The CPB's assertion to the contrary is a product of its fevered imagination.

It is not true that the predominant trend in the IWA is led by the AIC in Britain, affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM). As a matter of fact there are two IWAs (since 2004), one of which is led by the AIC affiliated to the CPM, and they are both equally strong, or, more correctly, equally weak presently.

It is not true that it became impossible to maintain unity in the IWA because, according to the CPB, a Naxalite branch insisted on maintaining its own publication, Lalkar, edited by Harpal Brar, and projecting its own policies rather than those of the IWA. This assertion too is the work of the not inconsiderably fertile imagination of the CPB. For one thing, there was no 'Naxalite' branch; all the branches of the IWA had a common membership. Second, no branch had a paper of its own. When the two IWAs were united in 1991, Lalkar, which was the organ of that IWA which had no political ties with the CPM, became at the

unity conference the organ of the united IWA and continued to be so for several years. The problems with the paper did not arise because the alleged, but actually non-existent, 'Naxalite' branch insisted on projecting its own rather than IWA policies. In fact, the boot was on the other foot. It was the CPM leadership, and its followers in the IWA, who wanted *Lalkar* to represent and reflect CPM policy rather than that of the IWA – a workers' organisation functioning in Britain.

As to the examples of *Lalkar's* alleged deviation from the line of the IWA, the matters stand as follows. When India (and a few days later Pakistan) conducted nuclear tests, the Executive Committee of the IWA (the majority of whom were people with very close ties to the CPM) unanimously passed a resolution in support of these tests. Subsequently, at the behest of the leadership of the CPM, the latter's followers demanded the rescission of this resolution. It is clear that it was a foreign party's interference in the internal affairs of the IWA which was the source of troubles in the latter – not *Lalkar* failing to reflect IWA policy.

As to the substance of the issue, it had long been the position of *Lalkar* that the world needed to be rid of nuclear weapons but on a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory basis. The reality, however, was that imperialism, especially US imperialism, while arming itself with more and more up-to-date and deadly weapons, including nuclear weapons, was attempting to disarm socialist countries and oppressed nations. In the circumstances, threatened as they were with the nuclear arsenal of imperialism, some of the oppressed nations and socialist countries had no other option but to develop these weapons as a means of self-defence against imperialist threats and predatory wars of aggression.

Unless one took a Christian or petty-bourgeois pacifist line, one had no option but to support the decision of such countries to go nuclear and thus break the monopoly of imperialism in the field of nuclear armaments. It is in this context, and for this reason alone, that *Lalkar* supported India and Pakistan taking the nuclear option - a decision which had the unanimous support of the Executive Committee of the IWA. If the CPB wants to opt for the policy of petty-bourgeois pacifism, that is its problem. The shameful policy of petty bourgeois pacifism can, however, never be the policy of the revolutionary proletariat.

It was for similar considerations that *Lalkar* supported the detonation of a nuclear device by the DPRK - a position of which we are very proud. If after 1949, the old Soviet Union was never attacked by imperialism, it was because she possessed nuclear weapons and was in a position to deliver a crushing retaliatory blow to imperialism. It was Soviet weapons that kept peace for more than four decades and spared the use of these weapons, for when US imperialism had the monopoly of these weapons, it did not hesitate for one moment before dropping them on the sleeping inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, murdering several hundred thousand people and maiming many more.

If today US imperialism does not attack the DPRK but is in occupation of Iraq, it is because the DPRK is well-armed and well-prepared to deal with imperialist aggression, whereas Iraq had been effectively disarmed before being subjected to a devastating predatory war, which has killed over a million Iraqis, displaced another four million, and destroyed its entire physical and social infrastructure. It might suit the CPB, considering its close ties with the traitorous Iraqi Communist Party, to disapprove of the DPRK's nuclear weapons, but friends of Iraq and Korea, lovers of genuine peace and disarmament, of freedom and sovereignty of nations, cannot possibly condemn the DPRK for taking measures of self-defence by way of maintaining her sovereignty and her social system.

As to the question of China. *Lalkar* wrote two very important articles, the first of which appeared in the August-September 1989 issue. This was in the aftermath of the Tienanmen Square counter-revolutionary incidents. On the one hand, this article gave full support to the Chinese government for suppressing the attempt at counter-revolution; on the other hand, it attempted to reach for the reasons, the underlying causes, which had led to that eruption – the economic reforms which expanded the role of the market and commodity production. *Lalkar* stuck its neck out in defence of the actions of the Chinese authorities at a time when the entire might of the imperialist media was busy baying at the Chinese communists, and in the wake of which most of what passes for the left in the centres of imperialism was swept along vociferously to denounce the Communist Party of China, as indeed was the case with the leaders of the CPB, the *Morning Star*, and the New Communist Party. Instead of being denounced, *Lalkar's* services in defence of communism in China deserve nothing short of praise.

The second article, entitled 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics', appeared in the August-September 1992 issue of *Lalkar*. This article is a lengthy explanation of the reasons behind the eruption of the June 1989 counter-revolutionary events in Tienanmen Square, and we have absolutely no regrets about expressing our comradely concerns to the Communist Party of China about the dangers inherent in the expansion of the market. Although written after the two IWAs had been united, it said nothing new or different from that which had been hinted at in the earlier article. Consequently it ought not to have offended



the CPM-affiliated comrades in the IWA, who were fully aware of the contents of the 1989 article and had never protested against it.

As far as the 11 September attacks are concerned once again *Lalkar* did no more than explain those attacks by asserting that they were the response of the oppressed Arab people to the incessant barbarity practised on them by US imperialism over a very long period of time. This viewpoint now, if not in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, is accepted by the overwhelming majority of humanity, including vast numbers of people in the imperialist countries. If the CPB has a different take on these attacks, which it clearly does, it is more a reflection on its own political and ideological orientation than a slur on *Lalkar*. This does not surprise us, knowing the support that the CPB renders to the imperialist British Labour Party, which has the blood on its hands of a million Iraqis and tens of thousands of Afghans, butchered in Anglo-American imperialism's genocidal and predatory wars against the people of Iraq and Afghanistan; knowing the efforts it has made in cultivating friendly relations with the traitorous Communist Party of Iraq which supports the imperialist occupation regime in that country, as well as the lengths to which it went to make it possible for a representative of that party to propagate his capitulatory and pro-imperialist views in the *Morning Star*.

