

## FREE DEAN HANCOCK AND RUSSELL SHANKLAND

# Free the class war prisoners

THE LIFE sentences imposed on the young miners Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are an act of naked class vengeance. They were branded as murderers for the killing of the miserable scab-herder David Wilkie, who because of his opposition to the miners' strike and greed drove lone strikebreaker David Williams to work each morning.

We say that Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are not murderers or criminals. They are soldiers of the class war; they are now class war prisoners.

While their action was condemned by union fat cats, traitors like Kinnock and Willis, the tailist *Morning Star*, the right-moving SWP, and even Arthur Scargill, we and most militant miners said Wilkie got his just deserts.

Because Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are class war prisoners our class has a sacred duty to free them. The Tories won't listen to sweet reason, arguments which say that their sentences should be reduced to manslaughter, nor pious pleas from assorted clerics or Labourite windbags. Only mass action the likes of which freed the Pentonville 5 can free them, and freedom is what we must demand and nothing less.

As soon as the savage sentences were announced, militant miners in two pits struck in solidarity with them and thousands marched in protest through their home town Rhymney. These examples must be followed and built upon, not only in the South Wales coalfield but in all coalfields and across all industries. This is the way to free them.

While of course individual cases like those of Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland must be highlighted the fight to free them must not be separated from the fight around the 80-plus other miners and their supporters languishing in jail and the hundreds who remain sacked. The spontaneous protests in South Wales must be united with similar upsurges. In South Kirkby in Yorkshire there has already been a strike over the sacking of four men which lasted over a week. It drew in miners from Houghton Main, Dodsworth, Ferrymore Riddings, Royston Drift, and Shafton workshops and threatened to engulf most of South Yorkshire if Jack Taylor hadn't stepped in to defuse it, calling for a return to work although the four remained sacked.

There can be no doubt that the demand for the reinstatement of all sacked and the release of all class war prisoners can become the battle cry of all class conscious workers not only in Britain but throughout the entire world. Militant miners who established the National Rank and File Miners' Movement quite rightly therefore see the fight around the sacked and imprisoned lads as a central tactical question which can be used to fuse together day to day struggles over issues like water money, union representation, and safety.

The shifting of the balance of forces away from a dictatorial NCB is inexorably linked to the fight around the imprisoned and sacked. Faced with an NUM leadership

which seems to have had the fight kicked out of it the NCB is determined to press its advantage. It has remained more or less inflexible over those sacked and is going hell for leather to isolate and get rid of as many more militants as it can. It is sacking men left, right, and centre, even threatening dismissal for "verbal intimidation" which includes using words like "scab" and the new substitutes like "Henry" (the scab from TV's *Coronation Street*), "SS" (Super Scab), and "SAS" (Still-a-Scab).

The struggle against sackings and the demand for the reinstatement of all sacked and imprisoned men is an issue miners have shown a determination to fight around. It can also mobilise potentially massive support from other sections of the working class. Because of this a fightback around the sacked and imprisoned miners could both be a key to resisting the NCB's sweeping closure programme and through cementing the unity of militants across industries the foundations for a sustained offensive against the Tory government could be laid.

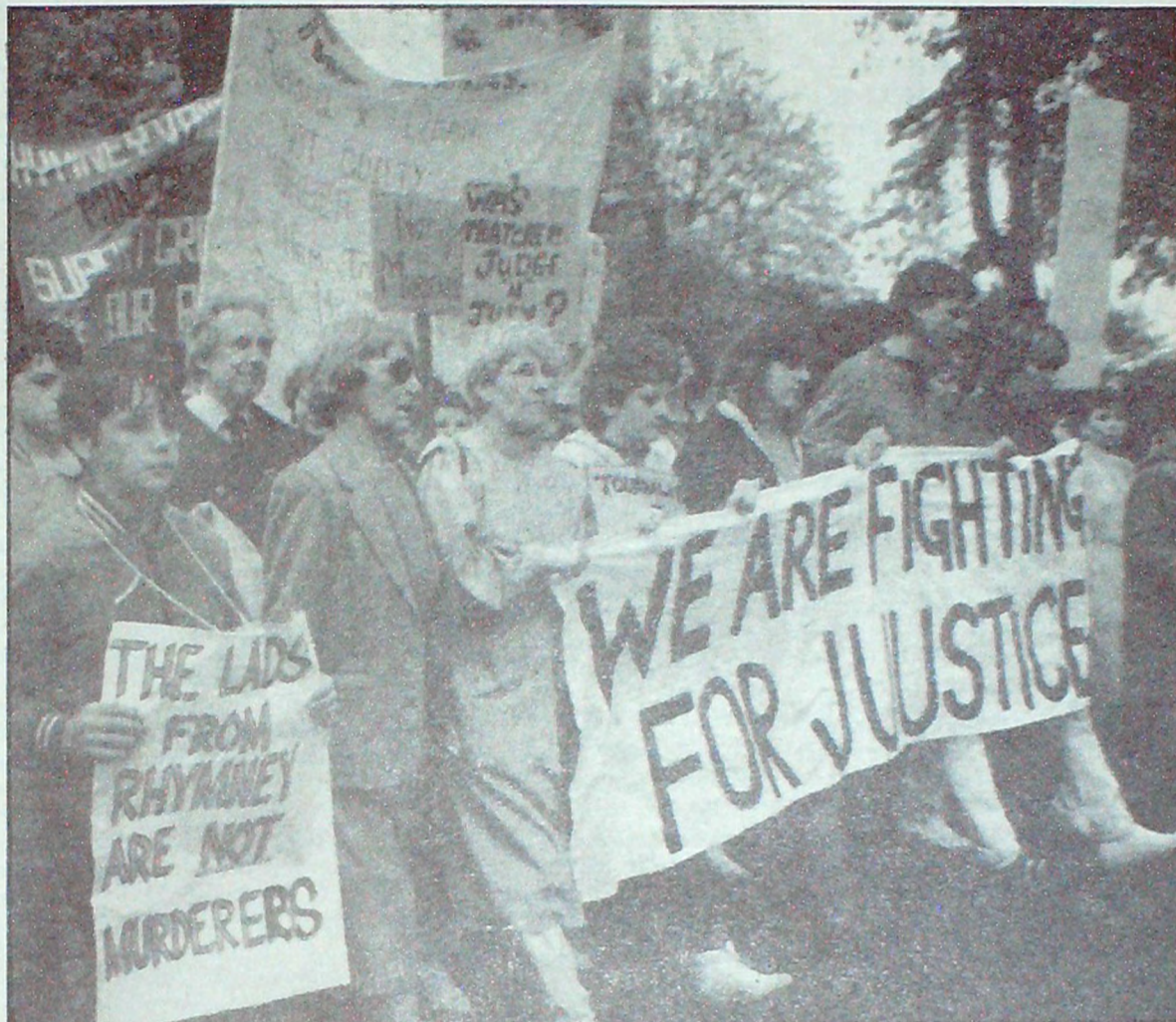
Therefore it is tragic that the likes of Jack Taylor have urged miners to look to the coal industry's conciliation and arbitration machinery instead of militant action. Of course Taylor is the rule amongst the left reformist leadership of the NUM, not the exception. In Scotland our CPGB comrade George Bolton, the Area's Vice President, has gone out of his way to push into the background the sacked miners in a desperate effort to "get back to normal" collaboration over a dram of whisky with the NCB.

The impotency of the leadership was summed up at the last meeting of the NEC. While fulminating against the arrogance of the NCB it rejected a proposal from Kent Area NUM to organise a national conference in London to build solidarity with those sacked and imprisoned. This means that the National Rank and File Miners' Movement has an even greater responsibility to take on the burden of giving a lead — the official leadership having reneged on its responsibilities.

The fact that the Kent proposal found no other support other than Durham, which seconded it, shows that the leadership's declarations in support of the sacked and imprisoned lads is so much hot air. They are, it seems, far more concerned with maintaining unity with the scab officials than standing by the best and bravest members, let alone seeking vengeance against an increasingly vulnerable Thatcher administration.

This was fully illustrated by the NEC's unwillingness to expel the scab officials. Yes, Lynk was declared no longer an employee of the NUM but the other filth in the "Triple scab Alliance" of Notts, South Derbyshire, and Leicestershire who are openly canvassing the formation of a Spencerite Solidarnosc breakaway keep their jobs and their union cards.

True, Arthur Scargill is proposing rule changes to curb their power but



this is a double edged sword. For while his proposals would limit the autonomy of the areas (the reason they are opposed by not only Roy Lynk but also Emlyn Williams) they would further distance the leadership from the rank and file and their control. Rules that would require a two-thirds majority to

remove officials, that would make Arthur president for life, are retrograde. Far from the answer being less democracy the way to beat scab officials and to forge a militant unity in the NUM's ranks is more democracy.

All officials should be elected and subject to instant recall.

Regionalism must be overcome but this should be done by galvanising the magnificent spirit and energy of the rank and file militant miners and the pit women who sustained the Great Strike for twelve heroic months. This spirit is alive and when it can be, kicking.

Jack Conrad

## The 1985 AGM of the Peoples Press Printing Society

### STATEMENT

THE RULING out of order of all but two motions submitted to the 1985 AGM of the PPS is a cynical manoeuvre and an act of political bankruptcy. Whatever excuse in bourgeois law is dished up to justify such an action comrade Chater and the faction that stands behind him have exposed themselves as having not a shred of communist morality.

In a crude attempt to polarise the AGM into a either for Chater or for the Euros position not only have all but two motions been ruled out of order but the *Morning Star* faction has even refused to print the banned resolutions: shareholders will only be presented with an explanation of this when they arrive at the AGM.

This along with the reduction of sectional meetings from seven to two is an outrageous infringement of elementary democratic principles. No

pointing to the Euro/McLennan gerrymandering for the 39th (Special) Congress can excuse the Management Committee's contempt for its own shareholders. Its preferred candidates have forfeited any right to expect the votes of communists and militant workers. We say there must be no vote for those who excuse gerrymandering, who support the banning of motions, and who fear honest debate.

This does not mean that we would urge a vote for the candidates of the Euro/McLennan leadership. They are committed to turning the paper into a daily version of *Marxism Today* and that's a fate worse than death. No we would urge shareholders to vote for a candidate(s) who rejects opportunism and who is committed to real Marxism-Leninism.

As to the motions. We think all motions should be debated. Of course a vote to do so might be used by the Management Committee to do another "Glasgow" in other words to close the meeting as a bureaucratic ploy to avoid the verdict of the shareholders. Be that as it may

shareholders have the right and duty to hear and discuss the motions submitted by the Euro/McLennan leadership of the Communist Party. They also have the right and duty to hear and discuss the motion submitted by comrade Barbara Lewis of South Wales on sacked and jailed miners. Its crime is to call for the *Morning Star* to "campaign for the release of the imprisoned men and demand that they and all sacked miners are given their old jobs back." The same applies to the motion from comrade Malcolm Bride of London. His motion states that the *Morning Star*'s "coverage of Ireland has so far been inadequate and has what is more been lacking in the spirit of internationalism". All these motions and any others which have been banned should be debated and voted on. The 1984 London District Congress of the CPGB demanded its rights — the 1985 PPS AGM should do likewise.

The Euros and Chater are but two sides of the same liquidationist coin. Don't vote for the lesser of two evils. Use your vote to build the COMMUNIST ALTERNATIVE.



## THE LENINIST

### On Democratic centralism — once again

FAR from the Communist Party being unique in operating democratic centralism, all trade unions and even Cabinets do so. Well this is what comrade Gordon McLennan informed or perhaps misinformed viewers of Channel Four's *A Week in Politics* back in April. And this being the case he argued wasn't it eminently reasonable for the opposition in the CPGB to abide by it and bow to the decisions of the Party EC.

Well comrade McLennan might believe that a Tory Cabinet applies democratic centralism because it is expected that minorities abide by the wishes of the majority and observe collective responsibility but this shows that he totally confuses the form of democratic centralism with its essence. The fact that comrade McLennan reduces democratic centralism to the simple formula of the minority accepting the decisions of the majority says everything about his bureaucratic approach to politics and contempt for, or maybe ignorance of, Marxism-Leninism.

So what is democratic centralism then? Of course it takes the form of Party members carrying out the democratically decided line but in essence democratic centralism is a way for communists to achieve unity in action around and on the basis of *revolutionary* principles. Is this the case with British trade unions or Cabinets? We think not. Indeed the fact that the CPGB has got a thoroughly reformist programme, the *British Road to Socialism*, by definition means that the organisational form taken by our Party cannot be democratic centralism whatever the rules and comrade McLennan may state.

Because it has a reformist programme unity in our CPGB can only be bureaucratic unity which genuine communists have both a right and a duty to rebel against. The McLennan/Euro leadership brand this a violation of democratic centralism and the breaking of Party unity but it is their opportunist politics that make principled political unity an absolute impossibility. These reformists, these self-confessed non-Leninists, not only show their hypocrisy when they lecture the opposition about Lenin and Party democracy but, yes, it must be their ignorance.

For them the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin was more or less the same as when it was under the leadership of Stalin — except perhaps the terror. For them democratic centralism means stage managed "debate", the suppression of minority views, and certainly their exclusion from leading committees in the Party. This was of course the state of affairs under Stalin but definitely not the case with Lenin's leadership.

In Lenin's Bolshevik Party controversy was the norm not the exception, Lenin himself more than once found himself in a minority position for example over the signing of the Brest Litovsk Treaty and above all what attitude to adopt towards the Provisional Government and whether or not to orientate the Party towards a new revolution. The fact that he could energetically pursue his argument against the majority is a tribute to the genuine democratic centralism of his Party: a feature ensured by its unity on revolutionary principles, something which enabled it to carry through the October Revolution and then successfully defend the new proletarian state power against all comers. Such democratic centralism is clearly diametrically opposite to the bureaucratic centralism imposed by comrade McLennan and his dull anti-Marxist-Leninist crew.

The Editor

Correspondence to: The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX

Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £5.00, Institutions £7.00; Europe £8.00, Institutions £10.00; All other countries £10.00, Institutions £12.00.

Back copies: Issues 1-6 (theoretical journal) £1.00 each plus 25p p&p. Issues of paper (from issue 7) 30p each plus 10p p&p.

All cheques payable to *The Leninist*

Printed and typeset by: Morning Litho Printers Ltd. (TU), 439 North Woolwich Road, London E16.

Published by: The Leninist Publications, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX ©World copyright June 1985

## LETTERS

### Welsh stereotypes

I enclose a copy of my pamphlet which *The Leninist* might wish to review.

To my knowledge, a number of comrades in South Wales subscribe to your paper and largely agree with a number of the positions put forward by it. In particular, your treatment of the Women's Question, Ireland, and the Labour Party has been excellent — and many of your other articles are informative, even where comrades cannot agree with the politics.

But you are not going to increase your influence and credibility with some of the arrogant, great-nation chauvinist remarks contained in the article on 'The Eurocommunists and the Miners' Strike' (*The Leninist* April 1985).

Your political criticism of the Wales Congress in Support of Mining Communities is correct as far as it goes: but it is quite obvious that the writer of the article knows very little about the Congress and its operations, otherwise the criticism from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint would have been very much sharper and better informed. A little more knowledge and study on a particular question, before rushing into print, might be more productive.

But — and this is my chief objection — why the pointless, sneering, and chauvinistic references to "druids" "magical mists", and "prancing about Eisteddfod fields in bard's robes" when dealing with Plaid Cymru and the WSCMC? Is this how everything Welsh is interpreted by the superior metropolitan mind? Is it ever-so-sophisticated wit? Or is this supposed to pass for serious, concrete analysis? Whatever your reply, it shows that the writer obviously knows nothing about the character, composition, and programme of Plaid Cymru.

Trotting out national stereotypes of the kind that used to be printed in the *Times* in the 19th Century — when that paper poured scorn on all real and imagined characteristics of Welsh nationality — is not remotely 'Leninist'.

