

Ramsey MacKinnock and Judas Willis



DUMP THEM

Jack Conrad

THE MINERS are fighting a heroic battle not just for themselves but for all workers. Their victory will be a major step forward for all workers in Britain, conversely defeat for them would be a strategic setback for our entire class.

Because of this those at the head of the workers' movement should be expending every ounce of their energy in backing the miners. They should be travelling the length and breadth of the country to rally support, they should be on the miners' picket lines, and they should defend the miners whatever tactics they are forced to adopt.

But what have we seen?

● The Eurocommunists' favourite, Labourite Neil Kinnock (or Ramsey MacKinnock as many a miner now calls him), has done his utmost to keep silent about the miners' strike in the Commons. The leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition declared himself too "busy" to attend NUM rallies; later he offered his services on the picket lines — as an "observer". This leader of a party miners and other trade unionists directly finance through the political levy would rather see the miners lose than see his carefully cultivated image as a future safe manager of British capitalism damaged in any way.

● What about Norman Willis? His "violence is not the way" Judas speech in Aberavon not only earned him praise from Kinnock and all sections of the bosses' press but Thatcher herself was so moved by it that she lionised him as a "distinguished" union leader. Willis's "support" for the miners is utter cant; it's true he's no general, in fact he's a deserter who deserves that hangman's noose waved in front of him by militant miners.

The miners and their militant

supporters are learning bitter lessons about the value of the resolutions passed at the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference. Those who lead these organisations never had the slightest intention of delivering genuine solidarity, they were out to control, trap, and betray the miners' strike through some rotten compromise. With "friends" like these, who needs enemies? The miners are right to call them scabs.

Given the misleaders Kinnock and Willis, the unleashing of the courts against NUM funds, the unprecedented media propaganda campaign, NCB bribery, and police terror, it is not surprising that many TUC "lefts" are wilting. They have proved themselves great windbags full of militant rhetoric, but when it comes to solidarity they have contented themselves with tokenistic gestures and calls for charity — certainly meaningful industrial action has been noticeable by its absence.

Faced with this downright treachery and formal solidarity the NUM leadership has two courses open to it. One demands a radical break from the venal labour and trade union bureaucracy and an appeal over the heads of the misleaders directly to the rank-and-file, especially the militant minority. If the NUM leadership called for the dumping of the misleaders, fought for a general strike against the anti-union laws with or without the TUC, it would be possible to galvanise the workers as a class against the Tories and their class, against whom today the miners fight alone.

Instead of this the NUM leadership seem determined to maintain their ties with the TUC and Labour Party tops they have even in an act of desperation turned to the church. No one should doubt the determination to see victory of many in the NUM leadership, Scargill in particular, but their reliance

on bishops and proven traitors might yet see the seeds of victory turned into the fruits of defeat. They are right to place the sheer grit of the militant miners at the centre of their strategy — but without the mobilisation of the workers as a class, victory will be far harder, more costly, the miners more prone to divisions and exhaustion. In other words the NUM leadership is fighting a war of attrition and trench warfare, when with allies a blitzkrieg could be employed.

It is because of this that NUM militants, and those militants in other industries who are committed to "total physical support" for the miners, would be ill advised to simply tail the NUM leadership. This is especially so when not a few in it have been openly floating the idea of a ballot on whether the NUM should accept the sell out deal given to Nacods — terms which Thatcher demands be accepted and the other half of the Labourite "dream ticket" Hattersley is actively canvassing. What is more, certain NUM leadership "lefts" have shown that they lack the backbone of the rank-and-file militants, their lack of courage could potentially tip the balance in favour of those seeking "favourable" surrender terms. Only by taking control of the strike and broadening it can militants guarantee total victory.

So while Arthur Scargill, Mick McGahey, and Peter Heathfield are to be praised for their refusal to condemn miners' violence, militants are still confronted with the burning necessity of organising that violence. We have argued since the beginning of the strike for Workers' Defence Corps. Formed now out of the bravest pickets, the unemployed, and those with military training, police intimidation could be rebutted, picket lines protected and peace brought to the mining communities. That already hit squads

have been established, molotov cocktails used, barricades erected, and police stations wrecked, only goes to show the correctness of this call and testifies to the fact that miners and their communities have spontaneously looked in this direction independently of the NUM leadership.

But as well as meeting police violence with workers' violence militants must also take on board the task of spreading industrial action and providing real solidarity. The use of anti-trade union laws against carworkers and their union cries out for linking their struggle to that of the miners. Indeed all workers can be drawn into struggle alongside the miners on the basis of fighting the hated anti-trade union laws. Emotional appeals for solidarity are all very well but workers must have something to concretely gain if they are to throw themselves into the fray.

To make this perspective a reality the ideal vehicle would be transformed Miners' Support Committees co-ordinated at a national level. In the last edition of *The Leninist* comrade Malcolm Pitt, President of Kent NUM, stated that the Miners' Support Committee should "take on more and more the character of Councils of Action", they should "have a role far beyond merely collecting food or putting out leaflets on behalf of the miners".

It is this much needed transformation that the Solidarity Conference on December 2 called by the Mineworkers' Defence Committee should confront. It should lay the basis for a National Miners' Support movement which could act as the organising point for the estimated 25% of the trade unionists who are prepared to take strike action in support of the miners. Mobilised they could bring swift victory for the miners and bring the now arrogant Thatcher to her knees.



THE LENINIST

LONDON REVELATIONS

HAVING been told at its meeting over November 11-12 that even its very own Special General Meeting of the PPPS (the coop which owns the *Morning Star*) and £600,000 in legal fees would "not guarantee the courts giving us our paper back" the Executive Committee of the CPGB decided to open up a new London front in its war of attrition against the pro-*Morning Star* grouping. With National Organiser Ian McKay safely imposed as temporary District Secretary the way was open for comrade Dave Green to begin his detective work into allegations that certain pro-*Morning Star* branches in London had non-existent members on their books. On the basis of his enquiries and information divulged by comrades Max Levitas and Quentin Given the EC voted by 28 to 0 with 3 abstentions to commission an investigation into the following branches: Clapton, Rectory, Hackney South & Shoreditch, Tottenham, and Woodberry. It was also agreed to look into charges against comrades Tom Durkin, Monty Goldman, Don O'Hanrahan, Isolde McNeill, Susan Michie, George Wake, and District Organiser Roger Trask.

Without for one moment accepting the guilt of the aforementioned branches and comrades, it is well known that membership has been 'boosted' for years in order to secure greater congress representation — a practice which the Euros have taken to a fine art, a fact which makes it crystal clear that what motivates the EC majority are the narrowest factional considerations.

General Secretary Gordon McLennan opposed the Euro clamour for blood as he did over the Straight Leftist 38th Congress *samizdat* publication *Congress Truth* and the *Morning Star* rebellion. So instead of "freezing" the London District Congress as proposed by comrade Dave Cook (lost 20 to 11), instead of "reconvening" all pre-Congress meetings as proposed by comrade Nina Temple (lost 23 to 8), and instead of "disfranchising" those branches where there were "irregularities" as proposed by comrade Dave Priscott (lost 17 to 14) McLennan won the day for his softly, softly approach of reconvening pre-Congress meetings where "necessary" and "continuing investigations" after the Congress.

Despite this, less than two weeks later a Political Committee meeting has just been held which, we are told, disenfranchised Clapton, Rectory, and Woodberry branches, postponed the Hackney Borough Conference, and, most importantly, while the London District Congress would be allowed to go ahead it would not be permitted to elect a new District Committee. This gross violation of Party democracy was to be rubber-stamped at an emergency EC meeting as we went to press.

We said that the delegates to the London District Congress should refuse to accept the EC's dictatorial bureaucratic centralism, they should have allowed all branches their democratic participation, and they should have gone ahead and elected a District Committee as was their right. At the same time we warned against the foolhardy, centrist knee-jerk tendency to split — something the hardcore Euros are deliberately trying to provoke. The Communist Party is our Party and we must not do the Euros a favour by walking out: we must stay in and win the fight. A pro-*Morning Star* split is in any case doomed to disintegrate at the first serious hurdle, doomed to end in farce where the NCP ended in tragedy.

The Editor

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Errata: In the last issue (No 14) column 3, line 7 of page 12 should have read "and that Polish communists fight to break any coal contracts signed with British capitalist firms..."

LETTERS

How they try to ban *THE LENINIST*

To Us

Dear Comrades,
With reference to your recent advert for the November issue of *The Leninist*, we are attaching a copy of a letter received from Nina Temple and our reply.

We shall be glad to have your comments.

Yours fraternally,
Mary Rosser
Chief Executive

Mary to Nina

Dear Comrade,
I am writing to raise the 'Leninist' advertisement with you. As you will have seen in Focus (photocopy enclosed) the May EC of the Party took an attitude in relation to the *Leninist*. Whilst this wouldn't necessarily effect the *Star*, as you are not a Party journal, there are two points that I want to raise with you as a result of the most recent advertisements.

Firstly, there is no address or clear indication as to what organisation actually produces this journal. I had understood that the *Star* always insists on precisely this information for meetings being advertised, partly to protect the consumer but also to protect the paper, and I can't understand why this doesn't equally apply to journals.

Secondly however, (and this is why I am raising this matter again at this time), in the latest advertisements for this journal the impression is given that the journal is produced by the CPGB. In fact it says 'produced by the Leninist of the CPGB'. I want to make it clear that we do not have anything whatsoever to do with this journal, in fact we object strongly to its contents as is made clear in our EC minute.

I would ask you to make this clear to your readers by not in future accepting any advertisements which give a false impression of an association between the Communist Party and this journal.

I await your reply, best wishes,
Nina Temple

Nina to Mary

Dear Nina
Thank you for your letter dated 1.10.84 together with a photo-copy of the report in Focus.

The problem, as I see it, is that in the past this advert has been accepted including in it the phrase that you mention and yet no objection had been made.

So as not to drive a coach and horses through the advertising policy here, surely the best way of preventing *The Leninist* from appearing is for the EC to make its position known to the comrades involved. I'm sure that would prove a more direct and effective way of dealing with this problem.

Yours fraternally,
Mary Rosser
Chief Executive

From Us

Dear comrade Rosser,
We do not find it surprising that comrade Temple is asking you not to accept adverts from *The Leninist*

"which give a false impression of an association" between our paper and the Communist Party. Of course, what comrade Temple means by "the Communist Party" is her faction, which bureaucratically dominates the Executive Committee. Although this faction claims to be the Party this has been shown to be false on a number of important occasions. At this year's AGM of the PPPS none of the motions sponsored by the EC gained a majority — despite the fact that those attending the AGM were overwhelmingly Communist Party members. Even at the last Party Congress it was only the most unprincipled gerrymandering which enabled comrade Temple's faction to retain its grip over the EC.

Comrade Temple's faction is itself responsible for creating the rash of "unofficial" Party publications — publications which these hypocrites have the gall to label factional. It is their running of the Party machine, their exclusion of Party members from the columns of *Marxism Today*, their liquidation of communist principles which is the real factionalism, a factionalism to which *The Leninist* claims no "association".

It is public knowledge that the Communist Party has deep divisions. Very many Party members support the *Morning Star* against the EC's attempt to turn it into a daily version of its *Marxism Today*; the fact that the editors of the *Morning Star* have refused to prostrate themselves before the EC has led to comrade Temple and Co branding them, and we presume the *Star* itself, as factionalist. Indeed, all publications which emanate from the Party but which refuse to worship at the shrine of Eurocommunism: *Straight Left, Communist, Artery, Education for Today, The Leninist*; the pamphlets by 'Charlie Woods', Jim Arnison, 'Questro', Ben Fine *et al*; all are branded "factionalist" by the factionalists of factionalists who dominate the EC.

While we around *The Leninist* have important differences with other trends who stand in opposition to Eurocommunism, one thing unites us all — we will not let the Euros get away with *breaking the link* between the Communist Party and the working class. To this link all formal discipline must be subordinated. In the face of attempts to break it all genuine communist have a duty to organise disciplined rebellion, something not surprising that comrade Temple finds objectionable. So it is clear that her worry about protecting *Morning Star* readers is eyewash; she has no

concern to "protect" them or the *Morning Star*. For someone who was directed by the PC of the Party to investigate *The Leninist*, for someone who claimed to have studied our publications, isn't it amazing that she can state we have "no address", that there is no "clear indication as to what organisation" produces *The Leninist*. She even contradicts herself in this by declaring that in "the latest advertisements for this journal the impression is given that the journal is produced by the CPGB"; this is of course nonsense, as she herself then states that *The Leninist* is "produced by the Leninists of the CPGB."

It is quite clear *The Leninist* has nothing to do with the EC of the CPGB, nor the Eurocommunism of the EC, nor the *Marxism Today* of the EC; as to the Communist Party and its members, anyone who has ever read the paper, whether they agree with our politics or not, will testify to the fact that we have every justification for stating that it is "produced by the Leninists of the CPGB".

Yours fraternally,
Paul Fleming
(for *The Leninist*)

Scottish Question

At the Scottish Congress of the CPGB, Jack Ashton, the Scottish Secretary, stressed in particular the need for a Scottish parliament. The sentiment "not to follow the nationalist bandwagon, but by Marxist analysis" was marred by the conduct of the Congress: on one hand by supporting the campaign for a Scottish Assembly without any hint that this would be a bourgeois democratic demand in the present context; and on the other by paying lip-service to Party democracy with the Scottish Committee stage managing and stifling any debate. The two-day Congress of communists in Scotland is made a sham by its own time shortages and as such is ridiculous.

When the national question is raised with the working class it neither can be rejected or ignored but put on a class basis which supports the rights or nations to self-determination while explaining how it is seen from the angle of class struggle.