Comrades of the CPB ought seriously, sincerely and honestly to look at their own political and ideological complexion, rather than sit in judgment on us. They ought to remember V I Lenin's dictum that "*Honesty in politics is the result of strength; hypocrisy is the result of weakness*".<sup>iv</sup>

### **Working class base**

The opening salvo of this section of the report asserts that, though "*not published*", the membership of the CPGB-ML "*is understood to be less than 50*". Since it is not published, what, it may be asked, is the basis of the CPB's assertion? The answer is: the CPB's assertion. The report then goes on to list our party's publications and website, although it singularly fails to make even a cursory reference to the literature associated with the leading members of our party on a wide range of matters of crucial and programmatic significance to the development of a revolutionary movement of the proletariat in Britain and elsewhere (of this, more anon). By way of criticism of the events page of our website, the CPB's report says that for July and August 2008, a period of strikes of public sector employees and preparations for the then impending Trades Union Congress and the 20 September demonstration against the war our page remained blank. The truth is that our party supported the public sector workers and distributed leaflets at various places; our party had the largest contingent of all the communist parties in Britain at the 20 September anti-war demonstration in Manchester, where unlike the CPB, we sold a lot of literature and distributed vast numbers of leaflets exposing the predatory wars waged by Anglo-American imperialism in Iraq and Afghanistan and the dirty role of the imperialist Labour government in those barbarous and criminal wars.

The CPB goes on to boast a membership of 1,050 and claim credit for sustaining "*the only English language daily paper which follows a Communist editorial line and which has currently the support of all major British trade unions, the Morning Star*".

With regard to membership, the CPB claims that its present membership represents "*an increase of around 20 per cent over the past 3 years*", only forgetting to add that in 1990-91 it had a membership of 1,500. By our calculations, the CPB's present membership represents a decrease of 30 per cent since 1990-1991. For a party making the boastful claim of being a mover and a shaker in the British labour movement, this is progress indeed – only in the reverse direction. In passing, if its claims of a 20 per cent increase in membership are correct, then its membership in the autumn of 2005 would have stood at 840, which would have been the equivalent of a 44 per cent decrease between 1991 and 2005!

We are not inclined to play this stupid numbers game any further; we were compelled to refer to it because of the CPB's insistence. The truth is that every party in Britain claiming to be communist is pitifully small, including the CPB, ourselves and the NCP, which practically, if not clinically, is dead. What is important is the quality of membership and the political line of each organisation at the present. Whereas of the 1,050 claimed membership of the CPB, no more than 200 are active, our membership in almost its entirety is composed of activists. To use the words of Mae West, "*It is not the men in your life. It is the life in your men*"!

Yes, it is to the credit of the CPB that it sustains the *Morning Star*. It is, however, a blatant untruth to assert, as does the CPB, that this paper "*follows a communist editorial line*". The *Morning Star* is not funded by the CPB or its membership. It gets its funding from the trade-union bureaucracy. Since the defeat in the recent local government election of the former mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, the Amicus section of Unite, led by Derek Simpson, is the single largest provider of funds to the *Morning Star*. Precisely for that reason, most of the coverage in the *Morning Star* is either non-political or is left-social

democratic. With its support for the counter-revolutionary and imperialist Labour Party, combined with the ever-present threat of withdrawal of funding hanging over its head should it take a consistently proletarian and anti-imperialist line, the *Morning Star* cannot, and does not, follow a communist editorial line. Instead its line is plainly that of a left-social democratic paper, precisely for which reason it has the support of *"all the major British trade unions"*, according to the highly exaggerated claim of the CPB.

Far from being instrumental in formulating policy through debates among working people and putting that policy into effect in the daily struggles of the working people, the CPB, to the extent that it has any presence on the ground, merely carries out the policy formulated by the trade-union bureaucracy and its political wing, the Labour Party. Its members merely do the menial job of being the hod carriers for social democracy.

### **'Rebellion' of 140 MPs**

The CPB accuses our party of denouncing *"precisely those left-wing and anti-war trade union leaders and Labour MPs who have fought against the imperialist policies of the current New Labour government"*. By contrast, claims the CPB, its own work in the anti-war movement has won *"almost all individual trade unions and the TUC itself to oppose Britain's imperialist foreign policy"*, which *"...in turn has led to a significant and growing section of Labour MPs to oppose the government's war policies. In 2003 over 140 Labour MPs voted against the war"*.

The facts are at variance with the bold and dishonest claims of the CPB. Let us take the case of the 140 Labour MPs who in 2003 allegedly voted against the war.

On 18 March 2003, 140 Labour MPs voted for an amendment to the resolution in support of the government's war policy. This simply stated that parliament *"...believes that the case for war against Iraq has not yet been established, especially given the absence of specific UN authorisation, but in the event hostilities do commence, pledges its total support for the British forces engaged in the Middle East, expresses its admiration for their courage, skill and devotion to duty, and hopes that their tasks will be swiftly concluded with minimal casualties on all sides"* (our emphasis).

The 'rebels' who voted for this chauvinist and imperialist amendment included all those 'left-wing MPs' so beloved of the CPB who have allegedly *"fought against the imperialist policies of the current New Labour government"* – including among others Alice Mahon and Jeremy Corbyn - the very scoundrels who need to be exposed for what they really are: socialists in words and imperialists in deeds. Instead what we get is opportunists outside the ranks of the Labour Party, such as the CPB, the NCP and Trotskyite organisations, protecting counter-revolutionary social-democracy, in particular the 'left' wing of this stinking corpse. It is precisely the likes of Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, etc., who spread the dangerous illusion that the Labour Party can be rescued from the likes of Blair to serve as an instrument for the emancipation of the proletariat. It is precisely these 'left' charlatans who bring kudos to this out-and-out imperialist party, just as the 'left' of the Labour has always done. The main function of this 'left' is to serve as a cover for the Labour Party's hideously naked imperialism.