When you analyse the race question, perhaps criticising black separatists, do you make jibes about witch-doctors, voodoo, or limbo dancers? Do you discuss movements in Spain, for example, with scornful references to bull-fights, maracas, and passionate Latin bottom-pinchers?

As a matter of curiosity, does your clever correspondent know much about the class and popular origins of the National and local *eisteddfodau* in Wales, or about the Welsh-language culture of which they are a part?

*The Leninist* rightly opposes the British Nationalism that infests the working-class movement and, to some degree, all sections of the Communist Party — and which we see in some of the arguments about import controls, the EEC, Ireland etc. But read and ponder Lenin again on great-nation chauvinism, and consider the possibility that even *The Leninist* has not broken free from this serious weakness — at least in its attitude to smaller nations and the National Question within Britain.

P.S. To save the Thought Police time and effort that could be better devoted to the class struggle, please print my real name and not a pseudonym.

Yours in Comradeship  
Robert Griffiths  
Cardiff

*Alec Long* replies:  
Comrade Griffiths makes some interesting and worthwhile points in his letter and we feel his criticisms

may have a certain validity. Although the main author of the article to which he refers is Welsh, this does not *per se* exempt us from the charge of Great Nation Chauvinism — after all wasn't Stalin, the Great Russian Chauvinist, by origin a Georgian?

However, we feel that the comrade may have interpreted our comments as *anti-Welsh* when in fact they had a rather different intention. To clarify matters, what we were "sneering at" when referring to "druids", "magic mists" etc was not the Welsh people, but the class that currently dominates the national and local *eisteddfodau* in Wales, the petty bourgeoisie and its radical nationalist intelligentsia.

We believe that the Welsh working class must assert its authority, its hegemony over every sphere of Welsh social and cultural life. With this, *eisteddfodau* could truly become celebrations of Welsh cultural richness. At the moment however, these events I know from personal experience tend to be dominated by Welsh petty bourgeois whimsy.

It is unfortunate if the article gave the impression of London-centric chauvinism — possibly the 'side-swipe' nature of the comments reinforced this impression. We do however apologise to any Welsh comrades we may have offended. There are however some additional points we would make about the comrades' letter.

As Leninists we would not only 'allow' we would actively encourage the use and fullest expression of the Welsh language and culture. Ultimately, of course, we stand for the merging of the peoples of the world, but we recognise that this can only come through a free association of peoples, never a forced union. So we reject any charges of Great Nation Chauvinism — but we do feel fully justified in accusing the CPGB in Wales and Scotland of being thoroughly imbued with petty bourgeois nationalism. For example, what should the Party's attitude be to Plaid Cymru and its recent 'turn' towards 'socialism' and the working class. Should it not attempt to fight the nationalist poison that Plaid spreads that tries to make 'Welsh' coal and 'Welsh' industry the concern of the working class? What is comrade Griffith's attitude? His statements on Plaid Cymru seem a little ambiguous.

Similarly, the comrade describes our political criticisms of the Wales Congress in Support of the Mining Communities as "correct as far it goes..." He does not however indicate where they *should* go, apart from offering some rather abstract platitudes about the need for "a little more knowledge and study..." We characterise the WSCMC as a rotten, nationalistic popular front-type body. Does the comrade disagree with this? If so what is his view?

We would like to thank comrade Griffiths for initiating this exchange and for making some valid criticisms of our paper. His comments have prompted us to commission a fuller research project on the National Question in Britain. We would be pleased to print any further exchanges on this important issue.

### Good luck

I was given a copy of the March issue by comrade ... .., and became very quickly aware that *The Leninist* has the analysis and theory closest to my own views, however unformulated they may yet be. I do not belong to any party but have been casting around the various possibilities. *Militant* appeared pretty pushy to me initially but their anti-Soviet stance put me off along with their simplistic attitudes and then I realised how right wing they actually are.

I would very much like to be part of a Marxist-Leninist Communist

Party but feel I must await the outcome of the May Congress to see if what appears to me as the only feasible revolutionary party can get its shit together.

I spend a great deal of time working for the ... Trades Council MSG last year but unfortunately never became aware of your positions on the necessity of transforming MSGs into Councils of Action. I know from personal direct experience that that would have made an enormous difference.

Your correct stance on the use of violence within struggle also impressed me. Your attitudes to the questions of Women's Movements have opened my eyes to the nonsense parading as the way forward by feminists. I have been fooled by feminism in the past and thank you for rechanneling my views back to the working class struggle.

The view that your paper is 'too theoretical' is garbage. It is a hell of a lot easier to read than *Militant*, anyway, I can assure you. I find it clear, precise, stimulating, well laid out, and correct.

Good luck with your struggle for a reformed Communist Party. Hopefully it will become one which I can throw my energies into.

PS: Last night's 'Week in Politics' had Hobsbawm only committing himself to 'socialism'. That bastard has got to go! Actually, I need to know and understand more before making statements like that but I do know that the Euros do not belong in the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Yours fraternally,  
Brian Dyer  
Falkirk, Scotland

### Mr Angry I

Don't you think Dave Kitson is being rather hypocritical in his attacks upon South African apartheid? (*The Leninist* April.) Here's a man who spent some twenty years in gaol for resisting that State's apartheid policies, and was nigh on executed by these white racist barbarians; yet, when he came out of gaol, I read that he went to live in an Israeli kibbutz for an indeterminate period.

What, in essence, is the difference between the policies of the State of Israel, and those of South Africa? Both are based upon the principles of apartheid. That is to say, both discriminate against other ethnic people, which is another way of saying that both are racist in their political and social orientation. In Israel it is non-Jews, especially Palestinians, who suffer from a sort of ghettoization; in South Africa it is Black folk.

No Palestinians, for example, are permitted to take up residence in any Jewish kibbutzim, and become members. They are exploited by the kibbutzim for their labour power, of course, and the kibbutzim are not ashamed to milk them for masses of surplus value, giving them nothing in return for it in the shape of decent housing, or medical and social services. Nor are any non-Jews permitted to buy even a plot of land upon which to build a home; land cannot be alienated in the State of Israel, says the constitution of that land. Only Jews are allowed that privilege. Even to let a flat in a non-Jewish area is refused to non-Jews, if the Jews in the area protest. This decision has been actually upheld by an Israeli court. Doesn't that remind one of the vicious Nazi policies of making Germany *Judenrein*?

When the Palestinians were cleared from the land in 1948 (not to make mention of other dates like 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982), many kibbutzim claimed the vacant land, and the Jewish National Fund incorporated the remaining land

into their control, denying Arabs the right to return, whilst allowing Jews from all over the world to jump on the next plane or boat and take up full rights of citizenship. Those Arabs who actually tried to return by swimming the River Jordan to get back to their little homes and plots of land, were frequently shot dead in the water.

What sickens me is the dreadful hypocrisy of the Jews in the kibbutzim. Here they are purporting to be carrying out the finest example of socialist cooperatism in modern times, yet they refuse to allow any Arabs into their kibbutzim as members. Furthermore, any authentic left-winger knows that the Palestinian Clearances in the Middle East were even more brutal than those endured by my Celtic forebears in Ireland and Scotland in time past. Indeed, the only parallel to these savage clearances would seem to be those perpetrated upon the Indians by the white Americans, or those launched against the ethnic peoples in New Zealand or Tasmania by the white British, even the clearances from Eritrea and Tigre by the Ethiopian Derg, to make mention of more contemporary events.

What I want to ask is, why do many Jews, even those who purport to be Left-wingers, refuse to stand up and denounce such misdeeds when it is their precious Jews' State which does them? (Most Jews think Israel is the Jews' State, and give it their — at the very least — tacit support.) Many Jewish Zionists are ready to denounce land clearances when it is done in other lands; but maintain an hypocritical silence about similar policies in Israel.

This Jewish particularism is truly deplorable. Why do they insist upon identifying themselves with their own frequently savage and greedy bourgeoisie in the name of nationalism? Even against the authentic left?

I realise, of course, that the very utterance of such opinions will leave me open to hysterical screeches from the ranks of the closest Zionists who infest the Left these days (assuming you give the letter publication). They will grin that I am a crypto-fascist and blatant anti-Semite, and use all the deep sympathy many decent folk still feel for Jews after the vast massacres perpetrated upon them by the vile Nazis during world war two, to make political capital for their precious Zionist State.

Not being a patriotic sucker myself, I jeer at such naivety. The ideas propagated by many who purport to be on the left of the Zionist Movement is nothing less than blatant anti-communist and anti-socialist, just as all such bourgeois nationalism is a negation of internationalism. When any assaults are made against the Left in the name of Nationalism, we are merely seeing a manifestation of fascism. As Dr. Johnson said, "Nationalism is the last refuge of the scoundrel". So how can Dave Kitson even grace the state of Israel with his presence?

More to the point, how can the editor of *The Leninist* publish a full-page question and answer brief on Mr. Kitson's world-view without carrying even one tiny criticism of his behaviour towards Israel? As an authentic left-winger, I think I am due an answer from you.

Did not Lenin, whom you purport to follow, say without any trace of equivocation:

"Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it of the 'most just', 'purest', most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism, Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations into the higher unity."

The cry of the authentic left-

winger, then, in the face of those who would try to turn the working-class away from its historically ordained role of smashing the system of capitalism, and the privileged relations of production it sustains, is:

Workers of all lands unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win.

Away with this nationalist particularism many Jews have embraced, as well as many other ethnic peoples. Should Anglo-Saxons lend their support to the idea of all the Celts in the world returning to this land of our fathers (and that means all of mainland Britain as well as Ireland and the islands around these coasts), to kick the said Anglo-Saxons off into camps in Europe, whence you all originated? What reactionary nonsense. It is such garbage that is propagated by the National Front, only they widen the scope of their particularism to include all good Nordic Aryan types, whatever that might be supposed to mean. Now, if it is wrong here in Britain, how can it be right over there in Israel? And why do purported Left Zionists continue to give their support to such fascist ideas? Down with Zionism, then, I say.

An authentic left-wing worker (unemployed)

H.C. Mullin  
Glasgow

**Dave Kitson replies:**

**Mr Mullin is right and I agree with him except where he refers to me. As I have never been to Israel in my life, I am not grateful for this latest careless and unwarranted attack on me by a so-called comrade.**

### Mr Angry II

I sneered with contempt when I read David Sherriff's reply to Janet Wells. (*The Leninist*, May, p2.) What an exhibition of naivety. How it shows up your natures as a set of blindmouths.

Russia supports national liberation, alright, as long as it is in some other empire, and not her own. She has crushed mercilessly the aspirations for self-determination in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, White Ruthenia, Bessarabia, Byelorussia, Georgia, the Caucasus in general, Sinkiang Province, the Maritime Provinces, Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands (stolen from Japan). Right now she is doing the same in Afghanistan.

Let us not forget, either, the way she crushed under her jackboot the aspirations of Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Indeed, as I pointed out to you before, she joined in a secret treaty with "the bloody assassins of the workers", Adolf Hitler himself, to carve up Poland between Russia and Germany. In fact, when Ribbentrop arrived on the train from Germany to sign that pact, she had a band out of the Red Army to play stirring martial marches for the entertainment of Herr von Ribbentrop. One of these was *Der Horst Wessel Lied*, the marching song of the vile Nazi SS Jew-killers.

That you as a Jew should give your support to such is truly appalling. You should be ashamed of yourself; but folk like you have a conscience which is deadened with your little-girlish gushings in fervour for what your blind eyes see as a Socialist society. In reality, it is just a Great Russian chauvinistic state capitalist state, and Great Russian chauvinism is merely the Russian form of fascism.

Why don't you naive souls grow up and stop acting like the dopey little pretty-bourgeoisie lefties that you are? We workers don't want you in power here in Britain. We value

our liberties too much for that. Indeed, if there were free elections in the lands East of Checkpoint Charlie, we would vote your barbaric fascist comrades out of office, and put them on trial for crimes against the workers, and humanity at large fallen under their power. The enormity of their deeds is exceeded by none, not even the brutal Nazi SS have murdered as many helpless people as the Russian NKVD.

To me, you people are even worse enemies of the workers than Margaret Thatcher and her greedy gang. Indeed, she even met and feted and flattered your chief gangster out of the Kremlin, Gorbachev. She knows that he will crush any movement of the working class, to allow big capital to invest in the Russian Empire to make large profits, while we authentic left-wing workers are isolated, and have little influence among our class, because they think dishonest people like you are communists, and that we want to erect a fascist state like exists in Russia and her empire.

Your cries for national self-determination are just exhibitions of specious hypocrisy. All you want to do is to undermine the Western democracies, so as to strengthen your precious fascist state in Russia. You petty-bourgeois types are traitors to the communist movement, and the deadly enemies of the working class... my class. But workers shall bury you all at the last. I hope that I am one of those who stand by your graves. It will be a real pleasure for me to drop a large Number 10 shovel full of soil right into your blindmouths. Amen! An authentic left-wing worker,  
H C Mullin  
Glasgow

### World Carve-up

Another farcical Summit Meeting has ended; the meeting was attended by seven Imperialist countries: United States, Britain, France, Canada, West Germany, Japan, and Italy, the last three mentioned countries joined together before the Second World War in a 'holy alliance' to smash the Soviet Union; they were then called Fascists, their idea being to dominate the world. First they had to prepare their economies for war. It seems that history is repeating itself. They have now joined in with the United States, Britain, France, and Canada on a similar mission.

These Summit meetings, outside of the United Nations Organisation, are obviously for the purpose of preparing their economies, not to ease the unemployment problem but for an all out war, not against Fascism but against the Soviet Union and world Socialism. These meetings are led by the United States. It is an alliance of aggressors getting ready to carve up the world under US domination. They are an undisguised terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary Imperialist elements of big business, they have accepted United States Star Wars programme for the worst kind of war; only insane people would carry it out.

The Tory Manifesto 1983 is mainly about taming the working class, carrying out a reign of terror in home policy which is indispensable to the making of a war economy. The Tories have more than doubled their spending on 'defence'. The Manifesto also proposed to amend the Civil Defence Act 1948 so that funds could be used to safeguard peace time emergencies; were these funds used to pay the police during the miners' strike? Why did Mrs Thatcher go to America to make a very special speech to the United

States Congress? Was it to support the Star Wars Programme in exchange for the Dollar easing up on the Pound? Mr. Nigel Lawson was waiting patiently with his budget! It is time that all politicians and economists started to realise, before it is too late, that trying to stop the wheel of History will not solve Capitalist Crisis: only peaceful coexistence and Socialism will finally solve the world's problems. Yours faithfully,

James Dewar  
(retired miner) Pontypridd

### NCP

The *Morning Star's* Ally Pally Rally saw the truly ironic sight of what is left of the New Communist Party chasing after comrade Chater and his crew. The NCP tops, all dressed up in their best togs, could be seen buttering up any Chaterite bigwig in sight.

The tiny NCP has dropped the habit of its lifetime. After nearly eight years of doing its best to ignore the CPGB it has issued a pamphlet "For Communist Unity" which it dished out free to all and sundry at Ally Pally. Obviously the NCP which split in opposition to the 1978 *British Road* is out for a marriage with Chater's faction which has made fidelity to that reformist document a central plank in its struggle with the Euros.

Will Chater play ball with this fast declining centrist 'party'? I doubt it. Chater knows that 'unity' with the NCP would be the kiss of death.

This leaves the NCP to pick up the CPGB members who are looking to get away from debate and discussion and who want to retire with honour. No wonder for the last eight years the NCP has been noticeable by its absence, no wonder they couldn't even manage to get a banner along to this year's May Day demonstration in London, no wonder most militant workers think NCP only stands for National Car Parks.

Comradely  
Mick Sullivan  
Cambridge

### Factional Temple

Nina Temple told the 39th Congress that the leadership intends to build a "tolerant" Party in which differences can be freely debated and discussed. If only this was the case. Judging by past practice "free debate" only applies to the right wing of our Communist Party, to the Jimmy Reid's and Sue Slipman's of this world.

