

IN THE WORLD

BRITAIN

Eurocommunism splits British CP

By Mervyn Jones

DISCONTENT IN THE BRITISH Communist party, simmering since 1968, has erupted in an open split. A New Communist party has been formed with Sid French as provisional chairman; French has for many years been the key full-timer in the Surrey district, taking in the industrial towns on the southern fringe of London. Despite its name, the NCP is a fundamentalist group in revolt against the changes in Communist policy generally known as Eurocommunism.

Opening shots in the battle were fired when the CP, along with its much bigger brothers in Italy and France, condemned the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. R. Palme Dutt, a senior figure in the party since its foundation in 1920 and much respected as a theoretician, was appalled. Together with French and others, he forced a vote at the next conference (the first such event, except on minor tactical issues, in the party's history). The leadership was backed by about 75 percent of the delegates.

Dutt is now dead, but comrades of his way of thinking have made grumbling protests from time to time when the party, and its newspaper the *Morning Star*, condemned violations of human rights in the USSR. To champion imprisoned Soviet dissidents, they argued, was to join in a chorus uniting wish-washy liberals, social-democrats and, indeed, reactionaries. It is of course true that people who have always been anti-Soviet make capital out of the treatment of dissidents, Jews, and other groups victimized in the USSR.

British road.

The dispute, however, has been waged mainly on ideological lines. Unusual among Communist parties, Britain's has a basic program running to some 10,000 words, first drawn up in 1951 and revised from time to time. This document is called *The British Road to Socialism* and it's said on good authority that the key passages were written by Joseph Stalin himself. Strangely, it contained from the outset some of the ideas that would be described today as "communism Italian style."

It envisaged the transition to socialism as the outcome of popular pressure, without violence or civil war, and expressed in the victory of "progressive forces" (the CP plus the good elements in the whole Labor movement) at an election. It pledged that, following this victory, the incoming socialist government would maintain democratic political processes, freedom of speech and the press, and the right to diversity of opinion.

The '70s have seen the full flowering of Eurocommunism. While the Italian and (recently) the Spanish CPs took the lead in the new thinking, and the French tagged cautiously along, the British were cautious too. Gordon McLennan, the general secretary, has let it be known that he regards the word "Eurocommunism" as a bourgeois journalistic term.

For example, British Communists have deep misgivings over the Italian idea of the historic compromise and its expression in support of a Christian-Democrat government. They recall that the worst blunder in their own history was to urge the continuance of the wartime coalition beyond 1945—a policy that made them ridiculous

in the face of a sweeping Labor victory that year.

Still, the existence of *The British Road to Socialism* as a guiding text makes a full-scale reversion to classical Leninism impossible. The battle has therefore been waged over the periodic updating of the program, with the Duttite group trying to stem any further watering-down of traditional ideas.

Pleasing nobody.

The new edition, approved by the leadership and due to be presented to a conference this fall, contains the pledge—already made by the Italian and French parties—that a Communist-led government would yield power if defeated at a subsequent election. This was too much for French and his friends to swallow. Declaring their total lack of confidence in leaders who can advance such a possibility, they have walked out and called on all true communists to follow them.