Prior to the commencement of the war against Iraq, Anglo-American imperialism made strenuous efforts to get a second UN resolution so as to gain 'legitimacy' for the predatory war it was bent upon waging. In the period immediately preceding the start of the war, as the anti-war movement mushroomed in preparation for the 15 February 2003 demonstration, the largest ever in Britain, the 'left' wing of the Labour Party, as well as the LibDems, opportunistically jumped on the anti-war bandwagon, but with the hope that a second UN resolution would be forthcoming. Such a resolution, while helping them ease their consciences, at the same time would have enabled them to support the then-impending imperialist slaughter in Iraq. Any anti-war movement worth its name would have been duty bound to expose such people. Instead of that, the Stop the War Coalition (StWC), whose pictorial leadership<sup>v</sup> is jointly shared by the CPB and the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party (SWP), betrayed the interests of the British proletariat and the oppressed peoples by appending its signature to the following letter to the then Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, in December 2002 on the occasion of UN Human Rights Day:

*"We urge upon you as prime minister to give a clear undertaking not to engage in military action against Iraq without the explicit authority of the United Nations, and without the explicit decision of the House of Commons to do so".*

The signatories to this resolution included Jeremy Corbyn, Carol Naughton (chairperson of the CND at the time) and Lindsey German, a prominent member of the Trotskyist SWP and the convenor of StWC. No one with even a pretence of socialist principles could have signed this letter, for it implied that the signatories were not opposed to the then-impending imperialist war against the Iraqi people as long as the war had been anointed with the holy water of a UN resolution and the blessing of a

House of Commons authorisation. Instead of enlightening the anti-war movement about the imperialist nature of the war, which in no way could be changed through either a UN resolution or by approval on the part of the House of Commons (this legislative body representing one of the most cunning, cruel and bloodthirsty of bourgeoisies ever known to the world), the leadership of the StWC, capitulating to the interests of the imperialist Labour Party and out of its tender concern for the careers of the 'left'-wing MPs, made so much fuss about the 'rebellion' by 140 Labour MPs on 18 March.

None of this comes to us as a surprise, for both the Trotskyites of the SWP (as well as of many other such outfits) and the CPB are programmatically committed to defending the imperialist Labour Party as "*the party of the British working class*" – even if this party has the blood of a million Iraqis on its hands, even if during its 11 years in office it has dropped more bombs on the oppressed peoples than did the previous Conservative government during the 19 years it held office; even if it is viciously attacking working people at home. For all its crimes over the nearly 11 decades of its existence, to the CPB and the Trotskyites the Labour Party remains the only hope for the British proletariat, the only reliable instrument for ushering in socialism – peacefully through winning a parliamentary majority.

No one who has the slightest acquaintance with, and sense of fidelity to, the principles of Marxism-Leninism could even for one moment entertain the thought of supporting such an anti working class party and its 'left' luminaries. We in the CPGB-ML are proud that we expose the Labour Party as an imperialist party representing the interests of British imperialism and the privileged sections of the working class, the labour aristocracy. We are equally proud of exposing the 'left' representatives of social democracy. It is a measure of the degeneration of this allegedly left, allegedly socialist, fraternity that not a single one of them had the courage to resign their membership of this party on the question of war. Their jobs, their careers, mean everything to them; their alleged socialist principles mean absolutely nothing (be it said in passing that George Galloway did not leave the Labour Party but was expelled, and he actively fought to try to prevent his expulsion).

#### **'Left' trade unionists**

Now let us turn to the 'left' wing of trade unions, in exposing whose phony opposition to the war we have incurred so much of the CPB's ire. Here too the facts are discordantly at variance with the assertions and pious wishes of the CPB. This is the truth.

At its September 2004 conference, the TUC passed a motion against the war, which undoubtedly pleased every opponent of the war. Two weeks later, in the debate on Iraq at the Labour Party conference at the end of September, the truly imperialist affiliation and credentials of the cynical and cowardly bunch that goes under the name of the 'awkward squad', whom the CPB describes as "*left-wing and anti-war trade union leaders*" – Messrs Curran (GMB), Woodley (TGWU, now part of Unite), Prentice (Unison) and Hayes (CWU) - were on display in all their glaring obscenity. Fresh from the TUC Conference where this hypocritical gentry had passed a motion against the war, and wearing their Labour Party hats, they rallied round Blair and helped defeat, by a majority of 6 to 1, a constituency motion calling for an "*early date*" for the withdrawal of British occupation forces from Iraq. They even managed, as if to show hero worship of a war criminal, to stage a standing ovation for Blair.

More than that, they backed to the hilt an Iraqi quisling, Abdullah Muhsin of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, which was set up under the protection of US guns in May 2003 and is led by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and supports the occupation. Invited to the Labour Party Conference by the British state, through the Labour Party and Unison, this disgraceful Iraqi traitor, having condemned the Iraqi resistance as "*shadowy sectarian forces*", canvassed the delegates and begged them not to vote against Blair on Iraq. In an open letter to the Labour Party Conference, this apologist for imperialism wrote: "*All my life I have fought for political and social freedom in Iraq, and for the first time, we have the chance to achieve it. I know some of you were against the war in Iraq but be in no doubt – the fall of Saddam has given my country a chance of freedom and progress ... The multinational force is there to help our democracy ... [A]n early date for the unilateral withdrawal of troops ... would be bad for my country, bad for the emerging progressive forces, a terrible blow for free trade unionism, and would play into the hands of extremists and terrorists.*" This is the sole reason why he was invited by the TU bigwigs. After all, the TUC has been busy raising cash for the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, for it supports the latter's view that the occupation forces must stay in Iraq to prevent the break-up of Iraq and forestall the establishment of a fundamentalist state – a danger which has only arisen because of the imperialist invasion and occupation.