Of course Nina would say that the problem in the Party today is factionalism. But why has factionalism arisen? Does she really believe that communists easily and

automatically resort to factionalism? The truth is that the Euros have been the biggest factionalists of all and have declared that there is no place in the CPGB for those who disagree with them, "free debate" is to be within the confines of Eurocommunism.

So although the 1979 Congress voted that even opposition to the Party's programme was not incompatible with membership the Euros in practice reject this and are moving, as they have already in the YCL, to a position which demands that Party members agree with the British Road and not just accept it.

Such a move could see the Party lose many of its finest activists. This is bound to be the case if the Euros get their way in writing a new version of the BRS and then demand that we all agree with it. Factionalism can be ended but only if "free debate" applies equally to all Party members and not just one faction.

Joyce Hawkins  
Glasgow

### Back the Star

You are quite right that our communist movement in Britain is in crisis, the problem is that you stand aside from the real struggle. You are "purists" elevating "principles" above practical politics. The fact is that the *Marxism Today* faction is out to close down the *Morning Star* and chuck out all CP members who disagree with their trendy radicalism. Those who are putting up a real fight against them you label "liquidationist". This is a cop out. All who oppose the Euros must support the *Morning Star*. *The Leninist*, *Straight Left* and the others are irrelevant. Only the *Morning Star* can beat the Euros and because of that all communists should back the *Star*.

After all if the *Marxism Today* faction wrecks the CPGB we must rebuild it and only a daily paper which has the backing of people like Ken Gill, Terry Marsland, and even Tony Benn, can do that. What trade union leaders or MP's back *The Leninist*? Politics is about practical results and with Tony Chater and the *Morning Star* we can get them, with you and *Straight Left* all we can hope for is the purity of the grave.

Drop your sectarianism, your dilettante fear of getting your political hands dirty, stop attacking us and start working with us instead. Fraternally  
Harry Wilson  
London

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.

## No despair, no disillusionment

Now that the dust has settled after the CPGB's Special Congress and the Euros stand arrogantly over the opposition there is a great danger that despair and disillusionment will cause many to drift out of communist politics. The centrist politics of Straight Leftism and the reformism of the *Morning Star* objectively encourage this reaction. But there is *The Leninist*. It has earned a justified reputation for being truthful, its ideological clarity and uncompromising Marxism-Leninism is rightly feared by opportunists of all shades, what is more, we actually win recruits to the Party. To aid our struggle we are asking you our readers for money. You have a responsibility to ensure the voice of *The Leninist* remains loud and clear. Last month we raised £520 for our £600 fund. This shortfall must be made up. Comrades, we rely on your generosity and sense of communist self-sacrifice.

# THE 39th CONGRESS

## WHAT NEXT?



Martin Jacques: running the Chaterite gauntlet

AS DELEGATES to the Communist Party's Special Congress made their way to Hammersmith Town Hall they were met by a lobby and placards calling for "No expulsions — No suspensions", "Democracy not bureaucracy", "Reinstate the victimised comrades", "Fight injustice — Stop the purge" and "Say no to No say". There were, by the way, no more than 40 on the lobby, not the 100 reported in the *Morning Star*; even the 40 figure is arrived at by including members of the New Communist Party, *Proletarian*, and even sellers of *The Leninist*. Anyway, the congress delegates passed through the gauntlet and some good and some not so good bantering. It was only the appearance of comrades like Gordon McLennan, Martin Jacques, and Pete Carter which saw the temperature rise. Even then the cries of "scab" and the boos were more ritualistic than heartfelt.

Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that a communist lobby of a CPGB congress bears full witness to the depth of the crisis that is gripping our Party, as does the disciplining of 42 comrades and of course the calling of the Special Congress itself.

Unfortunately it is unlikely that the Party crisis will be made less acute let alone overcome by the votes at the congress. It is clear that although comrade George Bolton could declare emphatically in his closing remarks that "this congress has met, this congress has spoken, and the Communist Party has decided," the congress could not resolve

anything.

In fact the congress decisions amount to more of the very Eurocommunism which has plunged the Party into such profound crisis. Believing the claim that 'Thatcherism' represents a definite qualitative break from old style Toryism to the point of semi-fascism, the majority of delegates accepted the necessity of constructing a Popular Front which would embrace Liberals, SDPers, Labourites, and Tory wets. This rightist step demands the distancing of the CPGB from the practice and traditions of militant working class struggle. Thus comrade McLennan backed the views of Industrial Organiser Pete Carter who has caused a storm of protest over his attacks on the NUM leadership. For him the NUM should have concentrated on winning "public opinion" including the church and should not have indulged in "diversions" like mass picketing. And to win "public opinion" Carter told the congress the NUM should have condemned *all* violence wherever it came from and concentrated on projecting the benefits of the *Plan for Coal*.

Against this Eurocommunist liberalism the opposition around the *Morning Star* and *Straight Left* had little or nothing to offer. For them Thatcher is no different from Heath or Macmillan and while constantly prattling on about the fourth or fifth stage of the general crisis of capitalism they are incapable of applying their centrist theory to living reality. Indeed the centrist opposition at best only manage to

tail. This is what they did over the Euro attacks on the NUM leadership's conduct of the miners' Great Strike.

Refusing to admit that the miners suffered a defeat, even refusing to admit that the NUM leadership made any mistakes, flies in the face of reality and is a gift to the Euros. Of course the key question is not the right to criticise as the centrists maintain — something they have elevated to a "principle" covering everything and everybody from shop stewards' perks and fiddles to the export of Polish coal to Britain during the Great Strike. No, the key question is the content of criticism.

The Euros criticise from an explicitly anti-revolutionary, petty bourgeois point of view. This is what should be fought, not the fact of criticism itself. It's a basic question of form and content. But as the congress debates showed all so well the centrists from both camps proved incapable of going beyond a conservative defence of yesterday's revisionism, substituting dubious "principles" for logical argument.

So, in the face of Euro assertions that "class politics" are an "absolutely meaningless" phrase, and moves away from the utopian AES, the centrists jump into a defensive posture which amounts to a contortion and most certainly has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism.

While the leadership and above all the Euros rank and file revelled in their 2-to-1 gerrymandered majority over the centrists this was bravado. The Party crisis is not over, it even

threatens to become more acute.

The Euro triumph was soured by the knowledge that not only had one third of congress delegates remained defiant — not even as is 'the done thing' voting for the final resolution — but at least half the Party activists out in the country would refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the congress decisions.

All Euro delegates knew when they voted to "restore the relationship" between the Party and the *Morning Star* that this was a declaration of intent, not a reality. All were aware that winning Euro control over the paper relied on, first, all their five candidates winning at this month's AGM of the PPPS, and then winning another resounding victory at either a Special General Meeting or next year's AGM. And even then, given the parlous state of the *Morning Star's* finances and the fact that over 50% of its sales go to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it could well mean that a Euro victory would prove Pyrrhic.

At the 38th Congress comrade Chater and Co prostrated themselves to the Euros, beseeching them to be conciliatory. Chater's own speech was so humble and boot-licking that it was truly embarrassing. It was the Straight Leftists who caused an outrage from the Euros by their speeches and actions, not lest their brave circulation of *Congress Truth* and the *Alternative List*. At this 39th Congress things were in many ways reversed. The pro-*Morning Star* comrades staged the lobby, they carried their rebellion onto the

congress floor, and comrade Chater himself made a fighting speech, waving the spectre of Spain in front of comrade McLennan taunting him that he would "be next" on the Euro hit list.

In contrast, the Straight Leftists were restrained and kept their heads well down. Not only was there no *Congress Truth*, no *Alternative List*, but in the pre-congress edition of *Communist*, the Straight Leftists samizdat, voting "for the candidates sponsored by the Communist Party itself at the AGM" of the PPPS was put forward as a definite possibility.

The aim of this is to make the Straight Leftists the loyal opposition to the McLennan/Euro leadership. This was confirmed by the pre-congress letter of their comrade Fergus Nicholson. The Straight Leftist guru — who unlike previous congresses did not even put himself forward for election to the EC — called for an end to "the present fratricidal strife", describing differences in the Party as "tactical". He ended his 500 grovelling and thoroughly opportunist words with the plea for the leadership to "find a constructive role for the minority" who he pathetically says "may be tomorrow's majority".

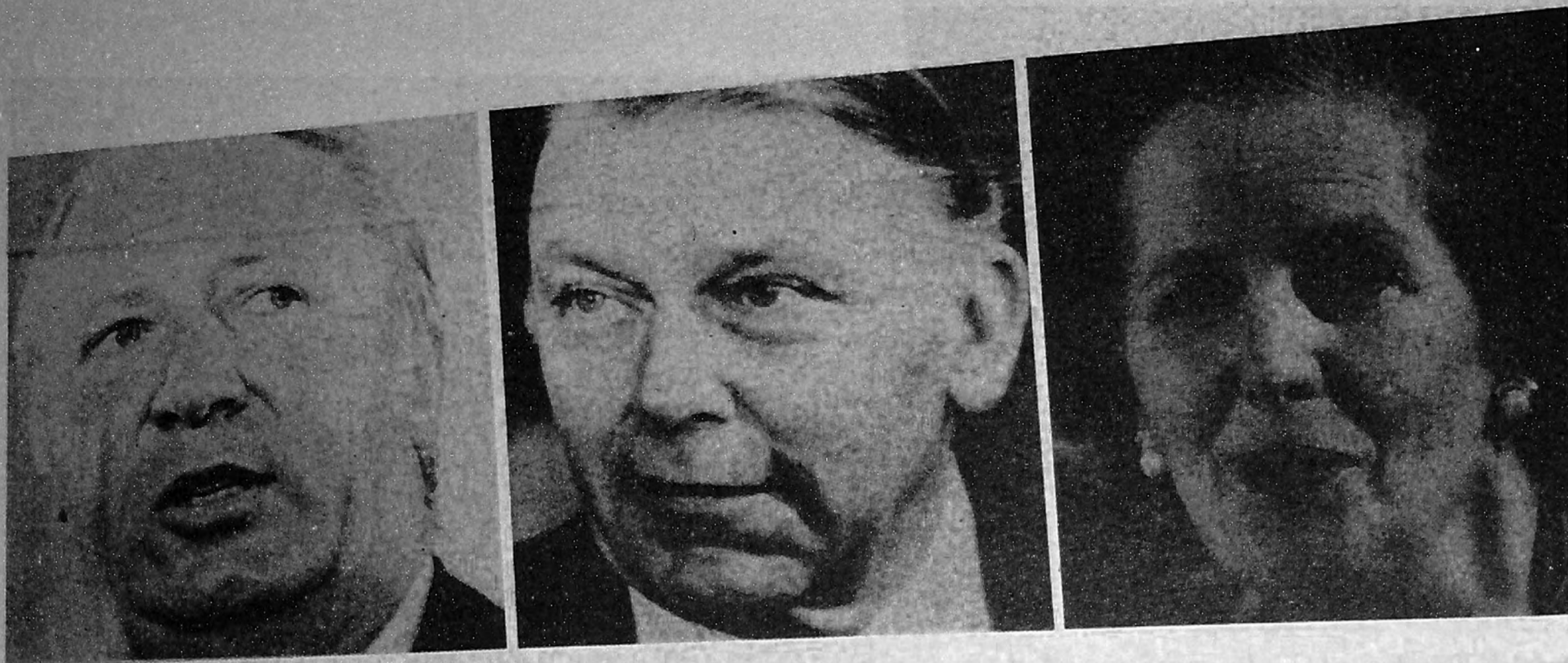
This effort to characterise differences with the Euros as a matter of "tactics" is clearly a ploy to avoid a Euro purge. The shabbiness of this can be seen from reading other Straight Leftist contributors to *Focus* who were no doubt following the old line. Comrade Brian Filling for example branded the Euros as "a petty bourgeois trend", to which the McLennanites may now become a "junior partner". What is more, they are "antipathetic to basic Marxist principles", "happier with Kinnock's politics than Scargill's", as well as being anti-Soviet — hardly what you would call *tactical* differences — at least if you were honest. But then, comrade Straight Leftists, your leadership does disdain expressing its views openly, considering ideology as something to be manipulated to suit the needs of the moment. No wonder rumours of divisions opening up in the Straight Leftist camp are flying about.

Of course, such transparent manoeuvring will not save the Straight Leftists from the Euro purge if and when it comes. They now have a majority on the EC for the first time, securing 25 out of 45 places on the successful recommended list. And while we would like to believe comrade Nina Temple's promise to the congress that there "will be no political expulsions in this Party," that they intend to "build a tolerant Party where different views can be freely expressed", and that "comrades will not be excluded or labelled", past practices and Euro sentiments can only lead us to conclude that a sweeping purge is in the offing.

It is possible that the initial wave of expulsions will be limited to those who have been the most audacious in their rebellion. But simply because the contradictions in the Communist Party are so fundamental and because the logic of the reformist positions enshrined in all editions of the *British Road* lead to liquidationism the crisis cannot be positively resolved by the Euros. Yes, if they do suddenly become "tolerant", stop "labelling" and "excluding" comrades then the possibility of an immediate and possibly fatal shattering of the Party could be more effectively combated. Certainly if "different ideas" could be "freely expressed" in the Party then the necessity for different trends resorting to factionalism and publications such as *The Leninist*, *Straight Left*, and *Communist* would not arise.

The next few months will test the sincerity of comrade Temple's fine words.

David Sherriff



## What is Thatcherism?

THE nature of the Thatcher government has increasingly become the subject of controversy within the Communist Party as all factions attempt to chart their own separate course forward. The Eurocommunists have coined the term 'Thatcherism', exaggerating it as a qualitatively new phenomenon and drawing parallels with fascism in order to make it the focal point of a resurrected popular frontist alliance. The Chater faction on the other hand underplays the significance of the Thatcher Government as simply "a Tory Government based on Toryism" (*Morning Star* April 3 1985).

Here we will attempt to describe the essence of the Thatcher regime in the context of the deepening crisis of imperialism.

First of all, the Thatcher Government represents a break with postwar consensus politics which was predominantly characterised by a class collaborationist approach. For Thatcher the challenge to law and order in Britain by rioting black youth or striking miners is just as seditious as the armed rebellion of Irish Republicanism, and increasingly the methods of state oppression once confined to the Six Counties of Northern Ireland are now being used extensively throughout Britain.

The underlying cause of this break with consensus politics is the determined attempt by monopoly capital to take back all the historic gains of the working class movement. The attacks on the

welfare state, the use of mass unemployment to discipline labour through fear, and above all, the systematic drive to break the resistance of organised labour through draconian anti-trade union laws are all unprecedented attempts to reverse the tide of modern history.

Never before has the ruling class waged such a concerted offensive against the working class. The closest parallel to the recent miners' Great Strike is the 1926 General Strike; yet even then, despite total defeat, trade unions were still allowed to operate more or less intact, and living standards of those in work actually rose quite dramatically throughout the depths of the 1930s slump. This is not the case today. The ruling class seeks to eventually drive down the living standards of *all* workers in a desperate attempt to restore the profitability of British monopoly capitalism, and this has already given rise to a crisis of reformism.

This shift in emphasis by monopoly capital from the politics of consensus to those of class confrontation is not just a recent development synonymous with the Thatcher government. The turning point occurred as far back as the late 1960s, since which time both Tory and Labour governments other than the present one have tried systematically to undermine the strength of trade unionism and to raise capitalist profits at the expense of working class living standards. Furthermore, this change has found expression in other imperialist

countries. The Thatcher government closely resembles the Reagan administration and the disillusioning experience of the Wilson and Callaghan governments are being repeated in France by Mitterand, where the workers who elected him to office are being subjected to stern austerity measures and record unemployment.

So what is the objective basis for this fundamental change in political strategy by the ruling classes of the imperialist countries since 1970?