The crux of the matter for Leninists is posed by yet another question — does this degree of advancement warrant the proletariat raising the national demand? This question cannot be answered "yes" or "no" as the basic consideration for internationalists is whether the demand is at the expense of any other nation. By that we must consider the English working class which itself has different historical conditions in different areas: there is a degree of militancy in the north, while in the south it is largely conservative in character. One plain reality is that without the militant traditions of Scotland the



Sinn Fein offers its total support to the miners

"We've had similar struggles"

Gerry MacLochlainn was sentenced to four years in prison for 'conspiracy' by the British state as part of its campaign against the Republican movement in Britain. Since his release last year he has been a prominent representative of Sinn Fein in Britain currently as its Press Officer, in which capacity he talked to *The Leninist*.

morale of English workers would suffer a setback as raising the national question appears to be a division of the working class in struggle.

The balance, which is never static, between internationalism and nationalism is the consideration of Leninists in the interests of the proletarian struggle which puts the class struggle to the forefront. Since the time of the great Marxist leader John McLean — who advocated a Scottish Workers' Republic but placed the interests of the international proletariat first — the propagation of self-determination in Scotland in the main has been the prerogative of the bourgeoisie. At the present time it is imperative for communists to uphold the proletarian approach of Leninism, to expose the representatives of the bourgeoisie, to raise the issue in a non "black and white" manner and to propagate amongst the working class the primacy of proletarian demands.

Ronald Buchanan
Scotland

Polish Coal

I read the article in November's issue "Polish Coal Why the Silence" with renewed interest... Fourteen Labour MPs offered to condemn Poland. Surprise, surprise. I can name many members of the Labour Party who tell us Nazi propaganda concerning Eastern Europe in the last world war. I have been assured by one prominent Labour Party member that the Khatyn massacre was "Russian" and that Georgi Dimitrov burnt the Reichstag. So fourteen Labour MPs are eager to condemn Poland. What a surprise. Enclosed £5 for your fund.

Robert Steadman
Bradford

No-Go

The emergence of a national police force in full riot gear is another turn of the screw by the bourgeois state in its determination to bludgeon the working class into servile acceptance of the capitalist status quo. With this weapon the Tory government hopes to smash our proudest union, the National Union of Mine-workers, and forshadows what is to come should this be allowed to happen.

Enough is enough. The policing tactics used in the Six Counties are now being employed with increasing measure to smash the will of the miners and the mining communities in their determination to protect their jobs and future livelihoods, and it won't be long before water cannon and plastic bullets are added to the armoury to reinforce the onslaught. It's time for the working class to go onto the offensive and turn mining villages into no-go areas for the police.

Tom Cullen
Notts

The Leninist: How is the miners' strike being viewed by the Irish Republican movement and more specifically, what is your view of the parallels between the miners' strike and the struggle for national liberation in Ireland?

Gerry MacLochlainn: The Republican movement in Ireland has seen the miners' strike as one of the most important political developments in Britain for certainly many years. Particularly, in this miners' dispute, the role of the British state and its relationship to ordinary working class people, and to organised trade unionists in particular, is being exposed very clearly. The Republican movement sees that the next few months are going to continue this process. I think we're going to see the miners' communities and the miners themselves, discovering exactly what it is to be an enemy of this state, exactly what this states remedies are for civil disorder,.... they're going to get all the weapons that we saw in Ireland. I think we'll see the escalation of police violence, possibly towards plastic bullets. There's no question about it, they will use them if they have to, though I think its true to say that the state is desperate not to use them if they can get away without it. And in all of these ways, we see that on one level, this is teaching lessons to the British working class on the nature of the state. But of course that's not just a one-way process, because what it has also done, is that it has forced miners to employ new methods of struggle in order to meet this offensive from the state, and they are methods of struggle which we've become very used to in Ireland.

One of the most interesting and exciting developments, I think, has been the role of the Women's Support Committees, where we see working class women taking a real lead, a real role in the political development of this dispute, even to the extent that when the High Court moved to seize the miners' assets, it was a Miners' Support Group led by Ann Scargill which went into the Union headquarters to start to remove the equipment. Here we have working class women considering the miners union as their union, which of course it is, taking action to defend that union and taking action in the vanguard of the struggle alongside their brothers, their fathers, and husbands who make up the NUM in the narrow sense.

It's become a huge community battle, it's becoming a battle in which the whole community are taking on the defence of those people who are impoverished by it, just as we've had to build our welfare organisations in Ireland to feed and clothe the families of our political prisoners....

And this is another aspect, I think. The growing numbers of miners who have been sent to prison, for short periods — at the moment — but who are certainly, when this dispute is over, going to be sent to prison for quite lengthy periods of time. It's sad to say, but it's true; that itself is going to lead to a major dilemma for miners and for miners' communities, and it's a dilemma which if resolved we think,

will lead to a huge politicisation and a huge jump in the level of politics in working class communities in Britain. Because that whole community fighting spirit, that whole class spirit — for the first time in a dispute we're actually seeing class move against class and this has become clear in many of the statements made by miners leaders recently, as the state throws down a gauntlet to them, they're appealing to their brothers and sisters in the class to stand by them...

But it'll be in the prisons, I think, that this will take another step forward because it'll be in the prisons, in the battles to defend miner prisoners, in the battle to defend their conditions, to win their release if possible and to ensure that they're not victimised, isolated and tortured in these new control units that are being built for subversive political prisoners; it'll be around that, that the whole community can be drawn in again in a much more directly political struggle. And for people who are involved in communist or socialist politics, then the opportunities of seeing the growth of mass socialist politics in Britain for the first time possibly since the 'twenties and 'thirties are beginning to come into the political arena.

The Republican movement offers its total support to the miners in their dispute against this state and the Thatcher government. We support entirely their struggle to defend their living standards, to defend their jobs and to defend their communities. We have had similar struggles in our communities; we know the curse of mass unemployment, we know what it does to working class people, we know what it does to working class communities and we support 100% the struggle to prevent that happening in Britain.

The Labour Party

The Leninist: What do you think about the Labour Party's record on Ireland?

Gerry MacLochlainn: The Labour Party over the years has proved itself, at least the Labour Party leadership — the section of the Labour Party which has always dominated it, be it ex-members of the 'Keep Left' Group called Harold Wilson or ex-South Wales radicals called Neil Kinnock — the Labour leadership has always sided with the state when the state has found itself in difficulty. They sent the troops into Ireland in 1969 — Jim Callaghan did that; he wrote in his memoirs I believe, about the excitement and exhilaration he felt as he sent the troops in to murder and butcher in Ireland. We saw the Labour government introduce the criminalisation policy in Ireland which was to lead to the murder of ten Republican political prisoners in H-Block, and the maiming of several others, because many of those people on lengthy hunger strikes have not yet fully recovered and will never fully recover... We've seen the Labour leadership support the murder of those hunger strikers when the battle reached its height. We've seen a Labour government play a treacherous role in a truce which the Republican

movement negotiated with them.

We've seen many, many examples of treachery, duplicity, and indeed in Britain itself we saw the Labour Party, under Merlyn Rees, introduce the Prevention of Terrorism Act — the most repressive piece of legislation ever introduced in Britain, a piece of legislation directly drawn from the Special Powers Act which was used to rule Northern Ireland for sixty years.

It is nothing new to see Kinnock line up with the state against the miners. It may be that because of the clarity of the issues to many people that it's shocking, but it isn't new. If we go back to 1968, we saw Barbara Castle trying to introduce 'In Place of Strife', the first of a whole series of attacks on the trade union movement, in order to assist the state as it got into economic difficulties.

So in all these ways, we've seen Labour governments and leaderships, when these types of questions have arisen, which put the British state in danger, we always see them standing with the state and against those who challenge it...

At the same time, I think we have to say that there have been developments within the Labour Party, there have been people who have taken up the nature of the Labour Party from within. To some extent they have raised the issue of Ireland; they are attempting to raise the issue of Ireland in such a way that they are attempting to force the Labour Party to adopt policies which will lead to a British disengagement from Ireland. They have adopted policies opposing strip-searching, opposing the use of no-jury trials, and we would welcome all those moves within the Labour Party to challenge the grip of the right-wing clique which has dominated the party almost from its very inception if not completely. To some extent we are encouraged by the fact that people are beginning to raise these questions and to get success among some working class people, and I think that the miners' strike itself is going to play a major part in allowing this to be brought through.

So there are two things to be discussed with the Labour Party; there is the leadership and there is what is left the rank-and-file membership.

The Communist Party

The Leninist: What do you think of the official position of the Communist Party on Ireland?

Gerry MacLochlainn: I think the official position of the Communist Party is one of the most disgraceful positions that could ever be held by any organisation that calls itself communist and I think it's in complete contrast to the role that communists played in the early days of our struggle when the national liberation struggle was at its height, when Sinn Fein was attempting to form a provisional government in Ireland, when they were attempting to drive British imperialism out then. At that time we found communists willing to take their part alongside the liberation struggle in Ireland, and we found the Communist Party in Britain, at least in the very

continued overleaf...



.... continued

early days, playing a supportive role to republican struggle, and playing the role that communists should play in opposition to British imperialism and the British state.

Today that has disappeared, there is no suggestion that the CPGB leadership is going to change their policies on Ireland except in the most superficial way. And I say that with some regret, as an Irish republican socialist, as a member of Sinn Fein who believes in socialist republicanism, because people who will take the name of communist or socialist and besmirch it in that way do a disservice to it, and are certainly making things much more difficult for those in Ireland fighting for socialism.

The struggle in Ireland over the past 15 years has been misrepresented by the Communist Party insofar that they've tried to cover up for the role of the Workers' Party, (what claimed to be the Official Republican movement in the early days) and in doing so, have gone so far, that along with the Tory state, the refuse to talk to Sinn Fein. This is tantamount to censoring revolutionary organisations of the working class. Having legitimate differences with the republican movement is one thing, censoring them on behalf of the Thatcher government is another.

I'm afraid that is a position they will have to end before I'll begin to have a certain amount of respect for the organisation which takes on the name of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Other Liberation Struggles

The Leninist: How do you see Ireland in a world context, compared with other national liberation struggles?

Gerry MacLochlainn: We have always seen our struggle as part of a world struggle against imperialism, although we may not have always seen it as clearly as that and been able to articulate it that way. It has been articulated in very, very real ways, right from the earliest days of our struggle, in that scattered patriots have had parts in, even leading roles in liberation struggles around the world.

At a recent meeting I spoke at in East London, another speaker who had spent 20 years in Robben Island, said

that Irish political literature was something that was smuggled into South Africa regularly, ever since the early days. He made it clear the inspiration he gained from the Irish struggle. ...

Violence

The Leninist: There are those, including people within the Communist Party who condemn the IRA for the use of tactics such as bombing particular institutions and violence in general, yet support the similar armed attacks carried out by the ANC.

Gerry MacLochlainn: I think that this is really hypocrisy on the part of those who would claim the name socialist or communist, to criticise armed actions by a people struggling for national liberation directed against the British state whilst applauding or at least adopting a neutral attitude to armed actions by another people struggling for freedom against what is, in effect a client state of British imperialism (it's not of course an independent country South Africa, it's an extension of British imperialism). We know that our tactics are the tactics which have been forced upon us by British imperialism. There's nobody in Ireland who desires to live in a war, desires violence on their streets day in day out. That violence exists, partly because British socialists have failed to prevent their government occupying our country. And when those same British socialists want to lecture us about the tactics we choose to end our occupation, we find it just the height of impertinence, apart from the fact that we find it hypocritical. Our tactics are the same tactics that are being used by the Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, the same tactics that have been used by other liberation movements: the Sandinistas, by the Cuban people, by the people of Grenada when they attempted to resist the massive US imperialist invasion, they are the same tactics used by the Vietnamese; I remember, back in 1968 the Tet offensive and when they raised the battle in Saigon, much in the same way that the IRA has raised the battle in Belfast, raised the battle in London, and raised the battle in Brighton.

As far as I can see, the Republican movement is not engaged in anything that any other liberation movement would criticise, and in fact they don't criticise; that any other liberation movement would be ashamed of, and if anything, the Republican movement by comparison with many of the other liberation movements, has been mild, it has been cautious and it has fought a war, which in history will be seen as remarkably clean in terms of risks to civilians.

I therefore cannot accept that someone can be consistent and condone the national liberation struggle of the ANC and condemn the liberation struggle of the Irish Republican Army.

What about the Workers?

The Leninist: In the 1918 elections in Ireland Sinn Fein had a policy of 'Labour must wait'; is this still Sinn Fein's position?

Gerry MacLochlainn: The struggle in the 1920s did have a different character from the struggle today. That was a massive united struggle, basically, of nearly all the elements in Irish society for independence. It was supported by people who were later to go right over to support for the bourgeois state in Ireland and was in fact supported by sections who would break off and join with the fascists to form Fine Gael; it was supported by those such as de Valera who would break away from the republican movement later and attempt to form an Ireland in which they, the middle class of Ireland, would gain a certain amount of independence from Britain, which would allow them to develop their position as businessmen, as farmers, and as ranchers etc. And in that context, the struggle to unite the whole of the people in the national liberation struggle was a tactic that was used and also well used in other

liberation struggles throughout the world. The fact that we were defeated in that struggle for liberation is something which has to be analysed. And I think the reasons for that defeat have been fully understood and that can be seen from the way that Sinn Fein approaches the whole struggle today. Because we wouldn't use a slogan such as that today, and I'm not going to say whether it was the right slogan or the wrong slogan in 1918, but 'Labour must wait' is a slogan that has no place in our struggle today, because the victory of labour, of the Irish working class is the victory of the Irish people, it is the victory of Irish women, of Irish nationalists, of Irish cultural activists etc. For only by drawing these together, in the Republican movement, will we garner the strength to destroy British imperialism. And that has been the lesson of the history of Irish republicanism because it was when all these forces drew together that we achieved the great victories of Sinn Fein and the IRA before, and it will be when these are drawn together in a socialist republican organisation, such as Sinn Fein, that we'll reach the stage where victory is very close. And so we don't say 'Labour must wait' at all now, we don't say anyone must wait; the whole struggle must go forward as a united struggle for a Socialist Republic of Ireland.