The behaviour of the trade-union leadership, including its allegedly left section, does not surprise us, for this leadership, representing as it does the privileged sections of the working class – the labour aristocracy – is obliged to come to the defence of imperialism, as without defending imperialist loot, the interests of the labour aristocracy cannot be defended.

## StWC in a fix

For once, the proceedings at the 2004 Labour Conference put the StWC in a fix. It was forced to choose between its trade union and Labour friends, on the one hand, and the rank and file opponents of the war on the other hand. In the end fast-moving events in Iraq and the Iraqi resistance to imperialist occupation compelled it to condemn the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions for the latter's *"political collaboration with the British government, exemplified at the Labour Party Conference and its view that genuinely independent trade unionism in Iraq can develop under a regime of military occupation – including the daily bombardment of major Iraqi cities – by the US and Britain"* ('Bring home the troops', *Morning Star*, 11 October 2004).

The above statement, along with a sentence in a previous draft, which recognised the legitimacy of the resistance in Iraq *"by whatever means ... necessary"* to end the occupation, upset all the carefully laid plans of the StWC. It infuriated the TU leaders and supporters of Labour Friends of Iraq (LFIQ). Mick Rix, former general secretary of the train drivers' union, ASLEF, resigned from the Steering Committee of StWC. Other TU leaders threatened to do likewise. Harry Barnes, the allegedly anti-war Labour MP was incensed enough to put down an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons condemning as 'scurrilous' the statement put out by StWC backing *"the legitimacy of the struggle of the Iraqi people, by whatever means they find it necessary"* to end the occupation, adding that it implied acquiescence in the murders of such people as Ken Bigley, as well as that of ordinary Iraqis.

The SWP and its junior partner in the StWC, the CPB, came to this sorry pass because they tried to build an anti-war movement in a thoroughly opportunist way through enlisting the support of the very elements who are the driving force behind the war – the so-called left and the labour aristocracy. They have run StWC in such a way as to bring succour to the Labour Party. They have kept away all those elements, like the CPGB-ML, who favour a consistent struggle against imperialism and believe in developing the anti-war movement along anti-imperialist lines. Their pretext for this behaviour has been that they do not want to disrupt the unity of the labour movement, that they do not want to alienate the trade union leadership and those Labour MPs who nominally oppose the war.

But, as the saying goes: Man proposes, God disposes. The reality in Iraq and the hammer blows of the Iraqi resistance put severe strains on this cosy alliance between the Troto-revisionist fraternity on the one hand and the union bosses and Labour MPs on the other hand – to such an extent that even Robert Griffiths, general secretary of the CPB, was compelled to whine: *"... however well-intentioned their motives, the unions and the Labour Party now uphold ... a military occupation ... which involves the daily bombardment of civilian areas and the illegal imprisonment and mistreatment of thousands of Iraqis"* ('Forward March', *Morning Star*, 8 October 2004).

How is this different from what we have been saying all along – only more consistently, clearly and resolutely? Why is it that we are singled out for condemnation for saying the same as Cde Robert Griffiths – only more clearly, consistently and resolutely?

In view of the foregoing, were the CPGB-ML really in the wrong in characterising these trade union leaders who, according to the CPB's assertion, *"have led the fight against the government"*, as traitors and apologists for imperialism? And, were the CPGB-ML really off the mark in denouncing *"the socialist [i.e., the Trotskyite SWP] and CPB leadership of the Stop the War Coalition"* for *"political cowardice of the worst kind"*? Even Cde Robert Griffiths' observations, noted above, would seem tacitly to accept what we have said in this regard.

Be that as it may, the above statement of Cde Robert Griffiths, instead of reaching the only logical and correct conclusion that the imperialist Labour Party and its trade union stooges must be exposed, opposed and defeated, went on to deliver a cretinous homily to the effect that *"...there has to be clarity over the need for a Labour victory as the least worst outcome of the forthcoming general election"*.

Every friend of Iraq, every enemy of imperialism, every class-conscious worker and every proletarian revolutionary, can only be repulsed by such nauseatingly opportunist capitulation to imperialism – all in the name of alleged working-class advance and unity. We in the CPGB-ML were quite right in exposing communists of this type for what they really are, namely, agents of the bourgeoisie and purveyors of the latter's influence in the working-class movement. For *"the fight against imperialism is a sham and a humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism"*.<sup>vi</sup>

Why should we in the CPGB-ML be condemned for saying the same thing as that said by the great Lenin, especially by people who profess to be Marxist-Leninists? If they have any problems with what we are saying, in all honesty they ought to direct their criticism and attacks at Lenin rather than his latter-day pupils.

### **Lies about our work**

Not content with hurling abuse at us for our principled fight against the 'left' charlatans from the trade unions and the Parliamentary Labour Party, and our exposure of the cowardly and opportunist capitulation of the leadership of StWC to the dictates and needs of the imperialist Labour Party, the CPB report utters the total lie that the "*CPGB-ML has taken no part in this [anti-war] work*", that it takes no part in the movements for solidarity "*with Cuba, Venezuela and Colombia*", and, that our "*main involvement outside the CPGB-ML has been in the establishment of front organisations controlled by the CPGB-ML, notably the Stalin Society*".

The truth is that we work on all these fronts – and many more. Our comrades are very active in StWC, where they face every form of discrimination from the likes of the CPB and the SWP. Notwithstanding this, they continue to work. We do a considerable amount of work expressing solidarity with Cuba (and the Cuban comrades know this), Venezuela, Colombia and Bolivia.

We also work in solidarity with the revolutionary democratic government of ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, which the CPB shamefully attacks in concert with imperialism and its stooges in the British trade unions and the parliamentary representatives of all the bourgeois parties, including the Labour Party.

CPGB-ML initiated in July this year the Hands off China campaign in response to the wave of anti-China hysteria launched by the imperialist propaganda machine to coincide with the Beijing Olympics and for the sole purpose of disrupting the Games and maligning China. The campaign has gone from strength to strength. Although, for understandable reasons, neither the imperialist press nor the *Morning Star* and such other publications report its activities, the 1.3 billion Chinese people well know about its work, thanks to the honest and accurate reporting by the New China News Agency (Xinhua), and through it millions of people in countries around the world. This in turn has forced even some of the imperialist propaganda arms to refer to our activities. We do not see the CPB comrades on that front, not because we exclude them, nor because Hands off China is a front organisation of the CPGB-ML. They are not there either for reasons of sectarianism or because they are unwilling to defend the People's Republic of China and thus choose to stay aloof from this exceptionally important and vibrant anti-imperialist solidarity organisation.