The basis is to be found in the crisis of imperialism. Lenin described imperialism as, first, monopoly capitalism, second, parasitic and decaying capitalism, and third, moribund capitalism. Up to the 1970s, the latter two characteristic features were expressed in the imperialist countries as transient phenomena or tendencies. Imperialism was still a system in ascendancy, capable of making major concessions to the working class in those countries (at the expense of workers elsewhere), and expanding economically. Since 1970, however, imperialism has passed its historic peak as a world system and the characteristic feature of *moribund capitalism* has become both dominant and permanent. Imperialism is now on the downhill slope and for humanity the only escape from the resultant crisis and the prospect of thermonuclear holocaust is if it is replaced by a new world system: socialism.

The term 'Thatcherism' is an inadequate label to describe

developments which have also found expression in other governments since 1970, both Labour and Tory, and which have also occurred in other imperialist countries. Yet to describe the Thatcher regime simply as "a Tory government based on Toryism" as comrade Chater does, fails to register the fact that any changes have occurred at all.

The disagreement between the Euros and the *Morning Star* over 'Thatcherism' is in essence a tactical difference among opportunists. The Euros use the term 'Thatcherism' to over-exaggerate it as a new development, almost to the point of equating it with fascism, in order to draw on the opportunist orthodoxy of popular frontism as a basis of support for their own class collaborationist strategy of forging an 'anti-Thatcherite' alliance with Labourites, Liberals, and Tory wets. Chater, on the other hand, underplays any new developments expressed by the Thatcher government, as his strategy is still based on the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, *British Road's* plan of securing "a series of Labour governments of a new type" through mass pressure from a broad left-dominated trade union movement. Chater chooses to ignore the fact that any left Labour government in the present phase of imperialist development would undermine the stability of parliamentary politics altogether, as was the case in Chile under Allende, and pose the working class with the choice of either falling under the heel of fascism or advancing beyond reformist

parliamentarianism to revolution.

How then should we assess the Thatcher government in the context of the crisis of imperialism?

The Thatcher government has raised the level of force as one of the day to day methods used by the state in safeguarding the interests of the capitalist class. However, it still continues to rule society within the framework of bourgeois democracy, and is *not* some semi-fascist or bonapartist dictatorship as is claimed by that hysterical and theatrical Trotskyite sect, the WRP. No matter how authoritarian the Thatcher government has become, it cannot remain totally indifferent to public opinion, and must constantly strive to secure electoral support for its policies among the middle strata and backward sections of the working class.

In rejecting any such association between fascism and Thatcher, however, we must not ignore the danger of monopoly and finance capital resorting to fascism in the future. Such a scenario would result from the bourgeoisie's inability to sustain its rule via bourgeois democracy, in conditions characterised by acute political and economic instability, namely a *revolutionary situation*.

In this context of Britain's crisis becoming ever sharper and deeper, the Thatcher government should be seen as a *quantitative* step in the process of class polarisation towards a revolutionary situation, but *not* a *qualitative* one.

John Mann

## 'Reaganism' and the CPUSA

THE POSITION of the CPUSA in opposition to what it terms 'Reaganism' compares strikingly with CPGB Eurocommunists' emphasis on defeating 'Thatcherism'. It is a parallel that the Straight Leftist sycophants of the CPUSA would like to ignore and which the Euros apparently remain ignorant of.

The CPUSA was determined that 'Reaganism' had to be defeated in the November 1984 US elections — it was the highest priority. For comrade Gus Hall, General Secretary of the CPUSA (and CP candidate for US President), the ultra-right were masterminding the Reagan campaign. This was why 'Reaganism' was qualitatively different from previous bourgeois regimes in the USA, because "four

years of Reaganism have created an atmosphere in which literally thousands of ultra-right organisations flourished. Their growth in numbers, influence and backing has been a direct result of Reagan's ultra-right rhetoric, actions and policies. ... they picked up fascist ideas... the Reagan Administration has staffed its agencies, departments, councils and committees from these organisations. The very nature of the Reagan administration has been changed... the more fascist-minded came out openly and became a bigger influence, taking over the convention [the Republican Party Convention which renominated Reagan in late 1984 — TL] and the party. This created a *qualitatively* new situation." (Gus Hall's 'Basics'

column in *World Magazine* October 13 1984. Emphasis in original.)

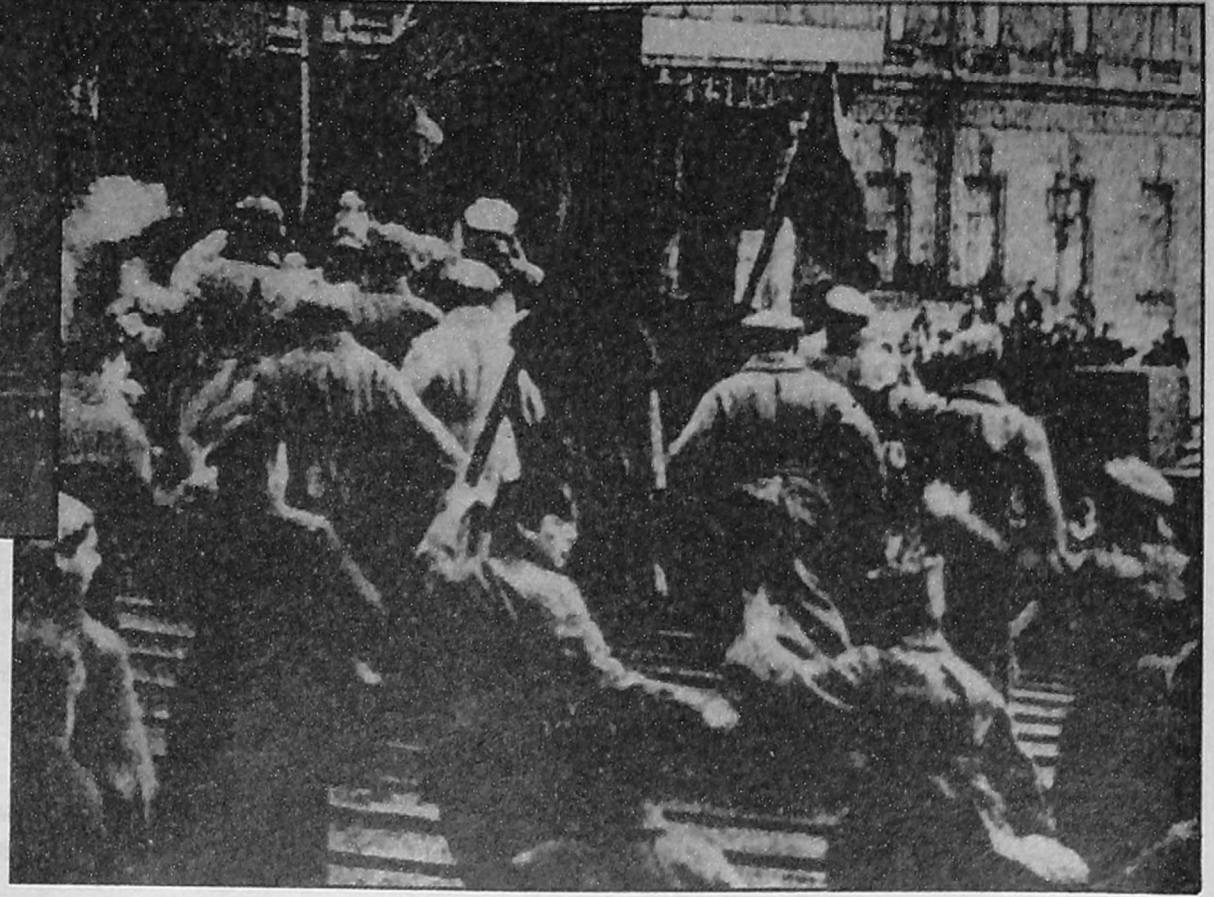
The CPUSA was and is concerned to back the 'lesser' of two evils: the Democratic Party. This is where its anti-'Reaganism' has led it. In order to back the Democratic Party the CPUSA has created the concept of an "all people's front" consisting of "labor, Afro-Americans, peace, women, seniors, youth and others." (*Ibid*). Redolent of our Euros' "broad democratic alliance" without any doubt.

The CPUSA pinned its hopes for defeat of 'Reaganism' on uniting at local level Democrat trade unionists, the Rainbow Coalition groups, peace committees, and "any other election-oriented group" into an umbrella coalition. This would then register (Democrat) voters; but

to be really effective the Jesse Jackson Rainbow Coalition faction of the Democrats would have to be united with the Fritz Mondale camp. This the CPUSA set out to propagandise for in the election campaign. Vice-Presidential candidate of the CPUSA, Angela Davis, rallied the Rainbow Coalitionists on the basis of their illusions in the bourgeois Jackson in a speech in Harlem on July 27 1984: "We are appealing to those of you who could not bear to cast their votes for a Democrat... and would never vote for a Democratic candidate, unless perhaps that candidate was Jesse Jackson."

Jackson was not selected to be the Democrats' presidential choice. The CPUSA was then left with the logic of its position; rally to the man

the Democrats did choose; Mondale. That this is nothing but a class collaborationist position is clear. Just as our Euros want the Labour Party to drop its 'sectarianism' and join with the SDP, Liberals, and Tory wets to defeat the present danger of 'Thatcherism', so too does the CPUSA leadership pander to openly bourgeois forces in the form of the Democratic Party in order to deal with 'Reaganism' before the next stage of advance. "The building of a united all people's front is the prerequisite for an anti-monopoly force that will make a bid for power that can bring about changes in the interest of the working class and people." (*Ibid*). The opportunism of this approach and that of the BRS are as alike as two peas in a pod.



*The storming of the Winter Palace is portrayed as a joke by the Euros but their British Road is not only unprincipled and reformist — it is the real joke.*

# The British Road to Socialism?

THE historic task of communist parties is to lead the working class in the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist class and its state, and to chart the course of society in the socialist transition to communism. To carry out this task, communists must be in general agreement with the overall aim and must also be in general agreement with the principled methods and ideas of Marxism-Leninism in working out the programmatic details of action, revising such details if necessary in the light of world revolutionary experience. It would seem therefore that we are in common agreement with comrade Chater, who states in a recent article:

**"There must be common ground. For a communist party, this common ground can only be acceptance by all of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism which generalise scientifically the revolutionary experiences of the working class throughout the world in the struggle for socialism."**

However, he then extends this correct statement to embrace a political position which lies at the core of the Party's crisis and with which we are in fundamental disagreement:

**"Applied to Britain, these principles lead to the strategy outline in the British Road to Socialism." (Morning Star, April 23 1985).**

Agreement with the *British Road* can never provide the common ground for genuine communists, because it is a strategy thoroughly imbued with the reformist illusion that it is possible for the working class to lay hold of state power and build socialism through the agency of parliament. Moreover, it was inevitable that even those opportunist forces which actually agree with this perspective should split, for there is no common agreement between them in Marxist-Leninist principle.

Let us therefore examine more closely why the *British Road* is reformist and what the Marxist-Leninist alternative should be. This means looking primarily at the question of what kind of mass democratic organisations are required to carry through the socialist revolution.

In their writings on the question of democracy, both Marx and Lenin rejected the idea of a single abstract form of democracy. They always insisted that it should be examined within the context of whose class interest a particular form of democracy is designed to serve. The role of democracy in a capitalist ruled society is fundamentally different from the role of democracy in a socialist revolution. The first is designed to perpetuate capitalist rule with the consent of the working class, whereas the second is designed to overthrow capitalist rule and to transfer state power to the working class.

Capitalist (or bourgeois) democracy primarily takes the representative or parliamentary form, whereas working class democracy has been most effective in involving the mass of workers in the form of soviets, workers' councils, councils of action, and other recallable delegate bodies.

How are these two forms of democracy fitted for their different class purposes? Why cannot capitalists rule through soviet democracy and why does parliamentary democracy suffer such severe shortcomings as a means for workers to seize state power and build socialism?...

In a recent *Marxist Today* article comrade Alan Hunt outlined the Eurocommunist attitude towards the two forms of democracy:

**"...socialism is presumed to require the abolition of bourgeois parliamentarianism. What this type of analysis fails to address is: what is it about a parliamentary system which makes it the exclusive vehicle of capitalist class rule?"**

**"Parliaments are castigated as mere 'talking shops' and contrasted with the superiority of soviets as 'working bodies' that combine both legislative and executive function... Only if there is a separation of such functions is it possible for there to be supervision of the administrative and executive function... To merge the two functions creates the serious danger of generating unaccountable and uncontrollable power." (Marxism Today May 1985)**

Here we see how the Eurocommunists reflect the view of the bourgeoisie in relation to

democracy, for only the bourgeoisie fears loss of control and accountability when the legislative and executive functions of the state are totally accessible to the masses. For the working class, this state of affairs would mean *greater* control and accountability.

On the contrary, it is under parliamentary democracy that the working class lacks control and accountability. How much control and accountability has the working class ever had over a Labour government — never mind a Tory one? In Britain, the most that working class militants in the Labour Party can hope for is to oust a sitting Labour MP through reselection, and even then, there is no control over his/her replacement once elected.

Parliament is designed to exclude the influence and participation of the masses. But say a left wing government is elected and begins to pass reforms in favour of the working class. Is there any guarantee that such a regime would be allowed to continue for very long? No, because the capitalist class still controls and staffs the most important executive apparatus of the state, namely the police, army, and bureaucracy. These are not elected or controlled by the masses and are in perpetual readiness to overthrow any government which threatens capitalist stability, as in the case of the Allende government in Chile.

Elected bodies thrown up by the working class struggle and organised along the lines of soviet democracy are different. They are brought into existence by the working class masses for a specific purpose. They are staffed by the masses to decide on policy in the interests of the working class and then organise the masses to carry out that policy. There is a close organic link between these bodies and the needs of the working class and are able to adapt rapidly to any changes through instant recallability. Revolutionary crises often only last for months or even days and cannot wait five years while the masses register their vote at the next parliamentary election.

It is this characteristic feature of soviet democracy which is designed

specifically to enable the working class to organise the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist state power, that makes the combination of legislative and executive functions into working bodies both *possible and desirable*.

A second issue arising from the question of parliamentary democracy and soviet democracy is whether it is possible to build socialism with parliamentary forms. The answer, as seen in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe where soviets never existed in the first place, is, yes, up to a certain point. As in capitalist society, however, the parliamentary system under socialism tends to exclude the role of the masses and encourages the growth of bureaucracy.

In the Soviet Union where soviets did exist we see a similar problem. Comrade Andrew Rothstein inadvertently reveals the reason for this problem in a recent *Star* article, in which he polemicalises against Eurocommunist criticisms of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union:

**"In the Soviet Union founded in Lenin's day, there is, on the one hand, an extensive machinery of representative 'parliamentary' democracy, combined on the other hand with a vast machinery of direct or 'participatory' democracy..." (Morning Star May 3 1985).**

Comrade Rothstein supports the *British Road* idea that it is possible and desirable to seize working class state power and build socialism via parliamentary democracy in conjunction with direct participation in economic administration by trade unions, etc., none of which involves genuine soviet forms of organisation. He is therefore unabashed in proving to the Eurocommunists (and to us) that the soviets in the Soviet Union have long since been transformed into parliamentary bodies and that "direct democracy" is the function of trade unions and other non-political bodies.

The Eurocommunists attack the system of government in the socialist countries as evidence of the limitations of soviet democracy as opposed to parliamentary democracy. The true picture, however, is one of socialism being built within a political framework

more akin to parliamentarianism and where mass involvement through genuine workers' democracy is severely limited. Furthermore, it is clear that the real power in the Soviet Union lies not with the Supreme Soviet, but with the Politbureau of the Party.