The Leninist: And would you say that the working class should take a leading role - a central role in that struggle?

Gerry MacLochlainn: Well, if you look at where the support of Sinn Fein comes from it is almost entirely from the working class or from the very poor rural areas...

Our support in the North is almost entirely amongst the poor working class or rural areas; our support in the South is growing in the working class areas and we actually defeated the Irish Labour Party in the European elections.

So we do believe the working class will be central to our struggle and is beginning to take a central role; in the North it's been central to it from the very beginning.

And the Protestants

The Leninist: What is your view of the Protestant working class in the North; how can their loyalty to British imperialism be most effectively broken?

Gerry MacLochlainn: Their position is one I think British socialists must think about very clearly. Protestant working class people are not loyal to Britain because of some strange abnormality to the brain; they're not loyal to Britain because they are of a different nation; they are loyal to Britain because British imperialism has had a policy of divide and rule. They made sure that Protestant workers in the North were guaranteed the few jobs that were about, the lion's share especially of the skilled jobs, and gave them the best housing; and there was the conscious building of an Orange alliance, a fascist alliance (which preceded what Mussolini built in Italy). Those workers have been drawn into an alliance with British imperialism and drawn into it for real material reasons. Now, they may not be much more than marginal privileges; the fact is that they were real enough privileges in a country as poor as Ireland. And I think their loyalty to Britain, based on that, is not something which is going to change as a result of propaganda or appeals from the Republican movement....

There has always been, of course, a strong minority of Protestant people in the North who have supported the Republican movement. And that will continue, we will always open our hearts and our arms to our brothers and sisters in the Protestant community, and appeal that they take their place alongside us. All we can offer them is equality, we offer them nothing less. But so long as they tie themselves to British imperialism and so long as they are useful to British imperialism and that link is encouraged, then we have to accept the

fact that our struggle for freedom and our struggle for socialism must go on, to certain extent without them. We cannot hold back our struggle because there is a section of the working class that won't join us. If the miners were to adopt that policy toward Leicestershire then the strike would be off.

And the struggle must go on to some extent against them if needs be. In Ireland these workers have in the past joined fascist or British state organisations; this does not happen because of sectarianism but because of conscious political allegiance to the British state. And we think that their loyalty will really only be broken when the material conditions that create their loyalty are broken. And that means in the context of the British withdrawal, in the context of the reconstruction of the new Ireland, when for the first time in Irish history there will be no privileged sections in our community, there will be no privileged classes, and there will be no privileged castes within classes either. For the first time Catholic and Protestant workers will have the same living standards, the same living conditions, and then we'll see how long bigoted, pro-British sectarianism will survive. But sadly, Britain has an interest in keeping it going, and Britain will ensure that it does survive, at least until Britain's hold on Ireland is broken.

The Future

The Leninist: One final question, how do you see the future for the Republican movement in Ireland?

Gerry MacLochlainn: The gains we have made over the past few years have challenged the position of the reformist parties in Ireland, to the extent where they no longer can really claim to speak for the Nationalist people in the North. In the South we've begun to throw the state into panic, they've had to boycott delegations of Sinn Fein representatives and councillors, in the faint hope of halting the Republican advance.

I am fairly confident that the Republican movement will continue to advance its military struggle to liberate the North, will continue to inflict damage on British imperialism and isolate its political representatives in Ireland, will continue to gain support in Ireland, and take on all the issues affecting the Irish people in struggles on housing, on jobs etc in the South, and in that way the movement is to continue to develop to such a stage where it will clearly become a mass movement North and South, and will then move very quickly on to victory.



British Justice in Ireland...



...and in Britain

THE LENINIST

Supplement

IRELAND

Part III



1. Ireland — a Weak Link

IN THE FIRST TWO parts of our study we concretely examined some of the main contradictions which exist in Irish society. The primary contradiction that we saw is the fact that the country has been divided and thus dominated by imperialism.

This contradiction effects all aspects of social development, bends other contradictions to it to such an extent that social progress was in certain respects held back and even reversed. Thus the developing revolutionism of the masses, which was such a prominent feature at the turn of the century was through partition diverted and reaction triumphed north and south.

For British imperialism this has undoubtedly been a great achievement. But the forward movement of history can only be temporarily blocked. Today the forces of progress show all signs of slowly but surely undermining the dam of reaction imposed by British imperialism.

The most overt signs of this have been in the Six Counties, where as we saw in Part II since 1969 there has existed a revolutionary situation. The fact that this revolutionary situation has been extended for such a long period of time is not only a tribute to the Catholic masses but a clear indication of the weakened state of British

imperialism and its inability to resolve the situation in the negative.

But it is not only in the north where the forces of progress were exerting themselves. The Twenty-Six Counties, for so long a rural backwater, has now industrialised under the impact of the declining rate of profit in the imperialist heartlands and the search for superprofits. At the end of the nineteenth century industry was more or less confined to Belfast and its environs; today industry totally dominates production.

With this the urban proletariat has grown to become the most important class. The number engaged in agriculture, especially small farmers, has steadily declined. From being by far the most numerous class they have declined to 21% of the labour force in 1971, to 16.5% in 1976, and it is projected they will be down to 10.2% by 1986. Correspondingly the proletariat grew: from 200,000 before World War II

to 880,000 in 1971, and in 1981 their numbers exceeded one million (200,000 in manufacturing alone), or well over 80% of the workforce.

Now, although Ireland has industrialised and has even developed finance capital it has done so while being dominated and exploited by imperialism; its monopolies are collaborators with imperialism in exploiting the country and its workers. Ireland is thus a medium developed capitalist country which because it is unable to participate in the exploitation of the world finds that its class antagonisms at home cannot be blunted, as they are in the imperialist

To repay the interest and in an attempt to stabilise the principal there will be massive spending cuts in public spending on a scale not witnessed since before 1945. For the working class the plan means higher rents, higher health and education charges, higher food prices, and a virtual freeze

in the pay of public workers.

Even if the plan succeeds the Twenty-Six Counties will have a "public sector borrowing requirement equivalent to 11.25% of the GNP, unemployment around 16%, and the highest level of taxes in the European Community" (*Financial Times* October 17 1984). And this depends on the following assumptions agreed by most observers to be wildly optimistic: the punt will be stable; world trade will grow by 4.5% per annum; foreign and domestic interest rates will fall; and export earnings in its main markets will grow by 7% per annum. If one of these factors proves to nations through obtaining super profits. Thus as a result of its marginal position in the world economy the social order is extremely fragile not least because of the burden of exploitation suffered by the enormously expanded working class.

The burden of exploitation placed on the workers is undoubtedly a result of Ireland's domination by imperialism, and the fact that its native monopolies have to attempt to secure their "super profits" through exploiting their own workers. Thus Irish workers find themselves in a sense under a double yoke of exploitation.

The full extent of the burden imposed on them can be seen by the Fine Gael/Irish Labour Party government's three year plan *Building on Reality* launched in October 1984. Because of the massive foreign debt piled up in order to attract investment from the imperialist monopolies there now exists a chronic debt crisis. It is this debt, in October 1984 standing at £18 billion, that the plan is intended to cope with

Jack Conrad

be over optimistic then the whole plan will collapse, as it undoubtedly will, and the attacks on the working class increase.

Already before the full effects of a new general crisis bites, national wage settlements have become a central political question with the government doing all in its power to keep down pay and at the same time preserve social stability. This is a balancing act which is becoming ever more difficult given the necessity of jacking up the rate of exploitation and the fact that unemployment is now around 20% of the workforce — an official figure which vastly underestimates the true number because of sending thousands of youth on work schemes.

The dire effects of imperialist domination exacerbate the contradictions in Ireland, make it a powerkeg, a weak link of imperialism. This must make bourgeois democracy — already a farce in the Six Counties — every more precarious in the Twenty-Six Counties. What is more, the stupendous growth of the proletariat, the fact that they suffer a double yoke of exploitation because of the combined effect of imperialist domination, and the development of native monopoly capital and their drive for "super profits" means that it is correct to talk of the struggle for national unity, the anti-imperialist struggle, becoming increasingly bound up with the class struggle between labour and capital.



2. The Irish Revolution

In formal terms, because the main contradiction in Irish society is the question of national reunification the method of resolving it is a national democratic revolution led by the national bourgeoisie, not least because national reunification would represent the completion of the bourgeois revolution. But Marxists worthy of the name reject formal logic and cut-and-dried formulae in both matters of theory and practice. We arrive at our conclusions through being guided by the laws of social development discovered by Marx and Engels and through thorough examination of the concrete situation. Only then can we discover how and in what form dialectical laws operate, how the situation should be appraised, and what line of action should be followed if we are to achieve victory.

A magnificent example of developing a correct strategy can be found in the theory and practice of the Bolsheviks in Russia, an example which we consider has particular relevance to the situation faced by communists in Ireland today. Russia's socialists were confronted with the problem of how best to overthrow the Tsarist regime, whom they should fight for the small working class to align itself with, and in the event of victory at what pace should they proceed towards socialism. Like in Ireland their immediate tasks were essentially bourgeois. Two major approaches developed.

The Mensheviks, claiming to be the true disciples of Marxism, declared that as Russia's revolution was bourgeois in its tasks the bourgeoisie must take the lead, and the peasantry and the proletariat should encourage and back them up. After the victory of the bourgeoisie, the proletarian parties would become oppositional. And after capitalist development had proceeded for some time and the number of workers had greatly increased, the struggle for socialism could be won. Any attempt to skip 'artificially' the bourgeois stage, the bourgeois revolution, attempts to deny the leadership of the bourgeoisie and the need for them to crown their victory of consolidating their rule through their own state would, despite subjective intentions, end up hindering the

struggle against Tsarism and lead to disaster.

On the basis of concrete study of the development of capitalism in Russia and the understanding of Russia's place in the world economy the Bolsheviks rejected the Menshevik approach as mechanical and branded them for wanted to subordinate the proletariat to a bourgeoisie which had long since ceased to be revolutionary, not least because of its fear of the proletariat. In place of the Menshevik call to tail the pusillanimous bourgeoisie the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin declared that while the forthcoming revolution would be democratic — bourgeois in its tasks, it was the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry that must lead the revolution. And that far from placing in power the bourgeoisie, a democratic revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry should consolidate itself against the bourgeoisie. While this regime would allow the development of capitalism it would wield state power in the interests of the popular masses. The proletariat itself would seek to achieve hegemony over the revolution and the revolutionary government, and to the extent it succeeded the revolution could proceed uninterruptedly to socialism in step with the broader European and worldwide fight of the working class.

Without being bound to the dots and commas of this strategy, with constant debates, change of tactics, and creative adaption to developments in the world situation, the Bolsheviks achieved victory in October 1917 and then proceeded to uninterruptedly to carry their revolution to socialism.

Now, in Ireland as we have shown while the tasks of the revolution are bourgeois the bourgeoisie is thoroughly reactionary. In the north it has historically been a collaborator with imperialism and in the south it now also plays this role. What is more the proletariat has grown in numbers and economic significance to a point where it bears the main burden of the imperialist domination of the country, where the contradictions caused by the imperialist domination and labour and capital are increasingly bound up with each other. In these conditions, to expect the bourgeoisie to play any part in ejecting imperialism from Ireland, let alone a leading one, is blockheadedness to the point of lunacy.

With the complications of a collaborating bourgeoisie north and south, a loyalist Protestant working class, and the block to progress and the divisions caused by the border, we believe that the national liberation of Ireland relies on the strength of the working class and its commitment to a programme which will not only see it gaining hegemony over the national struggle but fighting to carry the revolution uninterruptedly to socialism as in Russia.

Only a Marxist-Leninist programme of uninterruptedly carrying the national revolution towards socialism throughout Ireland, only by fighting for proletarian hegemony over the revolution, can the contradictions caused or exacerbated by partition be resolved. With such a programme it becomes possible to split Protestant workers from loyalism, something impossible by insisting that the revolution is halted at a bourgeois stage. A programme of uninterrupted revolution also has the advantage of providing the best possible conditions for independent economic development which would not only protect the working class from the ravages of monopoly capitalism but also the hard pressed small farmers. It also links the struggles in the Six Counties with the massive potential represented by the proletariat in the Twenty-Six Counties.

So while we recognise imperialism as the main enemy we see the necessity of also striking at local monopoly capital because it is integrated with imperialism. This, far from losing the revolution allies, gives it the potential to greatly weaken the enemy camp and strengthen itself by winning all exploited and oppressed sections to its banner.

The extent to which the revolution can become uninterrupted depends centrally on the degree to which the proletariat can gain hegemony. If it fails to exert its strength, if it allows itself to merely tail the forces of petty bourgeois revolutionism, if the revolution stops short and a bourgeois regime consolidates itself, then of course a new specifically socialist revolution would become a necessity. But given the mass of acute antagonisms produced by imperialist domination and the huge growth of the working class there is every possibility of the workers playing an independent course, imposing its hegemony over the revolution and then succeeding in dominating the state machine.

Thus along the path of its fight for a socialist future the proletariat should seek to align itself with the forces of revolutionary republicanism like the IRSP and Sinn Fein. With these and other revolutionary allies the proletariat should aim at smashing the existing state machine both in the Six and the Twenty-Six Counties. But while striking together with its revolutionary allies the proletariat must maintain its political independence, its own specifically socialist goals. Thus, on the ruins of the old state machine the proletariat would fight for an all-Ireland revolutionary government which would, given the power of the working class, proceed to take the country onto a course to socialism.