We note in passing that the *Morning Star* published, without editorial comment, an article by one of the CPB's favourite 'left' Labour MPs, Jeremy Corbyn, where he said in relation to the Beijing Olympics: "*What a fantastic wake-up call it would be for the whole world if the Olympic Games had to be suspended to allow the air to clear to make it safe for athletes to compete*" (3 July 2008). Such is the extent of CPB's support for China!

As to the Stalin Society, it has been in existence since soon after the collapse of the erstwhile USSR. It long predates the founding of the CPGB-ML and is composed of people from many organisations and from various political complexions. Several prominent members of the CPB over the years, including the present time, have taken an active part in its activities. In no way can this Society be described as a front organisation of the CPGB-ML, although the latter plays a prominent part in it.

What unites the members of the Stalin Society is their love for the old Soviet Union and her earth-shattering achievements in the fields of socialist construction, industrialisation and collectivisation; her unrivalled achievements in the fields of the arts, sciences and culture; the wonderful example she set in the area of fraternal harmony and friendship among peoples from dozens of national, religious and racial backgrounds; the selfless internationalist support to the proletarian revolutionary and national liberation movements throughout the world; and her signal contribution to the defeat of the allegedly invincible Nazi war machine, smashing therewith the anti-Soviet plans of international imperialism.

If many more comrades of the CPB stay aloof from this Society, sneeringly characterising it as a CPGB-ML front organisation, this can only be explained by their own dodgy and wobbly ideological foundations and their total inability to discharge their proletarian internationalist duty towards the first state of the international proletariat, nothing better than which has existed in the world.

### **CPB's revisionism**

The CPB's cynical attitude to the glorious Soviet Union and her crowning and world-historic achievements, its revisionism, its hostility to Marxism-Leninism, is all too evident from the following lines taken from its programme 'Britain's Road to Socialism':

*"... From the late 1920s, onwards, decisions [in the USSR] were made which led to serious violations of socialist and democratic principles. More specifically, there developed an excessive centralisation of political power. State repression was used against people who failed to conform. Bureaucratic commands replaced economic levers as an instrument of planning. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the trades unions became integrated into the apparatus of the state, eroding working class and popular democracy. Marxism-Leninism was used dogmatically to justify the status quo.*

*"Theoretically, the working people of the Soviet Union owned everything. But in fact they were masters of very little. Society was actually run by the party leadership, issuing orders from the top down" (p.6).*

Whereas the first paragraph quoted above is a rehash of the attacks on Joseph Stalin in renegade Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th Party Congress of the Soviet Union, the second paragraph parrots the lies propagated by the counter-revolutionary Trotsky in his *Revolution Betrayed* and elsewhere - albeit without naming Stalin. The intention behind, and the effect of, Khrushchev's secret speech was to defame the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist system, the USSR, the international communist movement and, of course, to malign Stalin - all as a pretext for departure from Marxism-Leninism, and a wholesale revision of its fundamental tenets, by putting forward erroneous theses such as the peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism, the negation of the road of the October Revolution, violation of Lenin's teachings on imperialism and war, and a distortion of Lenin's principle of peaceful co-existence among countries with different social systems.

Trotsky and his followers pursued similar aims, as revealed by the Moscow trials.

In repeating Khrushchev and Trotsky's lies in their programme, the CPB is merely attempting to use them as an excuse for pursuing its anti-Leninist programme of the peaceful parliamentary road to socialism, hand in hand with the imperialist Labour party - all in the name of democracy. Like Khrushchev, the CPB, too, is busy propagating the virtues of the market economy ("*economic levers*", if it pleases the CPB) by negating the system of central planning of the national economy on the pretext of fighting "*excessive centralisation*" and "*bureaucratic commands*". Like Khrushchev, the CPB too stands for the negation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of fighting "*serious violations of socialist and democratic principles*". Like Khrushchev, the CPB stands for the negation of the leading role of the party of the proletariat, allegedly so as to safeguard "*working class and popular democracy*". Like Khrushchev, the CPB, too, stands for the ideological disarming of the proletariat under the guise of fighting against dogmatism.

If from the late 1920s, the Soviet state system and the CPSU were as dreadful, bureaucratic and unrepresentative of the Soviet proletariat in particular and the working people in general, how is one to explain the truly miraculous achievement of the USSR in every arena, including the crowning Soviet victory against the fascist hordes during the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people? How, in that case, is one to explain the prestige of the Soviet leadership and the high regard in which it was held by the Soviet people, nay, by proletarians all over the world?

And how, indeed, is one to explain the post-war recovery and reconstruction of the Soviet Union (and other socialist countries in eastern Europe) after four years of a most devastating war? For 20 years after the war, the rate of economic growth of the Soviet Union and its allies in eastern Europe was far higher than that of the capitalist world. This fact is admitted to even by the CPB in its programme, for in the very next paragraph after the one quoted above, it states eclectically and completely contradictorily:

*"After 1945, the centralised planning of nationalised economies ... enabled the Soviet Union and its socialist allies to rebuild their war-torn countries and, for 20 years to outstrip the capitalist world in economic and social development" (pp. 6-7 ibid.).*

Suddenly, in the course of a couple of paragraphs, to suit the convenience of the CPB, what was denounced in the earlier paragraph as "*bureaucratic commands*" has been transmuted into "*centralised planning of nationalised economies*".

From the mid-1970s, however, "*... the USSR and Eastern Europe began to fall behind capitalism ... in the quality and the rate of growth of its productive forces*", says the programme of the CPB.