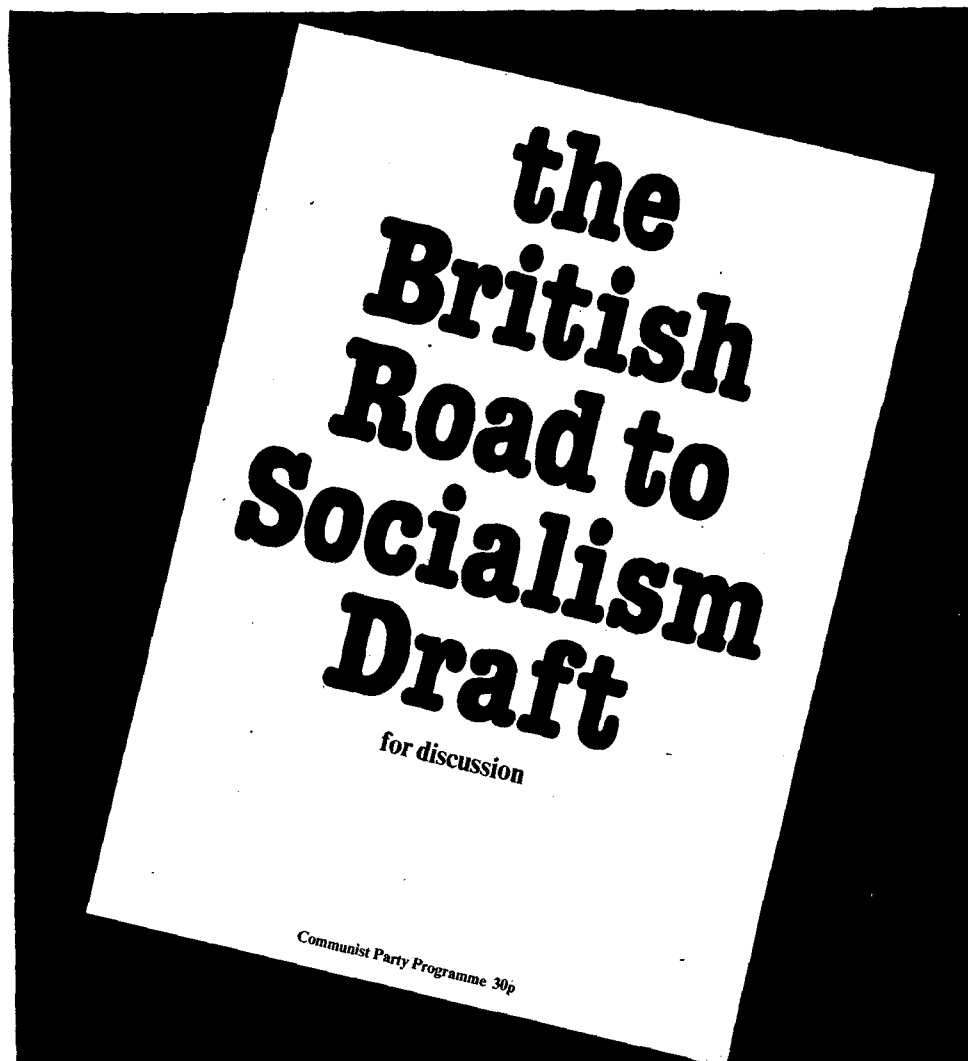
McLennan is in the unhappy position of pleasing nobody. Jimmy Reid—the one effective working-class leader produced by the CP in recent years, who led the successful sit-in that saved the Clyde shipyards from closing and polled a respectable 6,000 votes as Communist candidate in the locality at the 1974 election—left the party last year, charging that its conversion to democracy and pluralism was insincere. From the other flank, French attacks the conversion itself.

The CP can't be charged with secretiveness. Over recent months the *Morning Star* has published pages of letters discussing the revised program and now the split. It even allowed French, before he quit, to advertise meetings where he would speak on the theme of "What's Wrong with the New Program." Letters since the split reveal that a good many comrades agree with his views. They say that he's right on the basic issues, while criticizing him for walking out instead of continuing the fight within the party.

A major cause of the malaise is the failure of the CP to grow. Despite widespread disillusionment with the record of Labor governments, it is regarded by the bulk of the working class as an irrelevance. Its election results are pathetic—seldom reaching 5 percent of the poll even in solidly working-class areas. Its stated membership is only 28,000 and has varied little from that figure in over 30 years. (At the time of Stalingrad, it had peaked at 60,000.) French now asserts, from his inside knowledge of party affairs, that the figure is phony anyway and the real membership is 13,000. Of these, he claims to have drawn away 2,000.

Splits and splits.

The broader tragedy is the fragmentation



British Communists are now debating a new version of their party's program, *The British Road to Socialism*. Among controversial provisions are ones pledging that a Communist-led government would step down if defeated at the polls and committing the party to the civil rights of homosexuals.

of the British left. The NCP adds another to the list of what Italians eloquently call *partitini*. We have the Communist party (Marxist-Leninist), which is the Maoist group; the Workers' Revolutionary party, the Socialist Workers' party, and the International Marxist group—these three being more or less Trotskyist. Some by-elections feature three of four candidates claiming to incarnate the true interests of the workers, furiously denouncing each other and each getting about 500 votes in a poll of 50,000. Nor must we forget the thousands

of people who consider themselves to be Marxists but find it more rational to work within the Labor party.

The current split will not be fatal to the CP. Party members tend at such times to rally to the organization—as Claud Cockburn once aptly put it, to stick to the old regiment. But it defers once again that day when the CP can do what it hoped to do way back in 1920, and seize the leadership of the British working-class.

Mervyn Jones is a correspondent for the *New Statesman*.

A talk with CP head Gordon McLennan

By Sam Kushner

The debate within the British Communist party affords the English-speaking world a first-hand view of a major debate within the ranks of an influential Communist party over issues that are also of great concern to Communists in France, Italy, Spain, Japan, Australia and Yugoslavia.

In mid-November the British Communist party will hold its 35th National Congress and there the delegates will debate the issues of Eurocommunism as they are reflected in *The British Road to Socialism*, the party's program.

The British CP leadership decided to allow the televising of the debate and the forthcoming convention, a decision that some of the old timers want no part of.