We believe that this perspective is the correct one for workers in Ireland to follow; other strategies fail to creatively apply Marxism or they adhere to reformism, or simply engage in revolutionary romanticism. For example, there are those on the sectarian fringe of the workers' movement who refuse to recognise the democratic content of the Irish revolution, who deny the centrality of the anti-imperialist struggle for national reunification, and who reduce the struggle in Ireland to a simple matter of the class struggle between labour and capital. The most notable exponents of this view are numerous brands of Trotskyism, and its offshoots, ranging from *Militant's* Irish clone to the SWP's "sister organisation", the Socialist Workers' Movement. They declare for a straight class struggle leading directly to a workers' government. This hopeless leftism reveals a total absence of understanding of the laws of dialectics. It is a one dimensional workerist approach to living reality which deprives the working class of correct strategic and tactical direction and allies, fails to grasp the main contradiction in Irish society, and despite itself slips into economism.

But the main strategy which dominates the workers' and revolutionary movement in Ireland is based on the so-called theory of stages. This comes in both revolutionary and reformist variants but fundamentally whatever its coloration it represents the outlook of the petty bourgeois elements in society. Most adherents start with the situation in the Six Counties and look to the struggle in the north to create the conditions for national reunification, the role of the masses in the south being seen as essentially supportative. Thus the Provisionals and the IRSP consider defeat for British imperialism in the Six Counties to be a *precondition* for both national and working class unity. Only on this basis can the struggle for socialism (both organisations declare that they are in favour of socialism) begin.

Because of this, while we recognise the heroism of the IRA and INLA the revolutionism of Sinn Fein and the IRSP, we fight for the working class to organise independently of the republican movement while seeking a revolutionary alliance with it aimed at smashing the existing state machine. If the working class followed their strategy there would exist no possibility of splitting the Protestant working class from imperialism, the struggles in the north could never be organically linked with those in the south, and not only would labour "have

to wait" but it would be reduced to nothing more than an auxiliary role in which socialism is used as nothing more than a carrot to spur them into action.

So while we proclaim the need to strike together with the forces of revolutionary republicanism, at the same time we must always march separately all the while fighting for working class hegemony over the revolution simply because the working class is the only consistently revolutionary class of contemporary society, a class which takes as its starting point the fact that it can only liberate itself by liberating the country from imperialism, by liberating all the oppressed, and by building a society free from all forms of exploitation and oppression as part and parcel of its international struggle for world revolution and communism.



3. Towards a Communist Party

To carry out its historic role the working class needs to build a party guided by the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, which scientifically expresses fundamental interests. With such a party the working class in Ireland would become capable of assuming the leadership of the whole nation against imperialism and the bourgeoisie, and would be able to point the mass struggle towards socialism.

In Ireland a Communist Party was established in 1921 in order to play this vanguard role. The path is traversed and the positions maintained by the present leadership of the Communist Party of Ireland need critical study especially in the light of the burning tasks that confront workers in Ireland today. Indeed, the conditions which gave birth to the Communist Party of Ireland were rich and themselves repay examination. This is especially so given the fact that the last years of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth saw the working class in Ireland emerge first as a class in itself and then to a degree a class for itself, with its split from the labour aristocracy in Britain enshrined in the split from the British trade union movement and the formation of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in 1908.

Dialectically connected and preceding this was the struggle for separate Irish working class political expression. In 1898 James Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party (IRSP) which, despite objections from British delegates, managed to secure independent Irish working class representations at the Second International in 1900. Significantly the IRSP stood for linking the fight for national liberation with that for socialism. "The national and economic freedom of the Irish people must be sought in the same direction, viz the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic", declared its first programme. Connolly argued that this had to be the case because the propertied classes were "bound by a thousand golden threads to Empire". Socialism would be linked with the national liberation struggle because the "Irish working class must emancipate itself, and emancipating itself it must, perforce, free its country", Connolly wrote in his first major theoretical work, *Erin's Hope* (p23).

Unfortunately Connolly never placed the IRSP at the centre of his attentions. Although the party contested several elections, agitated amongst the working class, and published a paper, *Workers' Republic*, through which Connolly brilliantly expounded his views, membership never exceeded one hundred, and no effective internal structure or democracy was ever developed. What is more, Connolly left for America in

1903; there he was influenced by the ideas of industrial syndicalism propounded by Daniel De Leon. Thus when he returned to Ireland in 1910, while he helped out his old party (reorganised as the Socialist Party of Ireland — SPI — in 1909), after being appointed Belfast organiser of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) his main energies went into the union not the party.

This was also the case with Ireland's other great revolutionary of the time, James Larkin. As a result, in the great Dublin lock-out of 1913, which was the culmination of a wave of industrial militancy beginning in 1907, it was the ITGWU not the SPI which led the working class into battle.

The lock-out involved 20,000 workers, a huge number given the level of industrialisation in Ireland outside Belfast. And while the ITGWU emerged at the end of the struggle badly battered, working class militancy had reached heights unheard of outside Russia, not least with the creation of the Irish Citizen Army — a workers' militia formed for protection against police brutality, subsequently dubbed the world's first 'Red Army'.

It was with the Irish Citizen Army that in Easter 1916 Connolly launched an insurrection against the forces of British imperialism. Together with the Irish Volunteers they seized the centre of Dublin and declared an Irish Republic. Tragically, the uprising proved abortive. The broad masses, uninvolved in any moves towards armed struggle, and lack of any preparatory propaganda and agitation in favour of it, meant that they remained passive. The ITGWU and the SPI, likewise unaware of what was planned, were put on the sidelines because of Connolly's allies' insistence on keeping the whole affair a secret. Connolly's abortive attempt to speed Britain's defeat while it was at war with Germany, while heroic, revealed the shortcomings of his mechanical interpretation of Marxism and showed the desperate need for a Leninist type vanguard party.

With the rising crushed, many of its best leaders, including Connolly, dead, and Larkin in prison in America the working class in Ireland fared for its militancy became prey to the leadership of opportunists. The fact that the SPI was a loose centrist organisation, and the very all-embracing nature of the ITGWU, meant that the workers' movement had no ideologically trained vanguard to resist the replacement of Connolly and Larkin by opportunists like William O'Brien (secretary of the SPI and Dublin Trades Council, vice-chairman and later general secretary of the Irish TUC). This was not unconnected to the failure of Connolly and Larkin to fully grasp Marxism and the influence syndicalism exerted on them, indeed syndicalism provided fertile ground for opportunism to flourish.

In the period from Easter 1916 to the 1921 Treaty, the fact that the working class in Ireland had no steered vanguard party was to prove decisive. The catapulting of centrists to the head of the labour movement inevitably under conditions appertaining in Ireland led to the breaking of the organic link between the working class and the national struggle. Under O'Brien the official labour movement accepted that "Labour must wait". This break in turn laid the basis for the Green bourgeoisie in the form of the not so long ago stunted Sinn Fein to capture the leadership of the erupting national movement, and with it the loyalty of tens of thousands who had previously looked to Connolly and Larkin.

It was on the basis of this confusion, in the midst of the Black and Tan War, civil war, and the partition of the country that, inspired by the Russian Revolution, the CPI emerged. The October Revolution was greeted with acclaim by Ireland's proletariat; the SPI organised a rally to celebrate which attracted 10,000 to Dublin's Mansion House. But for the SPI

leadership, praise for Russia's revolution was tempered by the needs of opportunist practice, especially its bureaucratic running of the ITGWU, which had grown from 5,000 members in 1916 to a lucrative 100,000 by 1918. It was thus classic in its centrism. It was against these forces that the left of the SPI, with the encouragement of the Comintern, fought to transform the party into a Communist Party. Given the small size of the SPI and its lack of intimate links with the masses, indeed its very lack of importance, the labour bureaucracy was in the end prepared to lose control of the organisation without too much of a fight. And on October 28 1921 the membership of the SPI, having expelled O'Brien and Co, voted to change the name of the party to the Communist Party of Ireland and to seek affiliation to the Comintern.



4. Communism in Ireland

Starting with an active membership of around twenty, the fledgling CPI found events running ahead of it with such power and force that it was unable to play any really influential role, let alone a leading one. The civil war which broke out a mere six weeks after the Party was formed saw Griffith's British-backed pro-Treaty forces succeed in crushing the republican movement and establishing a firm pro-imperialist government. This doused the rekindled flame of industrial militancy which, according to Countess Markiewicz (Minister of Labour in the government of the Irish Republic), had created the conditions where social revolution was imminent (Mike Milotte *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p.49)

Although the CPI fought valiantly alongside the IRA anti-Treaty forces, it could not attract any significant numbers from the IRA to its ranks. What is more, O'Brien and the labour bureaucracy not only kept the labour movement in pro-Treaty 'neutrality' with the outbreak of civil war but set about isolating the communists by having them expelled from the Irish Citizen Army.

Having, despite heavy sacrifice and great effort, failed to shift the IRA anti-Treaty forces to the left by getting them to adopt a progressive social policy, the CPI came out of the civil war not only with its morale shattered but in theoretical disarray. During the civil war the CPI adhered to an essentially stragist theory. Its paper, the *Workers' Republic*, declared on November 12 1921 that the CPI would "fight as actively as our means permit for an Irish Republic, for a Capitalist Irish Republic, for a Republic wherein we shall still be wage slaves, shall still be an oppressed class, so long as this helps to destroy British Imperialism, the greatest enemy of the world revolution. This fight will teach us and prepare us for our own coming class fight — our fight for a Workers' Republic." (Quoted by M Milotte *Ibid* p54).

The CPI's uncritical tailing of de Valera and the IRA, its lack of independent activity in the working class, meant that at the Fourth Congress of Comintern which met in November and December 1922 its leadership faced sharp criticism in private discussions with members of the Comintern Executive Committee. Unfortunately, because of the theoretical weaknesses of the CPI, this criticism had the effect of allowing a syndicalistic tendency to capture the leadership of the Party at its First Congress. The national question was all but abandoned in favour of the fight for "One Big Union".

Comintern intervened in an attempt to rescue the situation. Roddy Connolly (son of James Connolly), previously the Party's president, who had faced expulsion by the new leadership, was

coopted back on to the Executive Committee as "director of propaganda". But despite this the internal struggle, which the Comintern considered counterproductive, continued. This and James Larkin's return from America and his refusal to associate with the "little wasps" in the CPI prompted renewed Comintern intervention, this time to order the Party's liquidation. Its members were ordered to join the Larkinite Irish Workers' League, which had been formed in September 1923, and which was quickly accepted as the official section of the Comintern in Ireland.

Faced with a tiny and divided CPI, knowing full well the prestige James Larkin still enjoyed amongst a mass of Irish workers, the Comintern decision was understandable. But this said, it was still wrong, indicating as it did an attempt to shortcut the arduous path of ideological struggle and the sorting out necessary to building a genuine revolutionary vanguard party. Certainly proof of the incorrectness of liquidating the CPI was given in the negative not least by the woeful performance of the Irish Workers' League (IWL).

The IWL never became a party of the new type. Conditions of membership were extremely lax, and there was not even the organisation for collecting dues. And although 6,000 marched with the IWL in Dublin when Lenin died, it was only in Dublin that the IWL managed to establish any permanent organisation in Ireland. Even there meetings were constantly cancelled because Larkin himself could not attend. In fact, Larkin, although an EC member of the Comintern, far from seeing his main field of activity as the building of a vanguard party looked as he had in the past to industrial unionism as the key to the proletariat's liberation. As a result he gave priority to work in building the Workers' Union of Ireland, which had split from the O'Brien dominated ITGWU taking 16,000 of its Dublin membership.

Throughout the vicissitudes of the 'twenties, Comintern doggedly backed Larkin's IWL despite its nominal existence. Even when former leading members of the CPI disgusted with Larkin's unwillingness to activate the IWL formed the Workers' Party of Ireland the Comintern refused to give it recognition and ordered its liquidation. The liquidation of first the CPI and then the Workers' Party of Ireland (WPI) crushed the morale of many a fine communist in Ireland. The Comintern's instruction to join a nonexistent party and its insistence that the hopes of communism in Ireland be placed in the hands of the temperamental and increasingly erratic Larkin led to many leaving active politics.

It was only in 1930 that the remnants of the communist movement in Ireland were reorganised. In March of that year a Preparatory Committee for the Formation of a Workers' Revolutionary Party (renamed the Revolutionary Workers' Groups — RWGs — in November) was formed with the help of the Comintern and the CPGB in the form of Bob Stewart and Tom Bell.

Unfortunately, the growing domination of centrism over the Comintern which manifested itself in the liquidation of the CPI and the WPI in the 1920s now spawned sectarianism as its official politics. The RWGs had despite this some remarkable successes, not least the establishment of a communist tradition in the Six Counties, where communists led unemployed workers (both Protestant and Catholic) against the police. But much of the good work of the RWGs was undermined by the sectarianism of the Comintern's politics. Under the banner of "class against class" the RWGs moved to the left in regard to the national movement: "Not a single move can now be made for independence without a struggle to overthrow the Irish capitalist class", declared Sean Murray in *Workers' Voice* of July 19 1930 (quoted by M Milotte *Ibid* p99). But for the RWGs, though under the influence of the Comintern, this was reduced to a mechanical, straight fight

for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in the workers' movement the Irish Labour Party was branded "social fascist".

In June 1933 the RWGs met to found the second Communist Party of Ireland. But the high hopes of the founding congress were to be disappointed. Soon after its foundation its paper *Irish Workers' Voice* virtually collapsed. Still tied to the centrist sectarianism of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, in the face of a reactionary onslaught north and south the CPI found itself isolated.

Relations with the IRA hit an all time low. In reaction to the CPI's declared intention of organising factions in the IRA, its executive organised a purge of CPI members. Many joint members of the CPI and the IRA chose the latter, no doubt because of the CPI's isolation. Bad feeling between the two organisations became so acute that at the Wolfe Tone commemoration on June 18 1933 CPI members were attacked by IRA Volunteers and their publications were seized and destroyed. (M Milotte *Ibid* p143.)