The reason? Unable, or unwilling, to point out the real reasons for the USSR and eastern European socialist countries' economies beginning to falter and lag behind those of the imperialist countries - especially those of Japan and Germany - the CPB reaches for the convenient weapon of the *"bureaucratic command system"*, which *"proved unable to utilise the post-war scientific and technology revolution and develop society's forces of production more effectively than capitalism"*.

This is not an explanation but a mockery of an explanation. If what the CPB, in its keenness to defame centralised socialist planning and a planned socialist economy, dubs as the *"bureaucratic command system"* proved such a potent weapon for the development of productive forces in the USSR, for its accelerated economic and social development, from the mid-1920s till the mid-1970s (in the case of the eastern European countries from 1945 till the mid-1970s), how come that it suddenly became a factor retarding the development of the productive forces? *"The bureaucratic system"*, which had, far from being a hurdle to the development of productive forces, served during several decades as a powerful lever for their accelerated development and had shown its superiority in mastering and using the latest techniques in production, suddenly, according to the sages of the CPB, proved unequal to the task of facilitating their further development. Add to this the allegedly *"authoritarian form"* of Soviet socialism, with its lack of *"democracy"*, one has got an explanation - à la CPB - for Soviet economic failure, ending in the collapse of the USSR. This is not science but sorcery.

The real explanation is that, as long as the Soviet Union followed faithfully the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, it made gigantic progress in every field. Its downfall began with the assumption (more correctly, usurpation) of the leadership of the CPSU by modern revisionists at the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU. Khrushchevite revisionism, through its wholesale revision, and downright distortion, of Marxism-Leninism in the fields of political economy, philosophy and class struggle, began the long process, which over a period of more than three decades, resulted in the emergence of the Gorbachev leadership and the restoration of capitalism.

On top of their thesis concerning the peaceful and parliamentary road to socialism, which led, and continues to lead, a lot of parties astray, the Khrushchevites disarmed the Soviet proletariat, as well as the proletariat of east European countries, through their violation of Marxist-Leninist teachings on the significance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leading role of the proletariat. Instead they put forward the theses of a *"state of the entire people"* and a *"party of the entire people"*. Even a novice in Marxism knows that the state is nothing but an instrument of class rule, a tool for ensuring the dictatorship of one class over another, the subjugation of one class by another. The moment the state comes forward as a representative of the whole of society, it becomes redundant and superfluous, and disappears as such. However, the proletariat needs its own state - the dictatorship of the proletariat - for the *"entire historical period which separates capitalism from 'classless society', from communism"*<sup>vii</sup>. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to make possible the *"expropriation of the expropriators"*, to crush the inevitable resistance and attempts at restoration of the former exploiting classes, to organise the economic reconstruction of society - in a word, to prepare the material and spiritual conditions for the transference of society from the lower phase to the higher phase of communism.

Since classes, and class struggle, continue long after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and for an entire historical epoch, during this period not only is the dictatorship of the proletariat needed, so also is the party of the proletariat, the only class under whose leadership is it possible to negotiate the long, difficult and complicated journey from the lower to the higher stage of communism. The proletariat for its part cannot accomplish its world historic mission except through its vanguard party.

By negating the dictatorship of the proletariat, and by negating the role of the party of the proletariat, the Khrushchevite revisionists ideologically disarmed the Soviet proletariat and created the political conditions for the restoration of capitalism.

In the economic sphere, the first act of the Khrushchevites was to hand over the Machine and Tractor Stations to the collective farms, thus throwing billions of roubles worth of the means of production into the orbit of commodity circulation. Accepting the bourgeois argument that without the market it is impossible to have an efficient economy, and that, since socialism aims at the abolition of the market, it cannot but result in ever increasing inefficiency and bureaucracy, which in turn are bound to produce conditions of an incurable crisis in which the market will assert itself, the revisionists put in place economic 'reforms' which step by step expanded the sphere of commodity production, restored profit as the regulator of production and all the concepts of value, profit and prices of production.<sup>viii</sup>

Since this restoration of capitalist norms of production was taking place in a relatively protected market, sheltered against too much foreign competition, the managers in charge of enterprises, with their gaze firmly fixed on producing the maximum of profit, neglected the updating and renewal of the instruments of production, in the process becoming less and less efficient,

resulting in decreasing productivity of labour. This is what caused serious economic difficulties and slowdown in the rate of growth of the economy. With the parallel developments in the political and ideological sphere, which brought Gorbachev to power, the Soviet revisionists were ready, and able, openly to declare themselves in favour of a market economy, on the alleged ground that socialism had failed! From then on, it only took a short time for a couple of dozen thieves, known as the oligarchs, to grab the Soviet people's property and begin the open and ruthless exploitation of the peoples of the former USSR.

### **Ability to develop Marxism**

In view of its utter political and ideological bankruptcy, briefly outlined above, it hardly becomes the CPB to sit in judgement over the CPGB-ML and to assert that the latter lacks the ability to develop Marxism in the concrete circumstances of Britain. Far from the resolutions on international issues passed at our most recent Congress being mere "*declarations*", as the CPB alleges, these are concrete and to the point. Let the CPB prove in what respects our resolutions, for instance on the question of wars in Iraq or Palestine, or on socialist countries such as China, the DPRK and Cuba, are mere declarations and not a concrete analysis of the concrete situation in each case, a correct presentation of the balance of forces, and our attitude towards the contending parties. If there were more resolutions on international questions, that was simply because of the slaughter taking place in several predatory wars waged by imperialism, especially Anglo-American imperialism. Further, Britain being one of the imperialist countries waging these wars, these wars abroad are as much a domestic question and a matter of concern for the British proletariat as any other question.

In addition, our Congress passed resolutions on several other issues, including the NHS, education, pensions, housing, immigration, etc. - all matters of vital concern to ordinary working people.