In late April I interviewed Gordon McLennan, the General Secretary of the Communist party. I discussed with McLennan both *The British Road to Socialism* and his party's position on Eurocommunism and the Soviet Union.

Q: *The British Road to Socialism*, the new draft of your party program, spells out the British Communist party's understanding of conditions that are also being

discussed in France, Spain and Italy. What do you see as the impact of the new approach to socialism that is being discussed in Western Europe on *The British Road to Socialism*?

A: The gigantic electoral advances of the Italian Communist party last year, and the victory last month of the Communist-Socialist united front in France while Labour is suffering heavy defeats in Britain stimulates interest here. People say, "What is it in the Communist party's strategy and policies there that are increasingly attracting working people while Labour's policies and attitudes here are losing the support of working people?"

The Communist parties of Western Europe are increasingly developing strategies for the road to socialism in accordance with the circumstances and the history and traditions of their own countries.

Because we have developed a strategy in this way, and because it coincides with the way the Italians, the French and particularly the Spanish Communists are developing their strategies and programs, we are correctly said to be part of that group of Com-

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U.S./KOREA

CIA linked to Korea cover-up

By Jeffrey Stein
WASHINGTON—Did the CIA try to discourage an investigation into the operations of South Korean intelligence agents here who might have bribed U.S. Congressmen?

That possibility has been raised here in testimony by the State department's former head of Korean affairs before a grand jury investigating the Korean bribery scandal. Donald Ranard, who, as chief of the Korean desk at the State department from 1971 to 1974 complained on repeated occasions of Korean CIA operations in the U.S. to the Justice department and the FBI, has identified a CIA officer who called him in the summer of 1973 "to express concern that a crimp in KCIA operations here could have repercussions on CIA operations there (South Korea)." He said that Homer Thrall, listed on official records as a State department employee, was the man who called him.

"Homer called me with specific reference to the fact that I had called the FBI into it," Ranard said in an interview. "Today, as I look back on it, what Homer was intending to tell me was, 'The agency does not want an investigation to go forward. This is a word to the wise. People around here don't like it.'"

Ranard added that Thrall, whom he had known at the American embassy in Rangoon, Burma (where Ranard was Deputy Chief of Mission in 1963), "would not have called me unless someone was putting him up to it."

A CIA personnel officer said the agency had no listing of Thrall as a CIA employee. He is listed in the State department's Biographic Register as an "International Relations Officer" with the rank of GS-14 (a senior level position) as of 1968. Personnel records at State show that he resigned in 1968 after a series of assignments in Asia as either a political or economic affairs counsellor in embassies. "There is no doubt in my mind that Thrall was a CIA officer," Ranard said. Thrall could not be reached for comment.

The call from the CIA officer came "in

June or July" of 1973, Ranard said, at a time when the Korea desk chief was strenuously complaining to the Justice department about the activities of Tongsun Park, a Washington wheeler-dealer now known to have links to the KCIA, and about KCIA agents who were harassing South Koreans living in the U.S.

As early as 1971, Ranard had supplied information to the Justice department to the effect that "we had ample reason to know that Tongsun Park was involved in lobbying and had offered money to Rep. William Broomfield," Ranard said.

Ranard had also asked the Justice department to look into the fundraising operations and personnel connected to Radio of Free Asia, which he suspected was tied to South Korean intelligence. In March 1972 the Justice department had said there was "insufficient evidence" to continue an investigation. A former KCIA director, Kim Hyung Wook, however, has testified to a congressional committee that Radio Free Asia's former executive officer, Bo Hee Park (who is now a top aide to the Reverend Sun Moon, whose actions in the U.S. have also come into question), was a KCIA agent under his control.

Thrall's purported statement to Ranard that an investigation into KCIA operations here might hurt American CIA operations in South Korea has been revealed at a time when the current director of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner, has publicly denied that the CIA has any agreement with the KCIA of an operational nature. Turner said in a press conference in early August that the CIA has no agreement with the KCIA concerning its operations in the U.S. or the CIA's in South Korea. Foreign intelligence operations in the U.S., Turner said, are the province of the FBI.

CIA contacts blown.

The next week, Ranard criticized the CIA for "a lack of interest in moving ahead" and cooperating with investigators while he was chief of Korean affairs. He reserved his harshest criticism, however,



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for FBI officials, who, he said, have been telling congressional committees that when two KCIA officers left Washington in 1974 as a result of his prodding, "They thought I had accomplished what I had set out to do and that the ballgame was over. That," he said angrily, "is a lot of crap. Tongsun Park was still there. The Unification church [of Rev. Moon] was all over the place, and the harassment of Koreans here at the hands of the KCIA was still going on, albeit on a more subtle basis. The FBI," Ranard charged, "is trying to explain away why no action was taken."