Although in 1934 relations between communists and republicans temporarily improved with the formation of the short-lived Republican Congress and the shift in Comintern policy from "class against class" towards popular fronts (which broke the isolation of many communist parties), the fortunes of the CPI still declined. Having shifted from sectarianism, the CPI again adopted a stagist approach. Sean Murray, the General Secretary of the CPI, declared to the first and only Republican Congress "I say you cannot smash capitalism until you get rid of British imperialism" (M Milotte *Ibid* p156). Because of this the CPI fought against moves for the Republican Congress to declare for a Workers' Republic. And with the decisions of the Seventh and last Congress of the Comintern, held over July and August 1935, the CPI took another clear step to the right. In order to win allies amongst the 'progressive' elements in the bourgeoisie the CPI flung itself into the fight for respectability. The Unemployed Workers' Movement and rank and file groups in the transport unions, amongst the CPI's most impressive achievements of the early 1930s, were merely the first victims, as the CPI in both north and south sought to align and integrate with the labour bureaucracy.

While these moves were motivated by a genuine desire to defend the Soviet Union against the growing menace of fascism, they were shortsighted. For by elevating defence of the Soviet Union above the interests of world revolution and by placing trust in sections of the bourgeoisie, including the Progressive Unionist Party, the seeds of political liquidation were planted. In Ireland these centrist seeds quickly germinated and bore right opportunist fruit.

Like the rest of the world communist movement, the CPI tailed the diplomatic manoeuvres of the Soviet state through the twists and turns of its calls for an anti-German alliance between itself and the bourgeois democracies, its non-aggression pact with Hitler, and finally its wartime alliance with Britain. From 1937-39 in the Six Counties the Party desperately sought to cobble together a "Labour/Progressive Unionist" alliance, and in the Twenty-Six Counties it backed de Valera and called for him to join with imperialist Britain against Nazi Germany — a pro-British position which led it to denounce the IRA's bombing campaign in Britain as "helping Hitler".

During the time of the Soviet German non-aggression pact and the 'phony war' the CPI, like the CPGB, first found itself out of step with the Soviet Union by maintaining that the "cardinal enemy" was fascism; then on receiving news of the Comintern's line that the war between Britain and Germany was imperialist the CPI executed a volte-face and came out with calls for peace on German terms. This brought about a certain coming

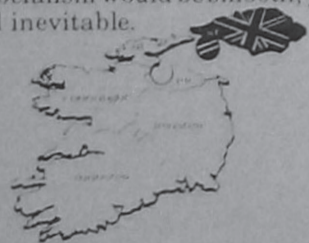
together again of the CPI and the IRA and renewed emphasis on the national struggle against British imperialism. Of course, with the German attack on the Soviet Union this line was put into reverse and in the Twenty-Six Counties the ending of neutrality was called for.

These gyrations, above all the fight for the nationally oppressed to join with the imperialist oppressors, left the CPI in the south more isolated than ever. This and the logic of liquidation enshrined in the decisions of the Seventh Congress led the leadership of the CPI, without any murmur of dissent from the Comintern, to close down its Dublin branch — now the only one in the Twenty-Six Counties — and call for its members individually to enter the Irish Labour Party.

In the Six Counties the Communist Party of Northern Ireland (CPNI) was formed. Under the banner of full support for British imperialism and its Soviet ally it not only gained significant sympathy from Protestant workers but even thousands of Protestant votes in the 1945 Stormont elections. But this had a price. The national question was not just dropped, it was buried. The Party became almost entirely based on Protestant workers — the labour aristocracy — and it showed little interest in winning the disreputable anti-British Catholics. The right opportunist national nihilism of the CPNI was bluntly stated in its pamphlet *For a Prosperous Ulster*, which declared that the Party's aim was to "build a new Ulster of the common man... to keep in step with Britain and the new world" (quoted by M Milotte *Ibid* p212).

The right opportunist course was programmatically enshrined in 1962 when, inspired by the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the *British Road to Socialism*, the Irish Workers' Party (IWP) — formed as the Irish Workers' League in November 1948 by former CPI members in the south) and the CPNI adopted programmes which were thoroughly permeated with reformism, pacifism, and dominated by the theory of stages. Both the IWP's *Ireland Her Own* and the CPNI's *Ireland's Path to Socialism* argued that the goal of a free, united, and socialist Ireland could only be achieved through a whole series of stages, at the centre of which lay the task of laying hold of the existing state machines in Belfast and Dublin, above all parliament. Through using parliament it would be possible to peacefully change the top echelons of the state and carry through far-reaching reforms. In the Twenty-Six Counties the immediate task was to construct a 'progressive' alliance which would push the government to defend the country's political and economic independence and strengthen native capital against the transnationals. Likewise in the Six Counties workers should not fight for socialism but after achieving workers' unity they should seek change through the existing state machine. Stormont, the CPNI maintained, should be given greater local autonomy by Westminster so it could pursue independent fiscal, foreign, and trade policies.

On the basis of a reformed Six Counties statelet and an independent Twenty-Six Counties the next stage of evolution could take place. The 'progressive' governments north and south would be able to develop their respective economies to such an extent that pure economic logic would dictate the establishment of one government for the island. From this stage the path to socialism would be smooth, peaceful, and inevitable.



5. Theory and Practice

Armed with Marxist-Leninist theory communists can base their practice on a knowledge of the objective laws of social development and the dynamic of the balance of forces between the

various social classes in a given country, its objective stage of development, and the relationship between that country and other countries. It is from this knowledge we have put forward our conclusion that Ireland is a medium developed capitalist country where, because the development of native monopolies has taken place under the domination of imperialism, indeed as an appendage of imperialism, the main task of the working class is to achieve hegemony over the national struggle, and, in alliance with other forces which are prepared to fight in a revolutionary way, smash the existing state machines both in the north and the south. We also say that with our understanding of the peculiarities of development in Ireland, especially the existence of a labour aristocracy which has had its privileges and its sectionalism reinforced by the partition of the country, that the communists must have a clearly stated perspective of fighting for not only working class hegemony over the revolution but of taking it uninterrupted to socialism, transforming the democratic dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The true test of the correctness of our theory and especially our programmes — which are after all the crystallisation of our theory and general perspectives — is practice. Under the impact of practice our theory can be adjusted and developed in order to reflect our deeper understanding of reality which in turn makes our practice more effective. This is the method of Marxist-Leninists, a method opportunists merely pay lip service to.

For if we look at the programmes of the IWP and the CPNI and their later variants we can see that in the stormy and indeed revolutionary period ushered in with August 1969 they have proved useless in providing the working class with a clear guide. Throughout the great events of the 1970s, and the growing depth and breadth of the revolutionary movement in the 1980s, communists in Ireland have found themselves marginalised at best and at worst playing a negative role. But let us have a look at the words and deeds of communists in Ireland during the last fifteen years to make our point.

Far from opening the path to peaceful social evolution as the CPNI had expected and its programme had promised, agitation around civil rights proved in the context of the Six Counties to be political dynamite. So as social peace exploded the communists were horrified that potential 'progressive' allies, like Unionist Prime Minister O'Neill, would become alienated. Because of this, while they played a leading role in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) they consistently opposed militant actions. When it did take militant action it was denounced, and even accused of provoking the reactionary onslaught on civil rights marchers and Catholic areas by loyalist thugs and B Specials in 1969.

So the role the communists played in NICRA was not revolutionary but conservative. In the same way when the civil rights agitation was transformed into insurrection with the Battle of the Bogside in August 1969, although the CPNI declared its "full support for the defensive action taken by the working people of the Falls Road" (*Unity* August 23, 1969), instead of fighting to spread the insurrection, win it active allies, and inculcate socialist consciousness amongst the masses, the CPNI looked to Westminster for salvation.

Under the idealist illusion that British monopoly capital wanted to unite Ireland all the better to exploit it; that it considered sectarianism a relic from the stone age; the CPNI expected that the intervention of British troops and British administrators would have positive results. "British monopoly capitalism waits ready to smash their former partners in crime," confidently but stupidly declared comrade Jimmy Stewart (*Unity* March 27 1971).

Because of its abstract, reformist, programmatic outlook the CPNI was

even reduced, in the midst of the developing armed struggle, to trite quotes from Napoleon Bonapart about "never interfering with the enemy when he is in the process of destroying himself". So while the Catholic masses battled with the B Specials, while the IRA fought against British paratroopers, the communists stood on the sidelines moralising.

As the revolutionary crisis matured with the consolidation of no-go areas, the mass activity around internment, the shattering of the Unionist Party, and the fall of Stormont the communists offered meaningless reformist stunts such as the Better Life For All Campaign. (The fact that this Campaign was backed by Labour's proconsul in Ireland, Roy Mason, Tories, and the British TUC should indicate to all partisans of the class struggle that objectively it was pro-imperialist.) And such is the inner logic of reformism that the communists ended up equating the violence of the oppressed with the violence of the oppressors. Comrade Andy Barr even denounced the Provisional IRA as "psychopaths" motivated only by their "appetites" for blood (quoted by M Milotte *Ibid* p.238). Not surprisingly, they mechanically counterposed violent and peaceful, and illegal and legal methods of struggle. And flying in the face of reality they maintained that the armed struggle of the Provisionals "Far from weakening British imperialism (has) in fact contributed to its strengthening."

The commitment to the theory of stages has meant that the communists in Ireland (reunited as the Communist Party of Ireland in 1970), far from giving the movement a clear revolutionary perspective looked to hold it back under the slogan of "workers' unity". This has meant in practice economism and playing down the national question. The CPI abandoned the oppressed for place-seeking in the trade union structure, which is dominated by the Protestant labour aristocracy, claiming that the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NC of ICTU) exemplified "workers' unity", something far from being feared by imperialism as the CPI claims is supported by it as long as it is "reformist unity". So as increasing numbers were drawn into revolutionary activity the CPI sought, in the words of comrade Tom Redmond, to hold them back, to "return" them to "bourgeois parliamentary order" because according to him "it requires 'normality' to win people's minds" (quoted by M Milotte *Ibid* p283). In an attempt to wean the masses back to 'normality' and 'bourgeois order' the CPI opposed the abolition of Stormont in March 1972 and have ever since championed its restoration.

While the IWP and the CPNI were united into an all-Ireland Communist Party in March 1970, it was organised into areas, each with its own paper, policies relevant to its area, and leadership. This meant that there could exist a sort of opportunist division of labour. In the Six Counties under the leadership of comrade Jimmy Stewart (now General Secretary of the CPI) a pacifistic, economic, national nihilist reformism was pursued. In parallel and superficially in contrast the leadership in the Twenty-Six Counties under the then General Secretary Michael O'Riordan placed more emphasis on the national question, albeit in a totally reformist fashion. In this way the Party in the south could look to influencing the greener sections of Fianna Fail as part of the stagist perspective of replacing "the present ruling parties by Progressive Governments North and South" (*For Unity and Socialism*, the 1970 programme of the CPI, p8).

So instead of fighting for a revolutionary democratic government in the Twenty-Six Counties, having a perspective of using it as a revolutionary bastion from which to expel British imperialism from Ireland, instead of seeking to bring about a close identity with the revolutionary masses in the Six Counties from the workers in the south

so as to cultivate a revolutionary and a socialist consciousness amongst them, drawing the struggle in the north into the life of the south, the CPI urges workers to call for UN intervention and for the Dublin government to "exert pressure" on Britain.

Such an outlook has nothing to do with a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist unity of theory and practice. The CPI's analysis is determined by its reformist theory of stages which, because of its unscientific nature, finds itself totally at odds with reality, especially as events have become so dramatic. Of course, the fact that the leadership has done nothing to dump its stagist junk only goes to prove that its opportunism is based on something far more fundamental than intellectual misconception.



6. Conclusion

The fact that British imperialism has not been more severely damaged by the armed struggle in the Six Counties has everything to do with the failure of the communist movements in both Ireland and Britain. In Ireland, if there had been an ideologically-steered vanguard Communist Party the course of the last fifteen years would not only just have been very different but would, more importantly, be more advanced. The spontaneous uprising in the Catholic working class areas of Belfast and Derry in 1969 could, with the active intervention of communists, have been given socialist consciousness. What is more, guided by a Marxist-Leninist programme communists could have achieved considerable successes in defeating the collaborationist SDLP, undermining the loyalism of the Protestant workers, and drawing together the struggles in the north and south. Certainly the existence of a revolutionary situation in the Six Counties combined with the massive growth of the working class in the Twenty-Six Counties, where the social order is visibly under pressure, means that there exist the raw materials which could both give a revolutionary Communist Party mass influence and, under its leadership, British imperialism could receive a body blow which could have far-reaching consequences in Britain itself.

In Britain the Prevention of Terrorism Act, riot training, plastic bullets, and blatant censorship, initially used against the Irish with the consent of the workers' movement in Britain, have proved with a vengeance Marx's famous dictum, that "A nation that suppresses another can never be free." First we saw 'anti-terrorist' raids, troops at Heathrow, and residents of the Six Counties denied entry to the rest of the United Kingdom; then radical and even liberal TV documentaries and plays were put in mothballs, and even relatively innocent pro-Irish pop songs were banned.

But the most striking example of Ireland coming to Britain has been the miners' strike. The police have fought miners using all the paraphernalia and tactics learnt in the struggle against the nationalist population in the Six Counties. The fact that the CPGB leadership has gone out of its way to do nothing, say nothing, and has done its best to ignore Ireland has indirectly contributed to the police terror the miners are now having to confront.

We Leninists of the CPGB are out to expose the rotten record of those who dominate the Executive Committee of our Party. We are fighting to rescue the banner of communism, to raise it from the gutter where the opportunists have trailed it. We promise our Irish friends that in our struggle Ireland will be a central question because the liberation of Ireland will open the door for the liberation of the working class in Britain.