Our party has a programme, which in broad terms outlines our strategy for political transformation. It is a revolutionary programme, unlike that of the CPB, which chases after the mirage of a parliamentary and peaceful road to socialism, hand in hand with the imperialist Labour Party - in violation of the fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

On the penultimate page of its report, the CPB, by way of pointing out the CPGB-ML's alleged sectarianism, refers to the attempt to criminalise communism in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to ban the Czech Communist Youth Union. While exaggerating out of all proportion the activities of the CPB's own work in this connection, it asserts that the "*... contribution of the CPGB-ML to this struggle was a belated statement reprinted from Greece in Proletarian - and a long article in LALKAR ... attacking the CPB leadership for 'Khrushchevite revisionism'*". Yes, we did attack the CPB for "*doing imperialism's dirty work for it*", not because it was for us "*... far more important than taking part in the campaign to defend the CCYU [Czech Communist Youth League] or defeat the Council of Europe*", as the CPB assert; on the contrary, we attacked the CPB as a part and parcel of our fight against anti-communism, for by peddling the Khrushchevite lies about the alleged "*crimes and violations committed against socialist democracy in the Soviet Union*" during three decades of Stalin's leadership of the CPSU, by approvingly citing Khrushchev's 20th Party Congress secret speech as being a "*... really detailed and largely accurate account*" of these alleged "*violations*", Robert Griffiths, the General Secretary of the CPB, whether he liked it or not, whether he willed it or not, had effectively joined ranks with those attempting to criminalise communism, for in doing so he ended up by not only defaming Stalin, an intrepid defender of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also maligning the dictatorship of the proletariat, the CPSU, the USSR, and the international communist movement.

We did not, however, confine ourselves to criticising Robert Griffiths. We took part in the campaign to defend communism to the best of our ability. Our representative attended, and participated in, an important international conference on this question in Brussels. This conference was attended by representatives of several communist parties, including the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). Although the CPB was absent from it, it has never occurred to us on that account to accuse it of doing nothing on this issue.

We sent a comrade to take part, on 13 December 2006, in the protest outside the Czech Embassy in London called by the CPB. We could not send more as it was a weekday. In addition to our comrade the protest consisted of eight comrades and supporters from the CPB/*Morning Star*. They cannot have failed to notice, in this crowd, that we were the only other organisation that responded to their call and took part in the protest. They took a picture, which appeared in the *Morning Star* of the following day. In this picture, our comrade was nowhere to be seen, it must have taken the *Morning Star* photographer a lot of trouble to get this picture at a moment when our comrade, wearing our party tabard, was out of the frame. More importantly, our comrade distributed, on that occasion, our party's statement condemning the actions of the Czech government for outlawing the Czech Communist Youth Union (KSM).



## Conclusion

Having enumerated a host of lies about us, and having made several boastful claims about itself, the CPB report complacently concludes thus: *"The CPGB-ML would therefore appear to lack the essential requirements of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party ..."*, that the *"hallmarks of its public interventions are sectarianism and attacks on existing communist parties in Britain and elsewhere"*.

In fact, just the opposite is the case. In view of what has been said above in our detailed treatment of the CPB report, it is the CPB which *"lacks the essential requirements of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party"*, for it long ago adopted revisionist positions on a number of important questions notably on the question of state power, and the relationship of proletarian revolution to the bourgeois state, as well as on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat - all in flagrant violation of the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

The CPB report goes on to assert that a *"... key principle of the communist movement today is non-intervention in each other's internal affairs"*, adding that while the *"CPB has on no occasion made public criticism of the CPGB(ML)"*, the latter has made *"repeated public attacks on our Party and also sought to interfere in its internal affairs"*.

We in the CPGB-ML do not accept the proposition that we shall keep quiet while organisations like the CPB have free field poisoning the minds of the working people with the ideology of revisionism, which is, in the memorable words of Lenin, one of the chief *"... manifestations of bourgeois influence on the proletariat and bourgeois corruption of the workers"*.<sup>ix</sup>

The question is not one of maintaining calm and cultivating good manners, but of defending the fundamental interests of the working class. Without exposing revisionism, which converts a party of social revolution into a democratic party of social reform, it is impossible to build a proletarian revolutionary movement for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was Lenin, in his brilliant work, *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*, who said that *"the fight against imperialism is a sham and a fraud unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism"*.

In any case, comrades of the CPB protest too much. What they accuse us of, namely attacking them and interfering in their affairs, they are guilty of the same to an even greater degree. The only difference is that whereas we openly state our differences with them, we openly criticise them, they do their dirty work dishonestly in private malicious gossip in the dark corners of smoke-filled rooms in Britain and abroad. They do their best to prevent us from being represented at various international forums, which is what their 'secret' report on us is aimed at - something of which we have never been guilty.

Comrades in the proletarian movement need to honestly and openly discuss their differences. There is nothing wrong, unusual or new in that, for *"... only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades inopportune or superfluous"*.<sup>x</sup>

One of the hallmarks of opportunists, while departing from the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, is their unwillingness or inability to settle accounts openly, honestly, explicitly, resolutely and clearly with the views they have abandoned.

Those who realise the profundity of the crisis in the international communist movement ever since the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism, especially since the collapse of the USSR and the east European socialist countries, cannot but intensify their efforts to defend the theoretical foundations of Marxism-Leninism, which are being attacked and distorted on a daily and hourly basis by the bourgeoisie and its revisionist, Trotskyite and social-democratic agents in the labour movement.

At a time of colossal renegacy, when petty-bourgeois opportunism, rejection of revolution in favour of reformism, jettisoning of class struggle in favour of class collaboration, fetishisation of bourgeois legality, and bourgeois chauvinism instead of proletarian internationalism are wreaking havoc on our movement - at such a time to make the demand, as does the CPB, that communists stop all open criticism of each other is *"like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day"* (Lenin, *What is to be done?*).