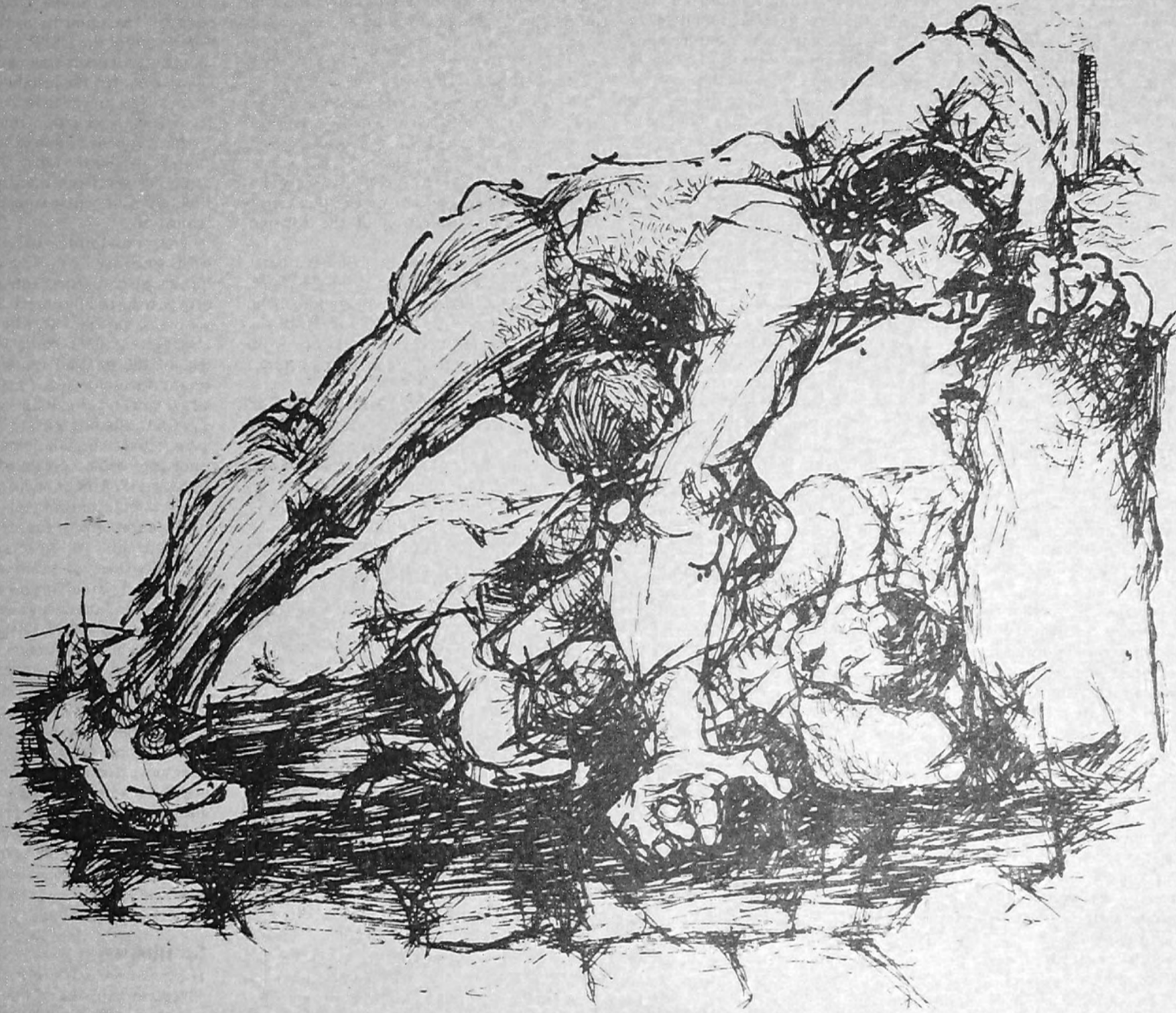
It has been possible to build socialism within this bureaucratic framework, so long as the socio-economic level of society has been relatively under-developed and the task has been primarily to catch up with the capitalist countries. Today, however, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries face severe problems in advancing socialism further, due to the underdevelopment of socialist democracy in general, and the absence of mass participatory soviet democracy in particular.

The need for working class democracy of the soviet type is therefore not just a piece of dogma, which is repeated, simply because Lenin said so. Soviet democracy is by far the most effective means of organising the masses in the revolutionary struggle for state power, and is also essential for involving the masses in the management and construction of socialist society, thus minimising and countering the tendency towards bureaucratisation, which will exist in all societies in the early stages of the transition to communism.

The perspective of a parliamentary road to socialism and communism outlined in the *British Road* is not only unprincipled and thoroughly reformist, but is also impractical from the point of view of posing any real method of seizing state power. It is a sure recipe for tragedy and must be completely thrown out in the light of repeated bloody lessons of Chile and elsewhere.

Furthermore, we should learn from the problems and mistakes of living socialism and look at the severe limitations of socialist democracy when based on the parliamentary model as opposed to the soviet form. In other words, we should also throw the *British Road* out in the light of the hard-won gains and hard-to-accept problems of the socialist countries.

# THE LENINIST SUPPLEMENT



## Turkey and the world revolution

THE Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) has recently held its Congress. This event is of tremendous significance for the world communist movement and all those who look to world revolution: it represents the beginning of the programmatic and organisational renaissance of Bolshevism within the international movement. As the Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain we have learned many invaluable and profoundly important lessons from our comrades of *İşçinin Sesi*. Today, as the disintegration of the world communist movement gathers pace and our own Party here in Britain totters on the edge of the liquidationist precipice, it is imperative for all genuine communists to look to these lessons taught by the struggle of the CPT.

If we are able to 'stand on the shoulders' of our comrades from Turkey it becomes possible for us to reforge our CPGB and thus enhance the struggle for the world revolution. The Leninist wing of the CPT emerged out of the crucible of crisis in Turkey and the failure of centrist opportunism to positively resolve that crisis through revolution. As we have pointed out before in a major article on Turkey, the events in the CPT have not been the 'back-yard' squabbles of revolutionaries of various hues. It is our task as communists to generalise the Turkish experience, to sharpen the differentiation between

Leninism and opportunism. This article supplies the background to the struggle inside the Party and points to some of the key lessons for those who wish to emulate the Leninists of the CPT and purge our Party of opportunism in all its manifestations.

### Party and state

Turkey's road of independent capitalist economic development was blocked and 'distorted' from its earliest years; developments in its capital economy have been largely dependent on Western capitalism throughout its history. For example, the already fragile empire of the Ottomans was rocked by the expansion of the capitalist West into the Mediterranean and beyond in pursuit of raw materials and new markets in the 18th and 19th centuries. The growing trade between Ottoman Turkey and Western Europe from the late 18th century onwards thus had disastrously negative effects on the local, small scale Ottoman industry; operating under strict regulations and with rising costs unable to be offset by economies of scale, it was totally incapable of competing with the cheap European manufactured goods flooding the empire Ottoman Turkey was in this sense, a *colonising semi-colony*.

Saddled with debt and plagued by the continued territorial haemorrhaging of the

empire, the despotic Ottoman state began to be visibly locked in the early 20th century, with secret societies coming together in army headquarters throughout the empire as centres of disaffection. The most forward looking and dynamic of these societies merged to become the 'Committees of Union and Progress', or romantically named 'Young Turks'. Eventually, on June 4 1908 the army headed by major Ahmed Niyazi marched on İstanbul demanding the restoration of the 1876 constitution. Politically isolated and unable to rely on the loyalty even of the troops closest to him, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, whose regime had come to be synonymous with intrigue and degeneration, abdicated on July 23 1908.

The leading force in this 1908 Young Turks' Revolution, the Committee of Union and Progress, had declared itself the Party of Union and Progress (PUP) in April 1907 and took power in the elections three years later. This essentially petty bourgeois nationalist party attempted to forge a Turkish bourgeoisie out of the *esnaf* (artisans) and the *tüccar* (merchants) of the towns. However, the PUP's total failure to prevent imperialist occupation during World War I and the massive losses of territory following the Balkan Wars (1912 — 1913) effectively destroyed its political credibility and set the stage for the emergence of Mustafa Kemal to leadership over the liberation

forces.

The rise to hegemony of Kemal over the national liberation forces was connected with the 'squeezing' of the Turkish bourgeoisie into the narrow borders of Anatolia as a result of the defeats following World War I. The dependent nature of Turkey during the 19th century had stunted any possibility of an indigenous large-scale industrial development. The dominant interests in the economy throughout this period, those of the big landowners in the countryside and of a comprador class in the urban centres such as İzmir and İstanbul, tied as they were directly to the interests of foreign capital, had a deadening effect on the Turkish industrial infrastructure. This comprador class effectively reinforced the dependent and 'distorted' nature of the Ottoman economy, by saddling it with debts to the West and by strengthening its role of primarily a raw material supplier to the expanding Western economies.

The interests of the small number of 'ethnic' Turkish firms were thus in sharp contradiction to those of both the imperialist countries and the collaborating bourgeoisie. The rapidly deteriorating position of Ottoman Turkey provided the opportunity for the further penetration of foreign capital and the relative strengthening of the comprador class. Thus the aspirations to national hegemony of this ethnic Turkish

bourgeoisie began increasingly to find its expression in the nationalist movement and ultimately in the War of National Liberation launched against the occupying powers of Britain, France, Italy, and Greece and their internal agents.

This bourgeois 'revolution' was in many senses, however, an 'exclusivist' one. The young Turkish working class and the most politically conscious and mature sections of the peasantry has been directly inspired in the struggle against the imperialist occupation of Turkey by the example of the Russian revolution. The struggle for national liberation threatened to slip from the hands of the weak Turkish bourgeoisie and also become a struggle for social liberation for the subaltern classes. Consequently:

"In its fear of seeing the leadership of the popular movement slip through its hands, the bourgeoisie resorted to every possible means of halting it and preventing it from heading in a communist direction. It even went so far as to found a fake Communist Party in order to create confusion about this direction.

"The first act of the bourgeois republic under which Kemal promised such freedoms... was to attack the workers and the working people. It started by drowning the leading cadres of the communist movement in the Black Sea, and it has continued along the same lines (to the present day)". (*Turkey Today* February/March 1983, p.19)

A young Turkish Marxist, speaking in 1928, succinctly described the course of events following the War of Liberation, the declaration of the Republic in 1923 and the Kemalists' gradual reconciliation with imperialism:

"After the victory against the imperialists, the Kemalists established their own rule. They took advantage of political power to establish at least a minimum economic foundation of their rule, at the expense of non-Turks and the agents of imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie... We witness an extraordinary increase in taxation and the growing use of state funds for the purpose of establishing their economic rule and for industrial development. We see the application of monopolistic methods and the mobilisation of capital in the country. This development continued for several years and brought the Turkish national bourgeoisie closer to its perpetual rival, the comprador bourgeoisie.

"This stage of development ended one and a half years ago. Kemalism has reached a point where it can develop no further. The bourgeoisie must increase the speed of accumulation. However, the efforts of the national bourgeoisie to safeguard independent development through its former methods have failed. Now they are forced to import capital on an increasing scale. Kemalism must bring imperialism into partnership for the exploitation of the working masses." (*Ibid.*, pp.14-15)

Thus, the Kemalist bourgeoisie, because of its innate weakness *vis-à-vis* other classes, its fear of revolution from below by the exploited classes, and its immense problems in competing with international imperialist capital, carried through a very restricted bourgeois 'revolution' which create a non-democratic authoritarian state. The Soviet expert on eastern affairs, Gurko Kryazhin, described Kemal's supporters as "a potential bourgeoisie, carrying out primitive accumulation through the agency of the state apparatus." (EH Carr, *Socialism in One Country 1924-26*, Volume III, p.639.) While the state then was used to facilitate capital accumulation by the local bourgeoisie, it never truly broke the back of the comprador class. At the end of the 1920s and 1930s, however, the fragile Turkish bourgeoisie had exhausted any vestigial ability it had to further increase the exploitation of the working class and a process of reconciliation and reintegration with imperialism began:

"The bourgeoisie sidled up to imperialist capitalist, at first warily, but much later and particularly after the Second World War, in leaps and bounds..." (İ. Bilen, quoted in R. Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.35)

Thus, after 1950 the state embarked on a process of wholesale denationalisation and the removal of restrictions on the flow of capital in or out of Turkey. The 1950s in Turkey were noticeable for three features: first, the unprecedented growth in business activity in Turkey as foreign investment swelled to 1.2 billion Turkish Lira during the period 1951-1963; secondly, Turkey's growing external debt as the quotas on imports were dropped and she was forced to increase her imports from donor countries as

a condition of 'aid'; and thirdly, as one might expect, the number of workers increased substantially during this period, by around 113% between 1948 and 1958. More significantly, the number of unionised workers shot up by some 405%, largely in response to the unbearable burden of the 'double yoke' of exploitation by both domestic and foreign capital. R. Yürükoğlu estimates that the mass of surplus value in Turkish manufacturing of 419,062,000 Turkish Lira in 1950 jumped to 3,365,847,000 in 1959; in other words, an increase of some 703% (*Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.154).

By the 1970s the Turkish bourgeois state had become the "managerial committee" of finance capital with the almost daily coalescence of the monopolies and the state. Inevitably, therefore, the 1970s also saw the continued deterioration in the position of the working class and a rapidly maturing revolutionary situation develop in the country as a whole.

Turkey then can be classified not as an 'underdeveloped' or backward country, but rather as a medium level developed one. The dynamics of the inner laws of monopoly combined with the role that the large banks played in the Turkish economy meant the inevitable emergence of finance capital in the country. The forcibly accelerated nature of the state-induced capital accumulation meant that when finance capital did emerge it did not rest on a developed economic basis. This general economic backwardness that persists, this medium level of capitalist development, means that countries at this stage (including Turkey) remain dependent on imperialism:

"Domestic finance capital is dependent on imperialism. It operates as an appendage, a part, a 'rank and file organisation' or 'local branch' of imperialism." (R. Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.32)

With finance capital comes the striving to expand outwards regardless of the general level of development of the country. But:

"In general, this door is closed for the countries at a transition stage." (R. Yürükoğlu, *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism*, p.32)

The "door is closed" precisely because of the domination of the world market by the major imperialist powers and consequently the working class of medium level developed capitalist countries bear a "double yoke" of exploitation. They are forced to provide not only the superprofits for their own domestic finance capital but also for international imperialism. Thus, a byproduct of Turkish finance capital's inability to expand outwards is the appallingly high levels of exploitation borne by the working class and working people of Turkey.

On September 12 1980, the Turkish monopoly bourgeoisie moved to crush the revolutionary situation in society and impose a bloody, barbaric, fascist dictatorship. With this came a reactionary stabilisation in the country and the working people of Turkey were to suffer under a fascist state for two long years. However, fascism is an emergency, not a lasting or permanent, bourgeois state form. The inability of the fascist junta or any bourgeois government to solve the country's structural economic crisis meant that though the revolutionary situation could be temporarily suppressed, it was impossible to remove the objective basis for it:

"Opposition in the society began to increase. The junta, whose base was narrow in any case, began to be severely pressed by the 'compulsion to go.' Mass support is not necessary for fascism to be able to seize power and establish a fascist state. But mass support is necessary if fascism is to last." (R. Yürükoğlu, *The Disintegration of Fascism*, p.21)

Due to its medium level of development and its consequent reliance on Western imperialism, Turkey has a general need to gain the acceptance of the Western bourgeois democracies. This, combined with a slight recovery in the economies of the imperialist nations in late 1982, was one of the key factors underlying Turkish fascism's tendency to disintegrate. Thus, even though the parties the junta allowed to be established after May 1983 were either puppet parties or ones with very restricted programmes, inevitably, given the groundswell of popular revulsion for the regime and the intolerable position of the masses, they became (in spite of the junta's intentions) channels for the people's anger. Today in Turkey it is not possible any longer to speak of a fascist state. There is an

authoritarian, transitional form of bourgeois rule in Turkey today. It can no longer be spoken of as fascist; the character of the regime is being largely determined by the fact that there are 'partners' emerging to share power in Turkey and there is a "continuous expansion of the sphere of the civilian political forces." (*Ibid.*, p.48) Crisis however, is structural to the Turkish economic and social systems. Thus:

"...the permanent alternatives which confront Turkey until there is revolution remain two: either fascism or revolution." (*Ibid.*, p.81)

Fascism has gone; but democracy for the peoples of Turkey is yet to come and can only come through revolution.