James Mitchell

WHEN THE Communist Party ministers left the French government in July this year, many activists in the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), disillusioned with their Party's participation, heaved a sigh of relief. No longer would they be bound to defend unpopular government policies. Some even hoped that this decision to withdraw from the government would lead to a hardening in PCF policies and a shift to the left by the leadership. Any assessment of the recent history of the PCF would show this to be a vain hope. Its leadership tends to simply react to events, there being no fundamental strategy.

The PCF leadership now wish to distance themselves from Mitterand's government and benefit from the freedom to criticise the economic and social policies of the administration. They will not however actually question the right of the capitalist class to rule, or pose revolutionary tasks for workers. Marchais and his colleagues only think in terms of electoral politics, and their latest manoeuvre is to enable them to regain some popularity in the run-up to the legislative elections in 1986.

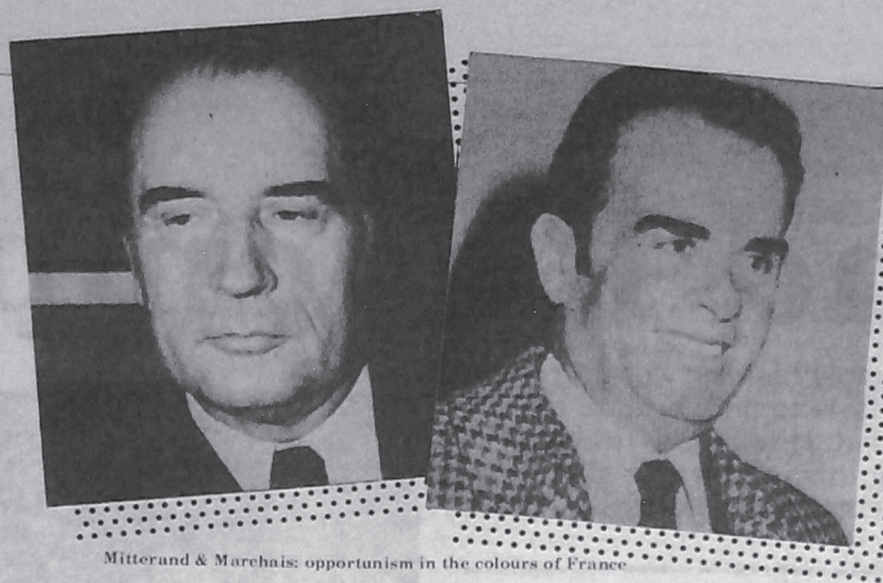
Any militants in the rank and file of the PCF (it is in fact a mass party — of some 700,000 members) who are hoping for a return to communist principles and action now that the PCF is in opposition will be deeply disappointed. Their Party has totally embraced evolutionary parliamentary politics, and the need to win votes at all costs. With the recent successes of Le Pen's semi-fascist National Front, for example, this has led to statements from French Communist Party members such as "there are already too many immigrants in this area" in an attempt to win back the votes of those white working class who have been affected by racist ideas.

On the question of peace the PCF's disgusting social-patriotism shines through. The Party supports France's *Force de Frappe* (strike force), which André Lajoie, the PCF spokesman in parliament, claims "guarantees our independence"; and he freely admits that the French missiles are aimed at the socialist countries.

The PCF-led trade union confederation, the CGT, played an ignominious role at the Talbot car plant at Poissy earlier this year when it engineered the redundancies of 1,905 immigrant workers and declared it a 'victory'. Paradoxically, because of the lethargy of the CGT organisation in the plant many immigrant workers went over to the Socialist-led CFDT and were then denounced by the CGT leaders for causing the ensuing confrontation and riot.

During the past decade the PCF has been subject to major turnrounds in policy. For example, the Common Programme which was agreed between the PS and the PCF in 1972, whereby they would have a reformist electoral pact and stand down for the stronger partner at election times, was torn up by Marchais in 1977 after the pact had ensured the Communist Party the gains that they were after. PCF activists then felt free again to criticise the Socialists right up to the election campaign in 1981. Marchais stood against Mitterand in the first round, but when the Communist Party only received 15% of the vote (5% down on their usual average) Marchais declared the Party's support for Mitterand as President. The defunct Common Programme was therefore carried out in practice, with four PCF ministers in the cabinet.

Contradictions and changes in policy abound in the international arena. The PCF denounced the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, but nevertheless still identified with the world communist movement on other questions. Subsequently, however, there was a move towards the Eurocommunist examples represented by the Italian and Spanish Parties and an accord was signed with the PCI in November 1975. Marchais announced that he disagreed with the Soviet



Mitterand & Marchais: opportunism in the colours of France

The PCF in Crisis

communists over the nature of socialist democracy, but such examples of his justifiable right to make criticisms of a fraternal party degenerated into publicity stunts, such as the boycott of the CPSU Congress in 1976 and the PCF's much vaunted welcome of the Soviet dissident Plyushch to Paris that year.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan came some four years after the series of moves made by the PCF to link in more closely with other Eurocommunist parties in 1976. Marchais made an attempt to distance himself from this trend when, while on a visit to Moscow, he appeared on French television expressing his total support for the actions of the Soviet government. This was a great surprise to bourgeois observers in France, who believed that the PCF had been after 'respectability'; it was in stark contrast to its position on Czechoslovakia. There are several factors to consider here. The statement on Afghanistan would have gladdened a fair number of members in the PCF who still feel an instinctive affinity towards the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, and it would have been undoubtedly well received by his Soviet hosts. It is also indicative of Marchais's maverick character, in the sense that he can make an important snap decision like that while away from home and the PCF leadership. But most important of all it should be taken in conjunction with the PCF policy when in government just six months later. In a pledge it made to the new government in June 1981 it agreed that "we are in favour of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan". On the question of Poland a similar contradiction appears, where a type of compromise is made to appease the feelings of many in the Party's rank and file on the one hand, and to live up to their governmental responsibilities on the other. The criticism of Jaruzelski's martial law by PCF deputies in parliament was kept very low key, but in the June declaration the PCF and the PS had agreed that the dual power situation in Poland, with the PUPW on one side and the Church and Solidarity on the other, must continue.

Any illusions that the PCF has embarked on a rapprochement with Moscow and shunned its erstwhile Eurocommunist friends are shattered by a candid statement made to an historian by Pierre Juquin early on this year:

"We have rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat, rejected the Soviet model, rejected Marxism-Leninism... rejected proletarian

internationalism... We have broken the framework within which French communists had learnt to think and to work for 50 years, and we haven't put in its place another dogmatic framework." (*The Times*, January 20 1984).

This has been a quick summary of the politics of the PCF. There are various groups which are opposing the opportunism in the PCF, both from within and without. Some of these anti-opportunists point to the 22nd Congress of the PCF in February 1976, when the Party renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a major date in the Party's crisis. For example, the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party (CRPC) has declared its opposition to the line of the 22nd Congress and considers that the PCF has now gone too far: "The reformist line of the PCF is irreversible... [Real Communists] have no common interests either with this type of politics or with this party." (Statement dated June 30 1984.) In 1920, French communists could have been proud that their newly-formed Party lived up to the conditions of entry to the Communist International, but it did not take so long before the rot set in. The CRPC notes that the roots of the French Party's reformism go back to 1934, when the Communist International sanctioned discussions between the PCF and the SFIO (the forerunners of the PS). The Seventh Congress of the International laid down the line of the Popular Front which enabled Thorez, leader of the PCF, to forbid criticism of the Socialists (who before had been branded as 'social fascists').

The CRPC has three local bulletins: *L'Insurgé* (set up a year ago in Créteil), *La Barricade du 13me* (ie in the 13th arrondissement in Paris), and *La Tribune de Seine-Saint-Denis*. They appear on the 10th, 20th, and 30th of each month respectively. There is also the nationwide journal *Le Communiste* which is based in Paris and which functions as the organ of the Committee for Communist Liaison (CLC). The tendency around *Le Communiste* has existed since the mid-fifties, although the CLC itself was only set up last December.

The main paper in the south of France is *Le Communiste des Bouches-du-Rhone*, which is the journal of the Communist Grouping of the South East, based in Marseilles. It is now closely associated with the CRPC, although originally it was the sister organisation of *Le Communiste*. The former journal is the second eldest, having been started in 1960. All the various journals are really agitational

broadsheets aimed at the left of the PCF and other class conscious workers. In some areas there are two papers side by side from each organisation: in the Val de Marne there is *L'Etendard Communiste* representing the CLC and *L'Insurgé* representing the CRPC. Both groups also publish pamphlets on themes such as Zionism, the Second World War, Proletarian Internationalism, and to mark important anniversaries. They also have close links with various immigrant groups in France such as the Resident Martinican Communists and the Union of Turkish Workers.

The main difference between the two main opposition groups is self evident from their titles: the Committee for Communist Liaison sees its role as one of coordinating all the various anti-opportunist groups inside and outside the PCF on a national basis, with a view to a future national organisation; whereas the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Communist Party has set itself the immediate task of rebuilding the Communist Party as against the already existing PCF, which it considers irreformable. The two organisations regularly quote from each other in their publications, and on some issues, such as the campaign to boycott the EEC elections (see *The Leninist*, No.9 p.9), there is no tactical difference between them.

There are certain parallels to be drawn between the situation in Britain and the situation in France. The *British Road to Socialism* envisages a Labour government of "a new type" being elected with Communist Party support and carrying out a peaceful socialist transition. The French experiment in Mitterandism has shown in practice that this will lead to nothing other than capitulation before the bourgeoisie and disillusionment of progressive workers with their Communist Party.

When Mitterand was elected the *Morning Star* too drew parallels. Its predictions showed a great thirst for the type of class collaboration that was happening in France to happen here: "Mitterand's victory creates an opening towards the possibility of real, lasting fundamental change... Within France and abroad there is a fear that Mitterand's breakthrough in France might be emulated here in Britain — with a Labour Party consolidating its policy positions and roots at a time of reactionary government this surely is well on the cards... Against a united right, determined to do all it can to frustrate any turning to the left, the left must develop unity." (Editorial May 12 1981)

We also read that Mitterand's election "means important changes in all areas: economic, political, social, and spiritual... [He has an] ambitious programme [of] nationalisations, cleaning up the economy, an effective fight against unemployment, democratisation, an end to inequality, respect for international alliances, and a policy of peace and disarmament... [French Communist Party ministers are in the government not for] form's sake or prestige but to bring out a policy that responds to the wishes of the majority of French people for democratic and social change." No, that wasn't the *Morning Star*, that was the editor of *Pravda* writing five months later. Victor Afanasyev also expressed the very optimistic prediction that the election of the 'Left' in France was the forerunner to the end of capitalism, with the Communist Party having its role to play (*Pravda* quoted in *The Guardian* October 17, 1981). What conclusions are we to draw from this? Afanasyev at least has the excuse that at the time of writing the Soviet leadership was hoping for better relations with France, now that a Socialist government was in power. The editor of the *Morning Star*, though, was without doubt driven by a desire to sit in a cabinet with the British Mitterands.

Beyond Redemption?

The current miners' strike is the most historic working class struggle since 1926 yet the YCL fails to match up to this in either its propaganda or recruitment. How is it, at this time of intense class conflict, that the organisation which should be the vanguard of young working class militants is yet again failing to deliver?

Chris Kincaid

IN THE PERIOD around the General Strike the YCL threw all its energies into the struggle: centrally it produced 4000 copies of a daily bulletin *The Young Striker*; districts produced versions of the bulletin with extended local news; and it also enthusiastically threw itself into the key areas of picketing, defence corps, and communications.

Now while we are not currently in a general strike situation, the miners' strike is broadly regarded as the most important fight for the working class since 1926. Yet in stark contrast to the YCL of that date our present YCL has all but ignored the miners' strike: *Challenge* has remained a two-monthly publication and has paid only tokenistic tribute to the miners; its General Council has failed to have a specific item on the miners since the strike began; a motion that the General Secretary of the YCL should go on a speaking tour on the miners' issue, put to the last General Council meeting, did not get a seconder; and at the same meeting the leadership voted not to discuss the political issues involved in the strike. "Collect food and money" has been the only message from the 'leadership' of the 'vanguard'. This is not to disparage the hard work many YCLers have done in support of the strike but to point to the complete lack of political leadership.

This political poverty is reflected in terms of membership. During the period of the strike not only has the YCL failed to recruit large numbers of young miners but its membership has actually declined from 627 to 546. What is more, most of these are paper members not hard core activists. In 1926 the YCL started off with a similar sized membership, albeit more committed, which trebled within a year, 75% of which were young miners. In 1984 the YCL with its limited resources prefers to pay the wages of its two fulltimers rather than spend the money on propaganda. It is a sickening situation to any genuine communist. But what is more sickening is that the YCL is not an entity in itself, it is a barometer of the Party. For this reason alone the YCL is a very important organisation. It is an indication of what the Party is heading towards; the YCL's decline is only more rapid because of its near total reliance on recruiting new members.