We continue to insist that there can be no strong communist party without a revolutionary theory and that there is nothing wrong in defending such a theory, which we firmly believe to be true, against unwarranted and vitriolic attacks and attempts to distort, corrupt and vitiate it. We continue to insist along with Lenin, that *"without a revolutionary theory there can be no*

revolutionary movement", that the "... role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory", and that this "thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity".<sup>xi</sup>

The CPB report goes on to condemn our observations in the June/July 2008 issue of *Proletarian*, on the crisis within the CPB by asserting that while "... we expect such an approach from some Trotskyist and other ultra-left enemies of the communist movement, we consider it unacceptable from parties which want to be considered as part of the movement". The truth of the matter is that our exposure of opportunism is in the finest traditions of Marxism-Leninism, which is not averse to settling accounts with its opponents openly and honestly. It is the CPB which is at one with the Trotskyite enemies of the communist movement in attacking the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism and attacking the dictatorship of the proletariat in the erstwhile Soviet Union, and which has struck a cosy relationship with these same enemies of the communist movement, as for instance with the SWP in StWC, whom it characterises as "socialists" on page 3 (paragraph 4, third line) of its report on the CPGB-ML.

If the CPGB-ML is to be condemned as enemies of the communist movement for defending the cardinal principles and teaching of the science of Marxism-Leninism, we are happy to share this fate with other such 'enemies', viz., Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. No amount of opportunist abuse and whining will prevent us from performing our duty in the service of the proletarian movement.

Referring to his struggle against opportunism over a period of more than two decades, and the hatred of the opportunists that that struggle had earned him, Lenin in his letter of 18 December 1916 to Inessa Armand wrote thus:

*"Such is my fate. One battle after another against political stupidity, vulgarity, opportunism, etc.*

*"It has been that way since 1893. And it has earned me the hatred of philistines. Well, I would not exchange this fate for 'peace' with the philistines."*

If little things may be compared to big, we, too, have earned the hatred of the philistines for our relentless exposure of their political stupidity, vulgarity and opportunism. Following in the footsteps of that remarkable revolutionary genius and inspirer of the Great October Socialist Revolution, to wit, V I Lenin, we, too, would not exchange this fate for peace with the philistines. We continue to fight against opportunism relentlessly for we believe that opportunism "... helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat".<sup>xii</sup>

In the last paragraph of its report the CPB issues to the Working Party of the ICCWP this dire warning against recognising the CPGB-ML:

*"Capitalist propaganda dwells on divisions within the communist movement and on the multiplicity of communist organisations. Encouraging the formation of additional very small organisations styling themselves communist will, we believe, hinder the development of the communist movement, nationally or internationally. In Britain, recognition of such an organisation as the CPGB(ML) would itself undermine the wider standing of the International Conference".*

Opponents of communism have always gloated and grimaced over disputes within our movement, and they will doubtless continue to do so. They always have, and always will, use shortcomings in our movement, as well as disputes among us, for their own ends. That is no reason for the continued toleration of opportunism amidst our ranks. On the contrary, we must, undisturbed by these pinpricks, continue with our work of self-criticism and a thorough and ruthless exposure of our own shortcomings, which will without question be overcome with the growth of the working-class movement and the building of a truly vanguard party of the British proletariat based on the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

It is not a question of encouraging the formation of additional small organisations styling themselves communist, but of concretely analysing the reasons for their emergence. After all, the CPB itself was a relatively small organisation, which emerged in 1988 out of a relatively large CPGB that became thoroughly rotten through the domination of the revisionists of the euro-communist variety. The only pity is that the CPB at its birth did not make a clean break with the revisionism of the party it had split from. Had it done so, it would have become a pole of attraction for revolutionary communists like ourselves and spared us, as well as the British proletariat, the spectacle of "*the multiplicity of communist organisations*". Had the CPB, for instance, not reconstituted itself on the ideological foundations of the revisionist BRS, had it not parted company with the

cardinal teachings of the science of Marxism-Leninism on the question of the state and the relationship of proletarian revolution to the bourgeois state, had it adopted an attitude of irreconcilable hostility towards counter-revolutionary social democracy (Labour Party in Britain) instead of characterising the latter as the mass part of the British working class, there would have been no need for the likes of us to have been in the SLP in the first place, let alone forming the CPGB-ML after parting company with it.

Because the formation of the CPGB-ML, far from being driven by sectarianism or an incurable desire to add to the multiplicity of communist organisations, is firmly grounded in strict adherence to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the traditions of the Comintern, as well as of the CPGB up to the mid-1950s, its recognition as a legitimate participant in the work of the ICCWP would, instead of undermining the latter's standing, as is the assertion of the CPB, serve to enhance its prestige and the quality of its deliberations. What undermines the standing of the International Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties is that, while the Iraqi Communist Party, which supports the imperialist occupation of Iraq, and such other outfits, are allowed participation, others like us are excluded from it. What really, too, undermines the standing of the International Conference is that, while the CPB and the NCP, both of whom support the imperialist Labour Party in Britain, are allowed in and, hilariously, given a veto over us, we in the CPGB-ML, who have waged and continue to wage, a principled struggle against social democracy, are kept out. There is surely something terribly wrong with this state of affairs, comrades.

We conclude our refutation of the CPB's slanderous, sly and underhand campaign against our admission into the ranks of the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties by appealing to the Working Party to overrule the objections of our opportunist opponents and accept our application to join it. Any other course will be wrong in theory and harmful in practice. Failing that, everyone must realise that, while we can be excluded from the proceedings of the ICCWP, we cannot be excluded from the international communist movement. We express the hope that the Working Party will make the right decision.

With fraternal greetings

CPGB-ML

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<sup>i</sup> Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

<sup>ii</sup> V I Lenin, *The Deception of the People by the Slogans of Freedom and Equality*, May 1919.

<sup>iii</sup> V I Lenin, *Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, 4 July 1920.

<sup>iv</sup> *Polemical Notes*, Collected Works, Vol 17 p.166.

<sup>v</sup> The actual leadership belongs to the Labour Party, the perpetrators of the war.

<sup>vi</sup> V I Lenin, *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

<sup>vii</sup> V I Lenin, *State and Revolution*.

<sup>viii</sup> For a detailed treatment see *Perestroika - the complete collapse of revisionism* by Harpal Brar

<sup>ix</sup> V I Lenin, *Hasty Conclusions*, May 1914.

<sup>x</sup> V I Lenin, *What is to be done?* 1901.

<sup>xi</sup> V I Lenin, *What is to be done?*

<sup>xii</sup> V I Lenin, *One step forward, two steps back*.