## The Party

Like the Communist Party in our country, the Communist Party of Turkey has been profoundly affected both positively and negatively by developments in our world movement. The Party itself like so many others was established under the direct influence and inspiration of the Russian revolution.

However, the problems that have beset our movement have also laid the CPT low. For example, before the emergence of the CPT (*İşçinin Sesi*) the last Congress of the Party had been in 1932 and for the period up to 1973 the Party to all intents and purposes had been liquidated.

On May 24 1973 a 'Political Bureau' meeting set about the task of the reconstitution of the party in Turkey. Though this was obviously an important and welcome development, it is necessary to remember the motivation which underlay it. The Soviet Union had systematically 'courted' the favours of Turkey throughout the 1960s and so the possibility exists that the re-formation of the CPT had less to do with local considerations or the possibilities of making the Turkish revolution and more to do with enhancing the Soviet Union's diplomacy.

At the time of this 1973 'Leap Forward' the Party adopted a new (Third) Programme. This was an eclectic and self-contradictory document. It contains within it the embryo of the split in the CPT between its revolutionary and opportunist wings. By the time of the 1978 Plenum the radically different approaches to the revolution in Turkey, and thus the organisation of the Party, had become far sharper and the opportunist leadership's behaviour more autocratic. By now the leadership had dropped all organisational questions. Between 1973 and 1980 not a single provincial or regional committee was established by the Politbureau and no ties were established with those already existing. The committees themselves were forced to establish channels of communication with the Politburo and suddenly, in 1978, these ties were simply broken: a totally adventurist and irresponsible act for the 'leadership' of a clandestine party.

Comrade R. Yürükoğlu was at this time the highly successful leader of the CPT's British District, the Party's third largest. His *Turkey Weak — Link of Imperialism* had been discussed and agreed upon to the very highest levels of the Party; indeed comrade Yürükoğlu had been recommended by the Party's General Secretary to be given responsibility by the Politburo for ideological work through the editorship of *Atılım* (*Leap Forward*), the Party's central organ. However, when comrade Yürükoğlu published an expanded version of *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism* in Britain, he was severely criticised and censored. With the 1978 Plenum approaching there was a 180% turn on behalf of the CPT leadership. Comrade Yürükoğlu and another comrade who defended his views were expelled from the Central Committee. So what did the leadership now find so objectionable about *Turkey — Weak Link*? One of the essential ideas contained within the book was that there was a revolutionary situation in Turkey: a crisis that could only be resolved by the overthrow of the existing order. The leadership, however, had other considerations apart from the success of the revolution in Turkey, and thus found it diplomatic to ditch the previous orthodoxy that a revolutionary situation existed in Turkey.

The *İşçinin Sesi* newspaper, the organ of the British District Committee, continued however to defend and propagate the ideas outlined in *Turkey — Weak Link*. Thus while its tone was not as yet openly polemical, its

adherence to the correct revolutionary position was itself an implicit criticism of the leadership's new course. During this period, however, the leadership moved to expel all oppositionists, not only from leading positions but from the Party itself. The number of people thus removed actually amounted to a numerical majority of the Party. The report of the subsequent Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPT spoke of the "sectarian and adventurist" *İşçinin Sesi* movement which had been expelled because of "open revolt against the Party".

One factor that might possibly have influenced the initiation of this bureaucratic purge was the Soviet Union's attitude to political developments in the country. The watchword of the USSR's approach to such countries as Turkey was 'caution'; the Soviet Union deplored the instability, anarchy and terror which prevailed in Turkey, that is, the revolutionary situation that was raging in Turkey, a phenomenon examined in detail in *Turkey — Weak Link*. That our Soviet comrades were frightened by a revolutionary situation is of course something we must be critical of.

The possibility of the reactionary bourgeoisie of Turkey granting 'progressive' parties democratic freedoms proved to be totally unrealistic. By 1978 there were few people left who could seriously envisage the CPT being legalised. Yet the end of the utopian vision of a legal CPT meant for some the disappearance of the whole *raison d'être* of the CPT as a Party and not for the first time in the Party's history, the perspective of liquidationism arose. The *İşçinin Sesi* movement presented the only organised ideological obstruction to this liquidation. Thus the organisational split within the party dates from the realisation of the impracticality of a legal CPT. In his pamphlet *Discussions in the CPT 1981-1982*, comrade H. Erdal (a prominent member of the Political Bureau and Central Committee of the 'official' CPT who was won to the Leninist wing) pinpoints the nub of the disagreements that split the communist movement in Turkey asunder:

"What kind of Communist Party is the CPT to be? This was the essence of the discussions. There were then and are today two alternatives. Either the CPT will remain an organisation conducting only general and abstract anti-imperialist propaganda abroad, as it has been for many years, or it will become an organisation waging a struggle to make the revolution in Turkey, to seize political power..." (p.10)

## Conclusion

There is now a Leninist Communist Party once more in Turkey. The significance of this rebirth is impossible to overstate. As Leninists in Britain we look to the comrades of the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) not simply for inspiration but also for many practical lessons for our struggle.

— They have illustrated the correctness of the disciplined, open rebellion against opportunism: that is the duty of every communist.

— They have exposed in their struggle the failures and limitations of centrism and blind and unthinking tailing of the CPSU. They, like us, consider themselves to be a strongly pro-Soviet organisation, but understand that the best possible service that can be rendered to the Soviet comrades and people is to *make revolution!*

— The emergence of the CPT (*İşçinin Sesi*) and the profound crisis in their country have taught many generally applicable lessons in much the same way as the revolutions of 1905, February 1917 and October 1917. Turkey in some respects already stands alongside Russia as a brilliant example of the general laws of social revolution. We must fight to take those lessons and apply them to our own struggle.

There will be no retreats from the tasks of the Turkish revolution next time round. The Turkish bourgeoisie cannot resolve the crisis: the revolutionary situation will re-emerge and this time the readiness of the Communist Party will not lag behind material developments. Turkey is a weak link of the imperialist chain: with the mighty weapon of the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) the day will dawn when that country will become a strong link in the chain of world revolution.

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF TURKEY (*İŞÇİNİN SESİ*)!  
FORWARD TO THE TURKISH REVOLUTION!

William Hughes





## The CPT(İS): Our Tasks

**The Leninist:** *İşçinin Sesi* has adopted the stance that fascism in Turkey is in a process of 'disintegration'. Why do you argue this and what tasks does it pose to your organisation?

**Veli Dursun:** In Turkey fascism came in order to suppress the revolutionary situation and to head off revolution. This was its *immediate aim*. Alongside this were its longer term aims of solving the underlying problems which had created the revolutionary situation, of furthering the process of becoming imperialist, and of bringing about the centralisation of the state, social life, and the economy that is demanded by the stage reached in Turkey by state-monopoly capitalism.

The fascist junta achieved its immediate aim. It suppressed the revolutionary situation, solved the political crisis, and imposed a reactionary stabilisation.

When fascism has succeeded in eliminating the immediate reason for its coming, this is the beginning of its end. *It is compelled to go* even from the point of view of the bourgeoisie. For arbitrariness, lawlessness, and violence constitute a sword which cuts in every direction.

Whether or not fascism goes the moment the immediate reason for its coming has been eliminated, whether or not it is accorded time to achieve its long-term aims, and what kind of process operates if and when it goes are questions whose answers lie in the balance of political forces.

The fascist junta could not solve the economic crisis. Opposition in society began to increase. The junta, whose base was narrow in any case, began to be severely pressed by the "compulsion to go". Mass support is not necessary for fascism to be able to seize power and establish a fascist state. But mass support is necessary if fascism is to last.

The continued existence of the regime required that the appearance of greater participation by the people be achieved in one way or the other. The fascist junta adopted a "democracy" manoeuvre in order to alleviate the pressure that had begun to make itself felt in the country. It produced a constitution and, following the example of Kemal's [Atatürk] fraudulent communist party, it set up three parties.

In fact, the junta intended that "civilian government", "transition to democracy", and the like would remain manoeuvres. But, due to society's hatred for the junta and its acts, these parties ceased to be puppet parties. Moreover, three additional parties were founded.

The junta's plan didn't work. The economic crisis became deeper and the situation was not relieved by the false statistics published for the benefit of the IMF. The conditions of the working masses sharply deteriorated. Thus, since the junta's mass base, which had been narrow in any case, shrank even more under these conditions, the *inauguration of the "transition to democracy" manoeuvre brought with it the beginning of the process of disintegration of fascism*. What gave birth to this process were the *power relations in society in Turkey*.

It would be impossible to assign a precise date for the beginning of the process of

Veli Dursun is the General Secretary of the newly formed Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*). As the comrade makes clear the CPT(İS) is both a new beginning and a continuation of the party founded in 1920. We are very pleased to carry news of this development and honoured to be the first English speaking publication to carry news of it.



*İşçinin Sesi* were the largest contingent on this year's May Day demonstration in London.

disintegration of fascism in Turkey. For it is a *process* including some leaps forward and turning points. However, to facilitate understanding certain turning points can be distinguished. Looking back from the present, we can see that the local elections were a very important turning point. Contrary to what was planned, the general elections were also a major turning point. The founding of the political parties brought about a genuine change. Just before that, the fact that the fascist junta was compelled to introduce a constitution was a very important turning point.

There is a fundamental difference between the previous situation in which the

NSC (National Security Council) ie the junta was sole and absolute ruler and the present situation in which the president is only one power centre among others. The criterion is whether or not the organisational form which makes a state fascist exists. In Turkey the function of fascism has vanished, so too have the organisational form and superstructural formation required by that function.

Despite the violence which is being imposed without let-up against the revolutionary forces, since the passage from the introduction of the "democracy manoeuvre" through the general to the local elections *the state in Turkey can no longer be*

*considered as a totalitarian (fascist) state.*

Today Turkey is in a *transitional period*. The regime must now be considered not as a totalitarian but as an anti-democratic, politically reactionary, aggressive, and nationalistic regime. In this respect if we look at the tasks of our party we see that, saying the regime is not fascist is of vital significance from the point of view of the party's general political tactics. There is a huge difference between our perceptions of what could be expected in terms of mass activity under monolithic conditions, and how we intend the organisation to function in a situation where every bourgeois trend has begun to line up people behind itself. *We will either work as we did in the period of reaction, or work in the knowledge that fascism no longer exists.* The organisational forms and activities of each period are quite different.

The new stage that has been reached presents the party with a single goal: *to win the masses*. The first thing that we must consider from the point of view of the goal of winning the masses is strengthening the party organisation. For this we can summarise four aspects of our political work in the forthcoming period:

1. A struggle for democracy which will be waged in every sphere using active, militant, proletarian methods.
2. Concentration on the immediate, urgent problems of the working people.
3. Work within the legal structures which are emerging. Alongside the working class and youth in particular, then intellectuals and artists.
4. Care must be taken not to allow increasing legal opportunities to lead us to underestimate the repression continuing against the working class and communists. We will therefore raise our level of discipline and conspiratorial work.

**The Leninist:** *İşçinin Sesi* places great emphasis on the need for an intense struggle for democracy. How, in your opinion, can democracy come in Turkey? Can there be a stable bourgeois democratic regime?

**Veli Dursun:** Yes, it is true that we place great emphasis on the need for an intense struggle for democracy in Turkey. The reason is due to what we have already discussed. There is no fascism in Turkey but there is no democracy either. In general our people think that they deserve a higher level of democracy than what it is at present in Turkey. So, that makes democracy a real, burning issue. It is so real that everybody, even the bourgeois politicians, is trying "to democratise" the country in this or that way. That is, if we don't fight for it the bourgeoisie will. They will utilise the democratic aspirations of the people for something a little better than what it is today.

The second and more important aspect in the fight for democracy is what we communists want as democracy in Turkey. Or to put it in different words, what the level of development of the productive forces demands as democracy in Turkey. It is a level of democracy higher than even what our people think they deserve, and it is certainly higher than what bourgeois "heroes" can

offer. Both aspects of the question demand that we put great emphasis on the struggle for democracy and that we must fight for democracy in a proletarian way.

In our opinion democracy can come to Turkey only through revolution. And the revolution can only be won through a successful struggle for democracy. So we fight for democracy with the aim of revolution.

We do not think that there can be any stable bourgeois democracy in Turkey. This is something dictated by the socio-economic conditions of Turkey. We always said and still say either revolution or fascism. All other paths are unstable and transitory.

**The Leninist:** Could you clarify the relationship between the aim that *İşçinin Sesi* sets of 'Advanced People's Democratic Revolution' and socialism? Will there be stages in the revolution, in other words?

Veli Dursun: There is no sin in talking about stages if the objective situation of a country demands that. Turkey is not a feudal but a capitalist country. So you cannot talk about "stages" in its agreed meaning for Turkey. However, you can still talk about stages. We define the stages in our revolution in a different way. By an Advanced People's Democratic Revolution we mean the conquest of power by the working class.

That is, the advanced democratic revolution is a political revolution. On the other hand, socialism is changing the mode of production and bringing in the socialist mode of production. That is a social revolution, as Marx says.

So, if we talk in terms of, first a political revolution and then social revolution, in this sense, yes, there are stages. But in the sense we talk about stages in the world communist movement, if the working class is powerful enough at the stage of political revolution and gains the hegemony then there won't be any stages.

**The Leninist:** Could you give us an idea of the current state of the revolutionary and workers' movement? What is the state of the 'official' (i.e. Menshevik) wing of the party?

Veli Dursun: Every sharp turn in objective conditions creates turmoil also in the revolutionary movement. When the revolutionary situation came, when fascism came the same thing happened. Fascism has disintegrated not in a revolutionary way, but gradually; so, the turmoil in the revolutionary movement is also developing gradually.

In trade unions, there is so much pressure, so strong at the grassroots, that even *Türk-İş* is planning demonstrations in every big city. Süleyman Demirel's party the True Path Party and SODEP, are openly saying that they will change the constitution. Really, one has to be a real thickhead not to grasp what is happening. But because *Workers Voice (İşçinin Sesi)* talked about "disintegration", the rest of the revolutionary movement is stuck with the "fascism" formula. They think in terms of competition. Ideological orthodoxy is a good thing, especially in difficult times, but this is not that!

However what they say and what they do are two completely different things. The movements, like our Mensheviks and Dev-Yol, they are not "purists" in ideological matters. They don't think of ideology as the generalisation of practice, as a guidance to find the way for further practices. So, what do they do? On the one hand, they say it is still fascism, and on the other, they work as if there is no fascism.

There will be a crisis and it will divide such movements which see what is happening and act accordingly but do not say what this is.

Most of the organisations that are saying that this is fascism are behaving as if there is fascism. They will have a bigger problem! The first category has a problem of hypocrisy, but can come out of the crisis because they are doing what is needed now. The second category will miss the train altogether.

I think on the other hand, today the situation in a different way is helping the Mensheviks. There is an ample opportunity for legal work, and it is increasing. Legal work, but only by hiding yourself and talking in a disguised language. This means that the revolutionaries have to wait a little more before going out into the streets. When the time comes for that the tide will be against the Mensheviks; they cannot cope with that sort of work. But the legal

opportunities which require acting like the bourgeoisie itself, "in a respectable way": they do it well. If they can utilize this advantage today they can solve their crisis and can come out stronger.

**The Leninist:** There has been now for some time a debate conducted in the *İşçinin Sesi* organisation over your programme. Could you give us a brief outline of some of the important features of this programme? Also, are there any innovations?

Veli Dursun: We are translating our programme into English and it will soon be published. I will only say that with this programme we presented our people with a positive alternative. We believe it is the most advanced and comprehensive programme ever written in Turkey, and one that can be implemented.