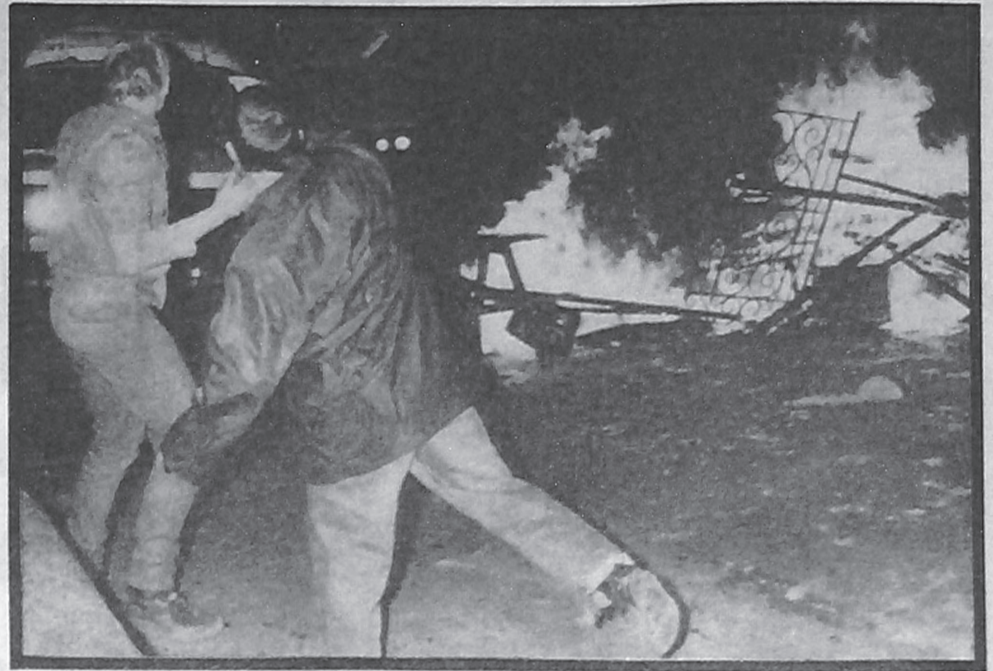
The General Secretary of the YCL during this strike and since the last Congress in 1983 has been comrade Doug Chalmers. He is retiring (having had two extensions to his membership) after the 1985 National Congress, and it is worth looking at his regime to try and understand how the YCL has become so politically impoverished at a time which offers so many opportunities. Since the 1983 Congress, which woke many with a start when the left won considerable gains, Chalmers, who comes from a right opportunist background, has had an unholy alliance with the Euros to push back the left. Given this start, one thing has dominated the League over the past two years — bureaucratic heavy handedness. The *pièce de résistance* was when comrade Chalmers called the police on young communists (a number of whom were black) whom he was anxious to exclude from a meeting in Hackney which he had intended to use to his factional advantage. Not only this but subsequently two YCLers were

expelled, one of whom was a GC member, for defending the rights of these comrades.

This is perhaps the most shameful example for the unprincipled and uncommunist behaviour that Chalmers and Co have been willing to engage in over the past two years to overcome any opposition. But in general the internal life of the YCL has been totally suffocated: new branches suspected of oppositionist potential have to wait for official recognition which sometimes never comes; new applicants to the YCL are checked with local Party Euros and if they are known to have oppositionist tendencies (or parents) often never receive a reply to their application. This leads us to another Chalmers tactic, a black joke among the YCL left, and that is the incredibly high propensity for mailings from St John St to oppositionists to get "lost in the post". The more important the mailing the less likely it is to arrive unless, of course, it is a disciplinary notice, in which case it comes recorded delivery. In addition to such regular features of YCL life, at the last GC meeting comrade Chalmers denied the meeting information about YCL finances because in the past *The Leninist* had published details of such matters. God forbid that the membership should be informed of what goes on in the upper echelons of their organisation.

Because of its geographical closeness to the YCL national office, London District has been one of the main victims of the bureaucrats. Since Terry Gallagher left the post of London Secretary under less than fraternal circumstances five years ago, London YCL has been denied a Congress. It was not until October of this year that comrade Chalmers felt confident enough to actually hold this Congress, having postponed it earlier this year because the left was felt to be too strong. The Congress was marked by the way the constitution was bent to breaking point for various branches with the 'right' politics, including Chalmers' own branch, while one oppositionist branch had its rights taken away from it on a most fallacious basis.

Unfortunately this is all par for the course. So what role have the opposition played in combating these disgraces? In reality very little; dominated by *Straight Left* they have proved themselves to be incapable of any real initiative and totally unprincipled. Supporters of a factional publication themselves, taking their line straight out of *Communist*, they have proved willing not only to vote to ban *The Leninist* but to move an amendment which makes handling it a disciplinary offence. These 'hard-liners' have continually refused to take up opportunities offered by a left majority on the GC (something mustered only occasionally). This included a refusal on their part to try to depose comrade Chalmers when they had the chance just before the Party's 38th Congress because "he's only an individual". Think of the reverberations throughout the Party if the leader of the YCL had been deposed by the left just before Congress — but it was too adventurous for these conciliators. The refusal of *Straight Leftists* to take a principled stand was further indicated by the fact that at the last GC some of their members abstained on whether comrade Chalmers should be given an age extension until after he had successfully bureaucratically manag-



Young miners organise hit squads, the YCL organises charity.

ed the forthcoming National Congress in April 1985.

After this Congress Chalmers will be put out to grass. Surprising as it may seem the Euros will not be sorry to see him go; Chalmers has undoubtedly been of use to them but the Euros regard him as a dull bureaucrat without political skill or charm. He has created the conditions for the Euros to grow but they are now distinguishing themselves much more as a trend distinct from Chalmers and right opportunism. For example, on the question of the General Secretary's extension the Euros grudgingly agreed to it but made their reluctance patently clear. Also comrade Brian Jones, National Organiser and toadie to Chalmers, had his card marked when arch Euro comrade Mark Perryman moved that his post be advertised before the 1985 Congress.

So who will replace comrade Chalmers? Certainly the main runner must be comrade Lorraine Douglas who has been a rapidly rising star in the YCL since her exit from CP student politics. An exit no doubt aided by comrade Douglas' part in the production of *Spectre* — her biggest political *faux pas*. Some Party members may be forgiven for not having heard of this publication which was buried alive almost as soon as it appeared. Destined to be (or not, as it turned out) a regular Party paper of CP students, its first and last issue brought condemnation from all sides of the House, so to speak. This publication's editorial was patently Euro:

"The old Testament school of Marxism has done much harm and must be allowed to do so no more." More than this it was utterly tasteless. Features included 'Tank track' (complete with tank and a picture of Stalin) and 'Slags Corner' which included a spoof advert for a "dick enlarger". Subtlety is not Douglas's strong point but in her struggle for a Party career she has learnt something from the *Spectre* debacle and certainly has more political acumen than Chalmers. Unlike him she is both trusted by the Party leadership and is liked by the Euros.

So whither the YCL? There are certainly rumours abroad that the Party is considering shutting it down because of the expense relative to productivity and because it is, despite the antics of the General Secretary, vulnerable to the left (eg the June GC had a broad left majority and refused to back the Party EC's position on the *Morning Star*). However, rather than shut the YCL down, which would be a very significant political step, it seems possible that the Party may advocate some form of merger with the CP students, thereby giving it greater

control over the League. This speculation is based on the fact that the Party has been encouraging such links in the form of a newly created Youth Affairs Committee, with student and YCL representatives hand picked by the Party; also the Party has fixed up an education school for the YCL, an unheard-of development in recent years given the fact that so much emphasis has been put on YCL autonomy. Such speculation is also backed up by the fact that the YCL Euros orchestrated a campaign on the last GC to get one of the three GC resolutions to the 1985 Congress changed from "Peace" to "Education and Training". In addition to this Graeme Harker National Student Organiser, is to be a visitor on every YCL GC.

This may or may not be what the Party leadership has in store for the YCL but what *should* its future be? Some Party members may read this article and see such a catalogue of disaster that they would urge the shutdown of the YCL at the earliest possible moment. We would strongly argue against such an attitude. The YCL is a barometer of the Party; it isn't controlled by a load of young irresponsibles, it represents the Party's political failings. The problem will not go away by closing the YCL, it is a political problem.

It is our communist duty to work to transform the YCL into a genuine communist youth league, not to protect young militant Party recruits from the League as is common practice in the Party. This is a defeatist and very incorrect position to take; young recruits have a duty to join the YCL and to fight for communist policies within that body. The YCL cannot be transformed without new recruits. One of the reasons the YCL leadership has been so reluctant to become politically involved in the miners strike is no doubt because they know that the vast majority of young militant miners are far to the left of them. Young miners have been looking for political involvement and it is no overstatement to say that the failure of the YCL to give communist leadership is in no small way responsible for the swelling of the petty bourgeois left's ranks with young miners. The recruitment of even a relatively small number of these young miners to the YCL could turn the organisation on its head. It is our job to make that happen.

Party members cannot turn a blind eye to the YCL; it is our responsibility to save it from the Euro clutches, not to connive in its destruction. The YCL represents the future of the Party; if you surrender this battle you may as well be surrendering the war.

"All out brothers, (and sisters)"

Geraldine Duffy

Tony Cliff *Class Struggle and Women's Liberation: 1640 to the present day* Bookmarks, pbk, pp271, £4.50.

ANYONE familiar with the history of the Socialist Workers' Party will understand the main purpose of this book. It is Tony Cliff's definitive work against feminism — an ideology which has wrought much havoc in his party, culminating in the shutdown of *Women's Voice*, which had become the feminist voice within the SWP.

In this book Cliff wages ideological warfare against bourgeois feminism by tracing key aspects of women's struggles since 1640. It is an ambitious project but it is successful in that it brings much information together that has been 'hidden from history'. Of course some of these women's struggles have been retraced by feminist writers but more often than not such authors have distorted the truth to present a unitary 'women's history' and have ignored the glaring class antagonisms so evident in the facts. Cliff takes it upon himself to iron out the distortions and to expose the fundamental antagonism between bourgeois feminism and socialism. The cornerstone of his argument is that working class women must be an integral part of the wider working class struggle for socialism as opposed to being part of a cross-class sisterhood.

In as much as Cliff exposes the incompatibility between feminism and socialism he is correct to do so, especially given the fact that much of the left, not least the Communist Party, has taken feminist ideology on board. However, when it comes down to it this position is nothing more than a basic tenet of Marxism; it is when Cliff ventures beyond this stage that he exposes that failing so characteristic of the SWP — economism. In his rush to defend working class unity against bourgeois and separatist ideology he is prepared to ignore the specific oppression that women suffer:

"As workers too, the needs of men and women are identical. Because of these things any separatism between men and women workers will damage both, and will damage women more than men." (p102.)

Thus Cliff leads working class women into an economic trap; he refuses to see women in any other context than as backward workers. For this reason Cliff's logic argues that women as low paid workers should not see themselves as any different from other low paid workers; the specific reason why most women workers are low paid relative to male workers is ignored. Women are thus confined to economic demands; the question of democratic rights and political struggle is pushed firmly to one side as unimportant. Cliff fails to link the economic demands with the political ones and hence in essence he presents the politics of a militant trade unionist, not those of a revolutionary leader.

Throughout the book the examples of Lenin, Zetkin, and Kollontai are used to prove Cliff's case against the feminists:

"The Bolsheviks understood the difficulty of organising working class women... The conclusions they drew from this were fundamentally different from those of the feminist separatists. The Bolsheviks argued that women and men workers face the same bosses, the same capitalist state." (p109.)

What is significant about this is what Cliff ignores about the way the Bolsheviks organised women. Before the revolution the Bolsheviks faced considerable problems over the women's question due to the reticence of many of them to recognise the special needs of women workers. Lenin was viciously scathing about those socialists who argued against special work among women for fear of bourgeois feminism. Despite Cliff's claimed adherence to orthodoxy he is clearly guilty of this. It was outstanding women communists like Kollontai and Zetkin, to whom Cliff pays more homage than attention, who built the basis for the revolutionary strategy and tactics adopted by the Bolsheviks designed to mobilise working class women to struggle for working class power. This included raising specific demands related to women's oppression and recognising the need for special forms of agitation, propaganda, and organisation to draw women into struggle. It included a working class women's movement led by communists.

Cliff poses no such tasks, he provides no comprehensive answer, his argument is based on the premise that although women's oppression is a result of their position within the family, it is only as workers that they become able to struggle against capitalism. We do not deny the importance of women as wage earners becoming involved in struggle but it is certainly nowhere near the only, or even necessarily the key, way for women to become involved in struggle.

The February 1917 revolution was sparked by the struggle of women demanding bread for their families. It was their role as wives and mothers, not as wage earners, that determined their action. Likewise at the present time the miners' wives' movement is a living illustration that women's role as wives and mothers can throw them into the working class struggle. The defiance of these women in fighting for the future of their families and communities in the face of grinding poverty cannot be met by simply telling them to join their union and the SWP. Cliff has no answer for these women, he cannot provide the answer which is so glaringly obvious and necessary — to transform these wives' support committees into a working class women's movement to fight alongside their class brothers in the struggle for socialism.

Cliff is correct to argue that neither women's liberation nor socialism will be achieved by the separatism of bourgeois feminism but he falls into the opposite trap of failing to take into account the specific oppression of women under capitalism. Instead of fighting for the working class to struggle for women's equality as part of the struggle for socialism Cliff argues against women raising their specific issues because this will only serve to divide the working class. According to the SWP, women's liberation will somehow materialise, it will all magically come clean in the socialist wash.

As an introductory history to the struggles of working class women this book is undoubtedly valuable. As an answer to feminism its arguments are limited and economic, it fails to take on board the real problems in organising working class women. In essence Cliff fails working class women and he fails those revolutionaries looking for a comprehensive argument against, and an alternative to, the scourge of bourgeois feminism.

Under the shadow of the 20th Congress

John Mann

Proletarian No 2: Proletarian Internationalism and the Irish National Question. Sept 1984, London, pp84, 60p.

PROLETARIAN is a small, left orientated sect which, although having been expelled from the centrist New Communist Party (NCP) three years ago, has continued to stubbornly and uncritically tail behind the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in typical centrist fashion. Because it deifies the CPSU, using the dialectical method of Hegel rather than Marx, *Proletarian* upholds the opportunist decisions of the Twentieth Congress as 'necessary' adaptations to objective changes in the world balance of forces. Thus it is fated to carry the seeds of the same rightism which has reduced our own Party to its present state of disintegration and bankruptcy. Only by breaking totally from such opportunism and centrism can we hope to reforge the communist movement in Britain into a genuine revolutionary party capable of leading the working class to socialist victory.