Ranard said that the FBI and the Justice department "have a lot of explaining to do. There was [Attorney General William] Saxbe at the Georgetown Club, being entertained by Tongsun Park. Nothing seemed to be happening with the investigation."

Reflecting on the recall of Korean agents from the U.S. as the bribery scandal has

developed in the press, Ranard said that Thrall's concern about the effect of the investigation on CIA-KCIA relations had probably been well-founded. "In the end," he said, "what happened? My guess is that the CIA *did* blow a lot of contacts with what I blew up."

Suggesting that somewhere along the line there might have been a cover-up, Ranard added that "Ultimately, when nothing much came out of the FBI investigation [in the early '70s] they were successful."

Asked whether there were other "hints" from CIA officials that he should not press for an investigation of the KCIA, Ranard thought for a moment and then said, "It was hard to know at the time. After all, they're masters at dropping a hint and running in the other direction."

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munist parties arriving at similar conclusions. Some people call this "Eurocommunism." I don't accept the term but the ideas are worthy of discussion.

What is the attitude of your party to socialism in the Soviet Union as it's now practiced? And to socialism in China as it has developed in recent years?

Our attitude to the Soviet Union is that the Soviet people and the Communist party of the Soviet Union led by Lenin not only opened up a way for the people of that great country towards a new and better and higher form of life as represented in the victory of the October Revolution of 1917 but they opened up the way for all humanity to a higher stage of social and political development. We have had warm fraternal relations based on active solidarity and unity in our attitude in the struggle against imperialism, the struggle for peace and disarmament, the struggle for the national liberation movements throughout the world, the united action of working people everywhere against the domination of monopoly capital and for the ending of all this by development of Socialist society everywhere in the world.

The British Communist party has never been and will never be anti-Soviet in any form at all.

That does not mean that on specific questions we might not take a different point of view from our comrades in the Soviet Union. Where we might consider

that the government and the Communist party of the Soviet Union take positions or policies that we believe are incorrect and we believe it's our job to express these views where these policies impact our situation and where they have some international relevance and international moment. We would not, of course, for a moment consider raising questions that are quite definitely the responsibility and concern of the Soviet government and the Soviet people. That is their responsibility and we would not interfere in that.

But where things in socialist society affect ability of Communist parties in capitalistic countries, and particularly in our own country, to win clarity and understanding among the masses of people about what socialism is and how socialism should be developed, then we naturally deal with these questions. And one of the questions that has been raised in recent years has been the question of the treatment of those who disagree with the policies of the party or the government.

We are of the view that where citizens of these countries have political differences with policies of the party and the government they should have the opportunity to express them publicly in reasonable form.

We have expressed this on many occasions. We are against the handling of these problems by administrative measures—what are called administrative measures—either banning them from public expression, or harassment of any kind or deprivation of jobs or any sentences through

the use of the courts for any reason or expulsion from the country.

That is absolutely clear in our program, *The British Road to Socialism*, that there will be freedom of religious worship, freedom of the trade unions from the state and the party, the freedom of artists to write, to express themselves in every way that is possible for them to do so. Any opposition to the ideas of socialism can be and will be freely and publicly expressed. And opposition parties will have the right to contest for the peoples' support on the same basis as the Communists and Socialists. And if they win that support in a general election, the the Communists and Socialists, if they are in government at that time, will, naturally, stand down and the new government will take its place.

How do you view developments within the socialist societies of Eastern Europe? For instance, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia?

We think Charter 77 and other questions of this nature should be handled by public discussion, public debate and the answering of any criticisms these citizens of the socialist countries have of the party and the government. We are positive that is the correct way for the further development of socialism.

Of course socialism is infinitely more democratic than is capitalism. Of that there is no question. Socialism is essentially more democratic than capitalism because the countries have been run in the interests of the overwhelming majority

of the people. Whereas capitalist countries are run in the interest of a tiny minority of the people. That is not the question.

The question is what is the further development of socialist democracy in terms of the ability of individual citizens to express publicly their disagreements with party and government policy. And on this we believe it can only be handled on the basis of public discussion rather than by administrative measures.

Do you think that the current human rights campaign being conducted by the U.S. and its allies against the Soviet Union compromises your position?

The imperialists and the people who are interested in disagreements and divisions between the capitalist and socialist countries are concerned about the developments that were set in train by the Helsinki accords. There is a conference in Belgrade about the follow-up of Helsinki. And these cold warriors want to undermine the process of detente and disarmament in Europe.

But we do not think that is the correct way to develop if we were always intimidated from expressing our views publicly because cold warriors and others were conducting an anti-Soviet campaign. Then we would never say anything public about these questions. And what we do is make it absolutely clear that we make our views on these questions known from the point of view of friendship and fraternal relations, solidarity and joint action with the socialist countries against imperialism and for peace.