**The Leninist:** The question of inner-party democracy is an extremely important one for revolutionaries. Both our organisations have negative examples of the way opportunist party leaderships may use administrative methods to crush debate. We would be interested if you could describe to us how specifically differences over the question of the programme were discussed and generally how political differences are handled in your organisation.

Veli Dursun: When the party can work legally, the whole structure must be

democratic from top to bottom. This means elections, discussions that are open to the public, elimination of cooptations, etc. When the party is illegal you cannot use these democratic procedures.

If you try to have elections in an illegal party, it is the shortest way to ruin. Police and all sorts of agents can infiltrate that party. So in an illegal party, you hold elections only for the CC.

In the run-up to the congress, the CC resolves that any organisation which has a certain number of members is considered as a provincial committee. Every provincial committee then elects and sends to the congress a number of delegates in proportion to its membership.

In the illegal party democracy mainly applies in the CC. When we come to the cells, district committees, etc, you can talk about comradeship and comradely trust, but you cannot talk about democracy in its established understanding. On the other hand we try to make use of every possible means to make democracy work as much as possible in the party. In our party every comrade can put up ideas to be discussed in its own organisation, or even in the CC, or the congress.

In our experience with the Mensheviks, yes, we fought against their administrative methods. But we have never been against centralism in the party. We wanted to have meetings of the CC! For such basic things we

fought. Not for democracy, for membership of an illegal party.

We know that an illegal party cannot be a really democratic party. It would be hypocrisy if we don't say that an illegal party cannot be really democratic. Only when the working class gains its political rights can the party work on a democratic basis.

Democracy is not a game, it is not a toy, it is not a fetish. The working class applies democracy when it supports revolutionary aims. When the party is legal, democratic procedures do support revolutionary aims. But when the party is illegal it is a dangerous game.

When we held local party congresses in Turkey it was a mistake. When we broke with the Mensheviks in 1979, there was a huge ghost hanging over our heads. Our party hadn't held a congress for 50 years! For 50 years there was no real programme and constitution! With this pressure on us, we even disregarded what Lenin says. It was wrong and practice showed us that Lenin was again right. Two big campaigns of arrests came through these congresses. One in İzmir and one in İstanbul.

**The Leninist:** Will your forthcoming congress be a congress of a wing of the party, or will you, as Lenin did in 1912, declare it to be congress of the party?

Veli Dursun: We are not any longer a wing of the party as the Bolsheviks were in the RSDLP. We are now a totally different party with a separate constitution, a separate programme, and a separate organisation.

We have held our 5.(1.) Congress. In the history of our party unfortunately every congress held was the first founding congress. So five indicates the historical roots, first indicates the actual state. Sixteen provincial committees were presented in the congress. Nearly half of the comrades had been in prison; 31 percent were women. This is a magnificent figure, especially for a Turkish organisation. Congress unanimously elected the General Secretary. The question of how shall we work in Turkey was discussed in a very extensive way. We changed the whole structure of the party organisation in Turkey in relation to the demands of the situation.

There were three earlier stages of the discussion of the programme. So we had, when the congress opened, the third draft of the programme. We discussed and changed some parts of it, and accepted the programme and a new constitution.

**The Leninist:** What is your assessment of the current state of the world communist movement, with particular reference to the parties of Western Europe?

Veli Dursun: I can say our judgement in a couple of sentences although it may do some injustice to the complexities of the situation. There is a process of "social democratisation" gripping the communist parties. The whole communist movement in Europe is disintegrating. This coming to a dead end is not only taking place in Europe but is particularly obvious in Europe. In underdeveloped countries it is not so obvious, because life is harder and the parties shout more. This disguises itself as militancy. An underdeveloped country's party certainly shouts. This is a way of life and you must not confuse it with real proletarian militancy.

There is a big crisis. I can understand (in a paradoxical way) the European parties but not so easily the parties of less developed countries. The European parties are really squeezed historically.

If we look in perspective we have all the reasons to be optimistic. In the imperialist system a really bad crisis is brewing. Indications are in all the newspapers. A "trade war" seems imminent. Europe is in a very disadvantageous position in relation to Japan and America. It means that life will become harsher in Europe. I don't mean to say that this is the crisis, but this will be one of the worst crises.

When the objective situation changes, certainly the psychology of the people changes as well. So there will be much greater scope for revolutionary elements in Europe to fight and organise. In some middle developed countries, like Turkey, opportunities are there, and won't go in the foreseeable future. Really it will be a long period of opportunities if we can utilize them. And in my opinion, if revolution takes place in any country which carries a little more weight than Cuba, it will make great changes in the world communist and revolutionary movement.



## Communists in Turkey have their 5th Congress

The Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) has held its 5.(1.) congress. In formal terms this congress was the fifth in the party's history. Yet given the harsh illegal conditions under which the Communist Party of Turkey has been forced to operate since its inception (1920) plus the grave liquidationist damage that opportunism has inflicted on the party historically, every congress of the party in a sense is its refounding one. Thus, this congress is the 5.(1.) congress: 5 indicates its historical continuity while the (1) appendage identifies the congress as the rebirth of the party.

This congress has created a separate, independent party. Our comrades from Turkey have gone from the stage of being a wing of the Communist Party of Turkey, in opposition to the menshevik 'official' wing, to being a separate Communist Party, with its own programme and constitution. There now exists once more in Turkey a Leninist Communist Party.

Comrade Veli Dursun, the newly elected General Secretary, heads a relatively young but experienced and mature party as the congress credentials indicate. Of the 51 delegates present at the congress, the medium age was 27. Only 13 comrades (some 25.5%) were older than 35 with the oldest among them being one comrade of 46 years. The majority of delegates (66.7%) fell into the age range of 25-35.

The party however has an enviable depth and range of experience. Over 15% of those present had been active in the organisation for over 10 years, spanning in that time the profound revolutionary situation that gripped Turkey throughout the 1970's, the fascist counterrevolution in 1980 and the subsequent dark years of repression and regroupment and now the new possibilities offered by the disintegration of the fascist monolith in Turkey. The party also has of course the rich storehouse of the experience of a protracted ideological struggle against opportunism to draw on. Over 92% of those who attended the congress had a membership of over 5 years and would thus have experienced in one form or another the open, principled and disciplined ideological rebellion of the *İşçinin Sesi* wing of the Communist Party of Turkey against the centrist opportunism of the official party leadership and its failure of the revolutionary masses.

Also indicative of the fact that this party has been forged in the crucible of class struggle itself was the number of delegates who had spent time in prison for political crimes. 43.1% of delegates (37.5% of women, 45.7% of men) had fallen foul of the barbarous prison system in Turkey and 32% of comrades had in fact been imprisoned more than once. On average the male comrades did around 15 months and the female 10.7. The vicious Turkish bourgeoisie however does not forgive or forget easily: of the congress delegates, some 27.5% were still wanted by the police.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the congress was the extremely healthy percentage of women delegates — 31.3%. This is not simply an outstanding figure compared the other Middle Eastern communist parties, it also compares extremely favourably to any communist party anywhere in the world (for example, well under a quarter of the delegates to our recent CPGB congress were women — so much for the attractive potential of feminism!) The female comrades of the CPT (*İS*) were not the 'junior' or subordinate partners of the men either: the average length of membership of the party for females was 7 years, just one year less than the average for male comrades.

The party then has breadth, maturity and a goldmine of cadre. The new Central Committee's statement indicates the optimism and confidence of the party:

"Now the task is, under the direction of the programme and the rules, to achieve the objectives which the congress has put in front of us and to open the way to victory of the revolution by defeating the bourgeoisie and opportunism."

May the Turkish ruling class fear: it faces a party the like of which has not been seen for over half a century. It faces a party which will shake the earth.

SINCE the start of the Spring term teachers have been engaged in some of the most intense industrial action for years. The Educational Institute of Scotland has rejected an employers' pay offer and demanded an independently arbitrated award. In England and Wales the largest teachers' union, the NUT, having last year burnt its fingers by going to arbitration, has stuck out for a flat-rate increase of £1,200 pa for all teachers. And 1985 has seen short strikes by the three main unions (the NUT, NAS/UTW, EIS) in every part of Britain.

The employers have offered a bitter pill with a thin sugar coating; little more money for more work. However teachers have refused to swallow it. And when the employers did express a willingness to offer more cash their paymaster — the government — said that no extra was available. Teachers are clearly being increasingly forced to fight.

Not only are ratecapping, cuts, proposed teacher assessment, and the decreasing value of salaries having a politicising effect but the Great Miners' Strike had a remarkably profound impact on many teachers, particularly in the inner cities. Not only the traditionally militant schools but even small primary schools had regular collections, twinned with pits and arranged visits to mining areas. School Miners' Support Groups had been set up and some London teachers took unofficial strike action on two occasions in solidarity with the miners.

The miners' militancy and determination has inspired many teachers to the extent that since the start of the Great Strike picketing of schools has become a frequent sight in some areas. Teachers are becoming increasingly willing to fight.

#### Executive actions

Despite the miners' defeat, teachers have moved to the left, pushing their leaders, particularly the NUT Executive, before them. But predictably, the NUT Executive has initiated a very fragmented campaign of action composed of 'withdrawal of goodwill' i.e. no attendance of meetings outside school hours, no reports or assessments to be done, no marking or preparation outside school hours, the cessation of dinnertime supervision, and sporadic one-day or three-day strikes. The first bloc of measures have had very little visible effect and the strikes have been marginal. In fact such action has even served to demoralise some militant teachers.

The Executive has compounded its lack of imaginative and bold leadership by offering local authorities exemption from strike action if they sign a pledge to support the teachers' case. Apart from agreeing to make representation for the recall of the Burnham Committee (which makes pay awards) these local authorities are not obliged to do anything else. As a result, the Executive have even called off strikes and the effect of their ridiculous scheme has been to isolate those in Tory controlled areas from their more militant colleagues in the inner city schools. Not only have they failed to properly prepare for more effective extended strike action by instituting a levy last September, but have now tied one hand behind their back and undermined the limited action that is taking place.

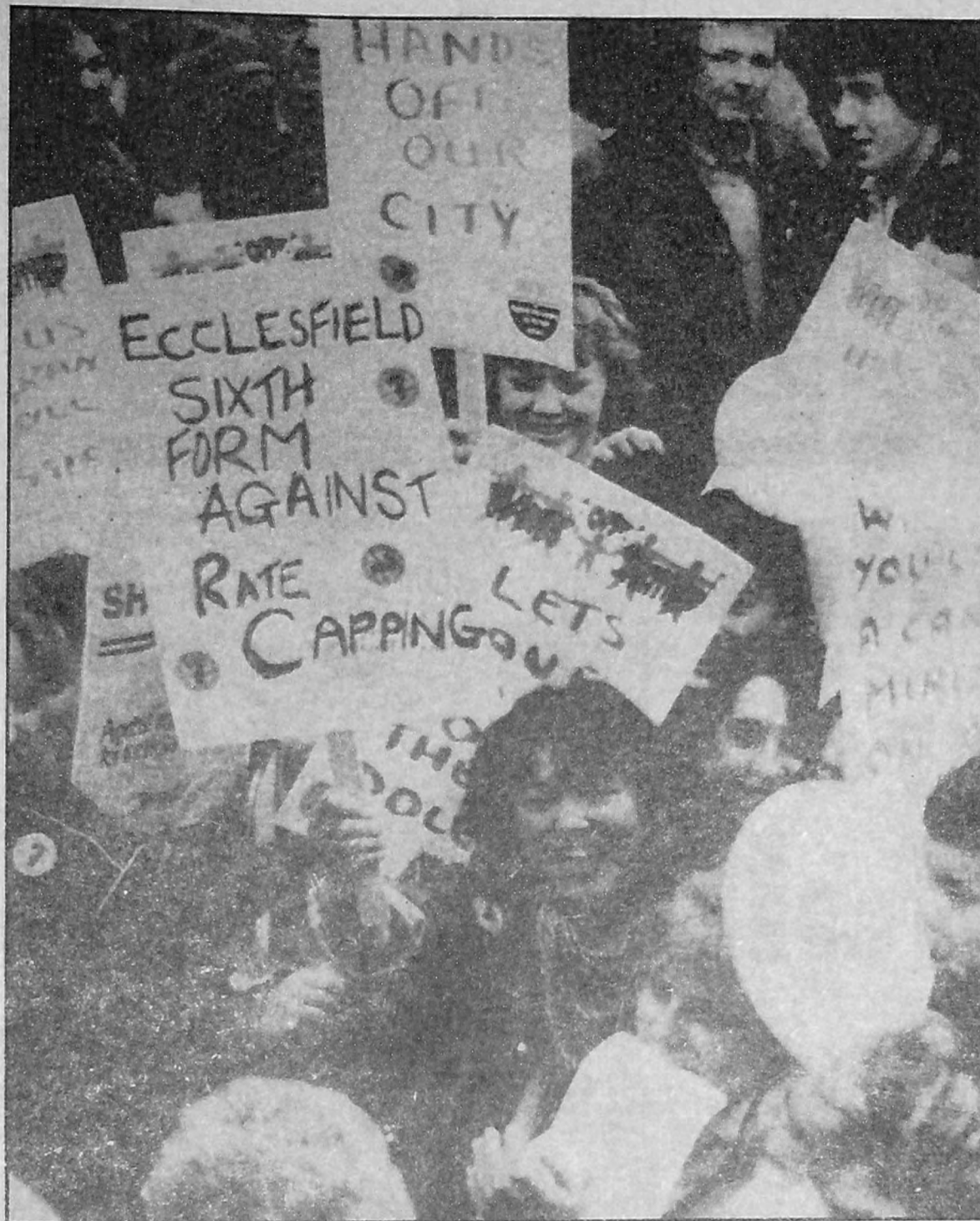
The union leaderships, including the supposedly 'progressive' NUT are all keen to do a deal as soon as possible.

#### Communist Party teachers

As with the Great Strike, all the three main opportunist trends in our Party have failed the test of political leadership in this campaign. After wresting control of the Party Teachers' Advisory Committee last

## The teachers' dispute

# A militant education



The teachers' leaders could learn a thing or two from the school students

year from the centrists the Eurocommunists took over *Education for Today and Tomorrow* and transformed it from a dull centrist publication into a dull Euro one, neither managing to inspire militant teachers nor attract more than a handful to the Party. This has not been done by the political practice of these factions during the dispute either; nothing illustrates this better than their role at the NUT Conference Easter 1985.

At the Conference, the vast majority of Party teachers, working in the Broad Alliance, acted as voting fodder for the Executive; for despite making occasional left-sounding speeches on the platform such comrades went back to their seats and voted against motions and amendments calling for much stronger action, notably those dealing with the current salaries campaign. Furthermore, leading Party teachers often led the defence of the faint-hearted, shilly-shallying Executive. A leading Euro from Brent in London — comrade John Poole — had the nerve to tell delegates that "The Executive had successfully co-ordinated the campaign so far and there is no reason to remove the flexibility." Likewise when a motion was put calling for action over oversized classes, Euro comrade Jim Ferguson leapt to the Exec's defence arguing that action would "create problems". The reader may well ask why were the bulk of Party teachers so terrified of proposals for a national levy to finance further strikes, more local

control of the action, building links with other public sector unions and the disruption of exams. The answer to that and the reasons why the Party's influence has remorselessly declined can be found in the politics of Broad Leftism.

The Teachers' Broad Alliance, in which most Party members operate, is in such a parlous state that even comrade Marion Darke, Secretary of the National Party Teachers' Advisory Committee, comments that: "Such broad left organisation as does exist at national level within the NUT still sees its role as supporting the Executive against the ultras, rather than as a forum for the discussion of progressive ideas within the union. Still less does it see its role as providing a forum for the discussion of socialist ideas and perspectives." (*Focus*, 18 April 1985) It is precisely because the major Party factions active amongst teachers — the Euros and Straight Leftists — have been almost obsessed with ensconcing themselves into, or ingratiating themselves with, the union bureaucracy that they have been incapable of winning the new influx of the young and increasingly militant into their ranks. But Euro comrade Darke, whilst recognising the creeping rigor mortis of Broad Alliance groups at national level and their virtual extinction in the localities, wants to resuscitate them for discussion purposes stating quite incredibly that the need for such groups "having never been so clear"!