In line with the general attitude of the CPSU towards national liberation movements, *Proletarian* has adopted a relatively positive position of support for the revolutionary Republican movement in Ireland. It quite rightly condemns the cowardly revisionism of the CPGB and the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) for their denunciation of IRA 'terrorism'. But in an unconvincing effort to 'prove' the non-complicity of the CPSU with this specific policy of opportunism it scrambles about trying to find quotes from *Izvestia* supporting "Irish Freedom Fighters" only to be embarrassed by Tass's well-publicised statement, in which comrade Gordon McLennan was approvingly quoted, condemning the Brighton bombing. The problem for *Proletarian* is that the CPSU does not consider the Irish struggle to be sufficiently important enough to risk major disagreements with the CPGB and the CPI, or indeed British imperialism. Therefore the CPSU does not have a principled position of support for revolutionary Republicanism in Ireland. *Proletarian's* position of support for the IRA, to comply with centrist orthodoxy, hangs on the slender argument that the Soviet Union looks on the latter in the same light as the PLO and the ANC.

As a left centrist trend *Proletarian* looks to the model of communist parties in El Salvador and Nicaragua which support the national liberation movements in their own countries. Although an advance on the rightism of other parties which have completely relinquished any possible role in an armed insurrection, such left centrist parties often suffer a tailist approach towards petty bourgeois revolutionary movements and confine themselves to the democratic tasks of the revolution. This is the case with *Proletarian's* strategy for communists in Ireland, who are called upon to provide only a supportative role in the South for the armed struggle in the North (in line with Sinn Fein's policy) and to even enter into a reformist alliance with "the left wing of Fianna Fail" (p77).

Leninists, however, call on communists to support the democratic fight of the revolutionary Republican movement in Ireland, but not to tail it. Communists are different from revolutionary democrats in that they must seek to take the revolution on to socialism and, in the context of Ireland, establish the hegemony of the

working class, especially in the South, thus combining the struggle for national reunification with the struggle to overthrow the capitalist state in the South as well as in the North.

Proletarian on the other hand condemns communists who attempt to lead the national liberation struggle as "dogmatic and sectarian" (p38), as in the case of Amin in Afghanistan and of Coard in Grenada, and claims that liberation movements such as Sinn Fein/IRA are now the 'vanguard' which will carry the revolution through to socialism. This perspective totally distorts the class nature of these movements and therefore falsely allots the tasks of building communism not to the working class but to the petty bourgeoisie. This is a major departure from Marxism and is essentially the same view as Proudhonism, anarchism, Maoism, and all other ideologies which champion the radical petty bourgeoisie as the 'vanguard'.

Although *Proletarian's* sectarian attitude towards the CPGB is rooted in its tailism towards Sinn Fein, it must still justify this on the basis of centrist orthodoxy. In conformity with the CPSU it begrudgingly recognises our Party as the "national contingent of the world communist movement" (p13) and as the "mass party of the politically conscious sections of the British working class" (p2) — and so it is — yet *Proletarian* still facetiously rejects the Leninist path of waging an ideological struggle within its ranks, because that would be a breach of democratic centralism! What a joke. Tell that to the Eurocommunists and the Editor of the *Morning Star*.

But despite such feeble excuses for retaining a sectarian disdain for the working class movement in Britain, the fact remains that *Proletarian* is as ideologically hamstrung as those other centrists in our Party. Like them *Proletarian* would be unable to get to the roots of opportunism in our Party. A critical analysis of the *British Road to Socialism* is promised for *Proletarian* No 3, but because the CPSU endorsed that programme in 1951 and at the Twentieth Congress, *Proletarian* will be unable to reject the reformist premise on which all five editions of the *BRS* are based.

An illustration of how far to the right *Proletarian* is capable of sliding is provided by its position on peace. This is in line with the policy adopted by the CPSU at its Twentieth Congress which states that world war can be prevented by a combination of the socialist countries pursuing peaceful coexistence and by the communist parties in the West promoting pacifism. Consequently *Proletarian* calls for communists to build reformist alliances with all forces capable of 'opposing' US imperialism and NATO, with the implication that in Ireland this could include the Protestant Church in the Six Counties (Ian Paisley?), Enoch Powell (he opposes the EEC and NATO), and the UDA (which is in favour of an 'Independent Ulster')! This absurd, reactionary lineup goes even further than the popular frontism of the 1930s by including fascists as well!

Proletarian shows us that no matter how far to the left centrism goes it can eventually collapse into rightism. For Leninism all issues including national liberation and peace must be connected to the struggle for socialist revolution, and unlike *Proletarian* that is the position we fight for in both Britain and Ireland.

Grenada Fake Gem



John Miller

THOUGH imperialism maintains tight control of Grenada in conjunction with the stooge troops of reactionary rulers Seaga of Jamaica and 'Uncle Tom' Adams of Barbados, behind the facade of the Interim Advisory Council and below the surface the masses are slowly but surely starting to move again.

Despite the pernicious activities of US 'Psy-Ops' (Psychological Operations) units, despite the restrictions (often including bans and expulsions) placed on journalists opposing the puppet regime, despite the machinations of the CIA-sponsored AIFLD labour front, and despite the general harassment of especially women and youth by the colonising troops — political and trade union organisation of a leftward orientation have begun to re-emerge.

Many of the trade unions that gained a new lease of life during the four and a half years of the Revolution have resumed functioning, have even in certain areas won wage increases, and perhaps more significantly held their employers to the implementation of the equal pay and paid maternity leave measures won by the Revolution. The Grenada TUC was resurrected in March and in June categorically rejected the Advisory Council's threats to reinstate pre-Revolution premier Gairy's anti-strike legislation.

The most significant development however, is the emergence of a new political party from the battle-scarred New Jewel Movement (NJM).

A new party

In March this year an organisation entitled the 'Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of October 19th 1983 Foundation' was established by former People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) ministers close to Bishop, and ostensibly dedicated to the remembrance of his ideas and his work.

After perhaps having 'tested the waters', these political allies of Bishop then proceeded to establish a political party — the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM). But unsurprisingly the MBPM seems not to have been received with open arms by the many NJM members who supported Coard's position (in fact the position of the majority of the Central Committee and the vast majority of the membership) during the events up to October 1983. An indication of this is provided by a statement issued by the MBPM on June 6 and published in the October/November edition of *Race Today* magazine which describes differences that arose within a group of NJM leaders prior to the MBPM's foundation.

Following the explosion of October 1983, the Grenadian High Commissioner in Britain, Fennis Augustine, returned to Grenada to assist in rebuilding the NJM. But, according to the MBPM statement, soon after he arrived "differences began to appear on fundamental issues" between him and the chief architects of the MBPM, namely Kenrick Radix, George Louison, Einstein Louison, and Lyden Ramhdanny.

Augustine "completely opposed Maurice Bishop's name being part of the name of the new party". His protagonists argued that Bishop "was the greatest leader our people have ever known" and that parties are often named after great leaders. So

it became quite clear that the new party was not to be a reorganised and reunited NJM, a party grounded on the honest admission of errors by all those concerned who survived, but would merely represent one wing of the NJM. What Augustine so rightly rejected was the attempt to virtually canonise Bishop and the completely uncritical attitude towards his (and G.Louison's) actions in defying decisions of the Central Committee and party last September and October.

But the main point that Augustine baulked at was the suggestion that George Louison should give evidence against "the Coard clique" still imprisoned and awaiting trial. In an interview reprinted in *Forward Ever*, the NJM (UK) bulletin, George Louison states that when detained and questioned by US security police: "I told them I would have given them any evidence I knew about that particular period surrounding the killings that would lead to the conviction of the Coard clique." Augustine held to his firm objection to this and subsequently withdrew from the group that was to found the MBPM. Fennis Augustine's judgement on these questions was absolutely correct, and for Louison to offer to give evidence to a colonial imperialist court in order to wreak revenge and possibly help condemn to death a one-time fellow NJM member is an utter disgrace, a betrayal of the Grenadian Revolution.

Further indications of opposition to the new party amongst surviving NJM forces is actually given by Louison himself: "The ultraleft position of the Central Committee is even today reflected in the antipeople nature of those who still... go along with the Coard cliques's position." (*Forward Ever*, Summer 1984) Louison goes on in an attempt to smear those revolutionaries in the most clumsy way, claiming that they have become "anti-Cuban", are engaging in "antipeople activities", are embezzling funds of the National Women's Organisation, and even have "began to show signs of warning to the invaders" (with their leaders in prison?); finally, sinking to the depths of demagoguery, he claims that the Coard leadership, after the US invasion "were found without the slightest scratch, with large sums of money in their pockets, prepared to skip the country."

So blatant and filthy a smear campaign speaks far more about the politics of Mr Louison. In fact the more the MBPM position is examined the more rottenly opportunist it is seen to be.

The MBPM manifesto

The MBPM was officially launched on May 27 this year to be quickly followed by the manifesto in mid-June. As with any political organisation, the manifesto is of particular importance as it is the most concentrated expression of the party's strategy and orientation. The bulk of the document deals with the numerous social and welfare programmes of the PRG, such as those on 'popular participation', youth, women, education, and even on the radio station. However, at its core the manifesto is based on an economic strategy of an essentially reformist nature; a plan to maintain and develop capitalism in Grenada permeates the programme: "MBPM pledges to build a mixed economy

with state, private and co-operative sectors..."

"MBPM will encourage the local private sector and foreign investors by granting incentives..."

"MBPM recognises that foreign investment is the key component to developing the industrial and tourism sectors..." (from *International Press*, August 1984, Vol 22, No 15)

The central issue as many students of the Russian Revolution will know, is not so much whether there is immediate widespread socialisation of production during the revolutionary transition, but the nature of the state.

Likewise in Grenada the crux of the matter is to seize power and with the new revolutionary state exercise control over capitalist production, wresting 'by degrees' all capital from the exploiters, the rate depending upon prevailing economic and political factors.

But nowhere in the MBPM manifesto do we find even a disguised mention on the question of the state — the need to smash the old and construct the new workers' and poor peasants' state organisations. Neither do we find a word on workers' control in any shape or form, and socialism is not even mentioned.

The NJM left

As we know, a split opened wide within the NJM in 1983, a split that took the form of a dispute around the capacities and abilities of central NJM leaders, but whose substance lay in substantial political difference (see *The Leninist* No.8).

Though some may still deny this, further indications are provided by an interview with Kenrick Radix, co-leader with Louison of the MBPM. Speaking of the OREL (Organisation for Revolutionary Education and Liberation) group, which Bernard Coard apparently founded after returning to Grenada in 1975, he said that it had "published a newspaper called *The Spark*. In those early years, they attacked the NJM... as a petit-bourgeois party." But despite such criticisms, according to Radix OREL "... approached the NJM leadership proposing an amalgamation into the NJM on one condition: that the NJM transform itself into their idea of a Marxist-Leninist party. This idea was apparently based on the model of Jamaica, where the Workers Liberation League, with which Coard worked closely, was in the process of transforming itself into the Workers' Party of Jamaica — a Marxist-Leninist party." (*Intercontinental Press*, April 1984, Vol 22, No 8).

Although that idea was rejected by the NJM leadership, nevertheless the OREL people joined the NJM, dropping any preconditions. Even more interesting is his claim that OREL people took up key positions within the new state after the March 13 1979 Revolution so that "they would be in the vital and strategic positions when the time came to initiate the 'second stage' of the revolution — something they declared to be indispensable." (*Ibid*)

If we are to believe Radix (and we see no reason not to, as he is in his terms trying to discredit Coard and his close comrades) then it becomes clear that the "Coard group" were the

communists within the NJM, they were its most advanced element and sought to transform it into a genuine workers' party and to direct revolutionary Grenada firmly onto the path of socialism.

Prisoners of imperialism

For well on one year Bernard Coard, Phyllis Coard, Hudson Austin and many other leaders of the NJM and the PRA (Peoples Revolutionary Army) have been incarcerated and subjected to deprivation, humiliation, and torture. The plight of these revolutionaries is graphically described by Bernard Coard himself in a letter smuggled out of his Grenadian cell, extracts of which have been published by the *Morning Star*. Coard details attempts to intimidate both the defendants and potential witnesses for the defence; reveals that 90% of the political prisoners have seen their lawyers for less than 40 minutes each in a six month period; and states that critical documents for the defence have been seized by US troops. As Coard points out — the invasion forces completely control the trial and therefore:

"There really can be no possibility of a free and fair trial, conducted in the presence of, not to mention fully orchestrated by, foreign invasion and occupation forces." (*Morning Star*, September 14, 1984)

Nevertheless, in addition to the shameful stance of the MBPM leaders in Grenada, other voices have been raised, not only in rather hasty and ill-considered condemnation of Coard and his comrades, but also to deny these prisoners of imperialism support and defence. Such an unprincipled position was displayed by a certain comrade J Youell in the letter columns of the *Morning Star* (September 18), to be sharply and effectively rebuffed by comrade Tom Durkin, who was absolutely right when he called such a stance a "Pontius Pilate act" (*Morning Star*, September 28). The only truly correct and principled position was stated comprehensively by comrade Chris Searle in his carefully balanced article in the September 1 edition of the *Morning Star*: "With Bishop dead, the easiest thing in the world is to make Coard and those gaoled with him the scapegoats for everything that went wrong in Grenada's fallen revolution. But that is neither an objective or educated approach, for it fails to establish self criticism by all concerned who survived the events and an honest admission of errors as the way that the Grenadian people and the progressive movement internationally can learn most from what happened in Grenada last October." Precisely. Yes, there are lessons to be learnt by all revolutionaries, all communists. Leninists will strive to develop and deepen our analysis of the Grenadian Revolution. Meanwhile it is our duty to defend those imprisoned by imperialism, no matter what their mistakes or their misjudgements might have been. The NJM must rebuild itself as a communist vanguard free from opportunist influence for the tasks that lie ahead. But we leave the final word with comrade Bernard Coard "They can crush our bodies but never our spirit. They can set back the liberation process of our people, but can never end it."