The position of the Straight Leftist orientated *Education for Tomorrow* is little different, if anything they trail along behind the NUT Executive even more obediently than the Euro poodles do. The essential similarity of these views could be seen by inspection of their respective leaflets distributed outside NUT Conference; they were almost indistinguishable, both giving support to the Executive position, proposing very limited escalation of the action and raving at the evil influence of the Trotskyites and 'ultra left' as divisive elements.

But in truth it is not so much small groups on the left that are the major problem but the right, and the most disruptive elements in undermining union action have often been those Heads and Deputy Heads who are also union members. Their fear of what they term 'the ultra left', in the case of many Straight Leftists extends to near paranoia. What it in fact reveals is their real rightism and a genuine fear of the rising tide of militancy. And they also are increasingly aware that whilst they are declining, others are tapping that militancy — and growing.

#### The 'ultra-left'

The largest left group that opportunist Party teachers are looking over their shoulders at is the Socialist Teachers' Alliance, an assortment of ex-IMGers and fellow Labourite Trotskyites and leftists who, though posing as revolutionaries, have assiduously worked

to integrate themselves into the union bureaucracy. The STA's claim to be really left rests more on its members' past history than its track record.

Interestingly, the SWP, moving to the right at a rate of knots, has recently applied to join the STA (after abandoning its own front organisation — the Rank and File group — some years earlier) only to be rejected. Their latest turn to the right also involves the whole question of ballots and the Tory law.

During the current dispute, the NUT Executive, fearing penalisation under the 1984 Trade Union Act has used ballots before implementing actions such as the refusal to supervise pupils during dinner breaks. In some Local Associations teachers have actually refused to conduct secret ballots on this issue; instead, members' meetings have been convened and voting has been effected by a show of hands. But instead of wholeheartedly supporting such displays of defiance and real democracy, the SWP has argued in favour of the secret ballot!

The STA itself has increasingly become drawn to the London Labour left's committee and quango blend of politics and, as the majority group within the NUT's Inner London Teachers' Association, has negotiated a rather dubious deal on the redeployment of teachers within the ILEA. But despite such weaknesses, the STA (and the Rank and File '83 group — composed of assorted ex-SWPs, Labour lefts and leftists) have managed to continue to attract growing numbers of militant teachers to the chagrin of Communist Party opportunists. Many teachers are clearly seeking socialist politics and militant action but our Party leadership and their Straight Leftist shadows are rightly not considered to be worth a second look.

#### The lead we need

What teachers need is some basic principles to guide the defence and furtherance of both their conditions of work and the educational and material needs of not only working class kids but the working class as a whole. With this perspective of fighting for what all those in education need, not what capitalism can afford, a movement of workers in education can be built which does not end up as a group of Executive apologists as the Teachers' Broad Alliance has done, and can avoid their reformist politics. Instead, the demands of today can be linked with the long term interests of the working class, education and the development of human society as a whole.

This will not be achieved *only* by working within the structure of unions. Given the lack of militant leadership of the struggle by the officials, and the generally low level of socialist consciousness and militancy on the part of most teachers (though this is undoubtedly being changed) there is a crying need for an organisation encompassing all militants, a movement which provides a forum for discussion of union tactics and on a broad range of politics relating to the struggle for socialism and which organises across schools and areas, for action whether leafleting, picketing weakly organised schools, at union meetings, or for demonstrations.

It is just as important for the militant minority of teachers to be organised as it is for militant miners. The general attack on education and the increasing pressures on teachers, school students and the working class will not go away in the next few years. On the contrary the struggle and thus the militancy of teachers will intensify; to fight effectively and develop the struggle, teachers need such a movement, to win the union for militant socialist positions and to advance the socialist future.

Tony Coughlin and Dave Curtis

# The PCE: the Euros fall out

*The Eurocommunists are hell bent on transforming our Communist Party of Great Britain into a 'pure' Euro party. They claim that if the opposition is purged everything will be hunky dory. This is very unlikely to be so, and if our report on Spain is anything to go by they will soon be at each others throats.*



Carrillo: the arch Eurocommunist now brands the PCE leaders as wanting to liquidate the party in a sea of pacifism.

A FEW years ago the Communist Party of Spain was hailed by a monotone chorus of revisionists the world over and their bosom friends in the bourgeois media as a model for all communists.

This was because the PCE was at the forefront of developing what became known as Eurocommunism. The party actually semi-officially declared itself Eurocommunist; a sort of self-mutilation. Today, the bitter results of this Eurocommunism can be seen in the chronic factionalism in the PCE, its organisational collapse, and its loss of mass support.

So deep is the crisis in the PCE that even the smallest, most innocuous questions, seem to provoke major schisms and further

*"refusal to submit to discipline would be 'tantamount' to excluding himself"*

political and organisational degeneration.

Such was the case recently. The Socialist Party Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, called on the various parliamentary groups and

parties to meetings in order to discuss a proposal for reaching a "consensus" around Spain's joining NATO. Instead of the PCE sending its parliamentary spokesman Santiago Carrillo it was decided to replace him with General Secretary Gerardo Iglesias. In pique Carrillo furiously launched a barrage of attacks against Iglesias, branding his action as a "matter for a psychiatrist".

This outburst by Carrillo against his hand picked successor reflected factional differences going back to the PCE's 11th Congress, where Iglesias won the day for his "convergencia" policy which aimed at forming an electoral alliance with pacifists and greens, as well as accelerating the social democratisation of the PCE by making it more acceptable to the intellectuals who had in recent years flooded out of the party. After the congress Carrillo and 18 other members of the Central Committee who closely supported him held a press conference declaring their opposition to these moves and their intention of continuing the fight inside the party.

Matters finally seemed to come to a head in April of this year, when at a special party conference Carrillo was condemned and told that refusal to submit to discipline would

be "tantamount to excluding himself from the party". Despite this the leadership, terrified of splitting the party in two, backedtracked and Carrillo and his friends were not duly expelled although they had threatened to use the courts, and

*"these developments have occurred against a background of profound crisis"*

are still attempting to build bridges with the Communist Party (the Partido Comunista led by Ignacio Gallego insists on being called that and nothing more) with a so-called "union of communists".

While the wrangle between Carrillo and Iglesias was in progress the PCE's Deputy General Secretary, Jaime Ballesteros, announced that he along with four other members of the Central Committee and "thousands of members" had gone over to the Gallego CP, stating that "in view of the process of liquidationism and grave crisis that is afflicting Spanish communism, we want to undertake a process of ideological clarification and unification of all communists."

As we have said, these developments have occurred against

a background of profound crisis in the PCE which has seen it decline precipitously. In 1977 it claimed to have 300,000 members; today while officials in the PCE talk of a decline to 70,000 it is thought that it is more likely to have only 40,000 members. Its paper *Mundo Obrero* ended its career as a daily in financial catastrophe and now limps on as a weekly with a print run of only 35,000. In terms of general election votes there has been a nosedive which has seen the number of PCE parliamentary deputies reduced from 23 in 1979 to a mere 4 in 1982.

*"supported and some say promoted by comrades from the CPSU"*

Important splits from the PCE began in 1970 with Agustin Gomez and Eduard Garcia, then Enrique Lister the famous civil war general established the Spanish Workers' Communist Party, but the most significant one occurred in 1981. In January the majority of the congress of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC — the PCE in Catalonia, and its largest district) voted to reject the term "Eurocommunism". This vote unleashed a bitter struggle in the PSUC which culminated in the formation of the Party of Communists in Catalonia and a break from the PCE. It was the PCC which was able to pull into its orbit other ex-PCE groupings as well as members who jointly sponsored the Congress of Communist Unity which founded the already mentioned Communist Party led by Ignacio Gallego.

This Gallego CP was supported and some say promoted by comrades from the CPSU who have taken the step of granting it recognition alongside the PCE — something which produced loud protests from the PCE and mutterings of concern from other Euro CP's including the CPGB. Today the Gallego CP claims to have around 30,000 members — almost certain to be an exaggeration especially when one considers that its fortnightly paper *Nuevo Rumbo* only has a circulation of 35,000. Certainly outside Catalonia it remains thin on the ground and in some areas like the Basque country it is more or less non-existent.

As a result of this splitting against Eurocommunism and the disarray within the PCE itself, the term 'Eurocommunism' is now hardly used by the Eurocommunists themselves. Partially as a result of this, some of the most extreme Martin Jacques type Euros like Azcarate, Brabo, and Zaldivar split in 1982, forming the Association for the Renewal of the Left. It dissolved itself in inglorious confusion a few months later, some members going back to the PCE, some to the PSOE, while others stoically insist on staying 'independent'. Clearly the crisis in the PCE goes far deeper than the use of political terminology; indeed the crisis of the PCE is a crisis of identity.

*"the PCE fought for the masses to tail the bourgeoisie"*

This crisis was neatly described by Carrillo himself when he maintained that "At the time (of the first general election in 1977 which capped the transition period which began with Franco's death in November 1975), we were faced with an immature and ultraleftist PSOE, and we had to adopt a statesmanlike responsibility to get the country out of the rut it was in. Then the PSOE slid to the right, leaving no space for us between it and the UCD" (the Union

of the Democratic Centre was the bourgeois democratic grouping which presided over the transition from Francoite fascism).

The "statesmanlike" policy of the PCE, then under the leadership of Sr Carrillo himself, meant doing everything to allow the bourgeoisie to safely make the transition from rule through Francoite fascism to parliamentary democracy without the masses stamping their imprint on the process, let alone propelling the country towards revolution. As a result of this "statesmanlike" policy the PCE attempted at every turn of events to block popular upsurges, something which of course allowed the PSOE of Felipe Gonzalez to outflank it on the left. The leftist demagoguery of the PSOE was naturally discarded when it was confronted with persuading the ruling class that it was fit for government, and this as Carrillo states left the "statesmanlike" PCE marginalised.

So when fascism in Spain was going through the process of disintegration the PCE fought for the masses to simply tail the bourgeoisie. Because of this, while the masses pushed the bourgeoisie from behind causing fascist laws, institutions, and procedures to change, their actions did not determine the outcome. Because of this, while fascism is no more in Spain fascist forces still permeate much of the state apparatus, especially the army as was proved by the attempted coup by Lieutenant-Colonel Tejero in February 1981. His dramatic appearance in front of TV cameras, his guns-blazing takeover of the Cortes, his enraged hectoring of the assembled parliamentarians, and the wave of rightist sympathy for him, did not lead to a sweeping purge of the armed forces, even though many of the top brass knew of the plot and some actively backed it. In fact, the Tejero coup led to a 'counter reform' which saw Spanish political forces turn to the right in order to placate the extreme reactionaries and head off the possibility of another more serious coup attempt.

Carrillo's response to the Tejero coup was typically "statesmanlike". Instead of turning to the working class, rousing it against the state, demanding far reaching democratic changes, he rapturously applauded the King, to whom Tejero wanted to give dictatorial powers but who had taken a lead in coming to a behind the scenes deal with the military hierarchy preventing the army tops rallying to the rebels through a combination of promises of lavish NATO arms procurements and warnings that this would be jeopardised if Spain reverted to fascism.

*"the PCE gave up any pretence of acting as a vanguard"*

"Statesmanlike" behaviour meant that in the delicate (for the bourgeoisie) process of transition from fascism and its inevitably fluid aftermath the PCE leadership created the conditions for stability and their present party crisis and with it the loss of mass support. By making the bourgeoisie's appeals for an orderly transition from fascism its own, the PCE gave up any pretence of acting as a vanguard. Nonetheless the PCE's first public statement after legislation, on the eve of the 1977 elections, thanking the King "who legalised us" and promising loyalty to the crown, still managed to shock an increasingly disorientated membership brought up with the memory of the civil war burnt onto their brains. Indeed it is said that many PCE members openly wept with shame and despair at the leadership's fawning before the

Franco-appointed monarch.

Faced with such "statesmanlike" behaviour many in the PCE have sought salvation by rejecting Eurocommunism and looking back to the days when the party operated underground against the Franco dictatorship. This has gone hand in hand with turning to the CPSU for aid and where possible leadership. Because of this the reaction against Eurocommunism has not managed to transcend centrism, has not engaged in a thoroughgoing and far reaching ideological re-examination.

Therefore the Gallego CP includes in it many leaders of 'fiefdoms' who have taken their followers from the PCE like rats leaving the proverbial sinking ship. And in order to draw into its ranks more 'clan chiefs', perhaps even the arch revisionist Carrillo himself, the Gallego CP seems determined to pursue a very moderate line when it comes to the class struggle.

That said, the Gallego CP has in the conditions now prevailing in Spain at least the possibility of becoming the Party at least to some degree repeating the success of the "Exterior" faction of the Communist Party of Greece which has long ago reduced the Eurocommunist "Interior" faction to a squabbling rump. Of course there is also the possibility that the Gallego CP will, because of its centrism, stagnate and fossilize as a large sect which reduces the question of revolution and Marxist-Leninist theory to ritualistic statements in the party press instead of the constant aim and guide to practice. Worship of the USSR is no substitute for revolutionary action. What the outcome will be time and developments in the PCE will tell.

Certainly the crisis in the PCE could prove fatal: and that would open up the road for the Gallego CP. Already despite drawing back from expelling Carrillo the Iglesias faction has surgically removed the

*Carrillistas* who controlled the Madrid organisation of the party. The same looks like happening in the Basque country, Valencia, and Galicia. So Carrillo may well be provoked into a split.

Already in the PCE-dominated trade unions, the Workers' Commissions elections for its leadership have seen the two major PCE factions and the Gallego CP field rival candidates. The Camacho slate (for Iglesias) managed to hold on to its positions with 53% of the vote but was closely challenged by the Ariza slate (for Carrillo) who managed to notch up a respectable 28%, while those supporting the Gallego CP came a good third with 15%.

*"Carrillo now makes positive statements about the USSR"*

The factional rivalry in the PCE has not only produced the amazing and ironic situation where Carrillo now makes positive statements about the USSR and the October Revolution, accusing the Iglesias leadership of being anti-Soviet and soft on the government, but his supporters have even engaged in militant class struggle posturing.

Because it is simply posturing all that has resulted is defeat. The Metalworkers' Federation led by Carrillistas retreated at the decisive moment of the Sagunto workers' struggle and the same looks like happening over the ship-building workers' dispute. Not to be outdone the Iglesias faction has been equally unprincipled in attempting to manipulate workers' struggles for cynical inner-PCE factional advantage. In the Asturias the Workers' Commissions, which are led by pro-Iglesias forces, launched an ill-prepared offensive in November 1984 with the sole

purpose of boosting the prestige of their faction; not surprisingly this stunt ended in a flop.

Such actions can only breed disillusionment amongst the working class and a further haemorrhaging of the Workers' Commissions, which have already declined from an estimated 1,100,000 affiliated members in 1977 to the point where today they can barely muster 400,000. Such losses are a sad and graphic tribute to the class collaborationism of a PCE which under Carrillo signed the notorious Moncloa pacts; a PCE which now under Iglesias seeks a place in the political sun as a left reformist party. This project is a non-starter of course. In conditions of emerging world capitalist general crisis when the inevitable consequences of this are that the 'socialist' government of the once 'ultraleftist' Felipe Gonzalez is forced to attack the working class, capitalism in Spain simply cannot afford to sweeten the austerity pill with the sugar of reform.

Such is the crisis of identity of the PCE. It long ago liquidated any genuine commitment to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and in the 1960s it ditched loyalty to the USSR in preference to loyalty to capitalist Spain: splits, factions, and groupings are an inevitable consequence, even the Tweedle-Dee Tweedle-Dum falling out of old Eurocommunist stablemates like Carrillo and his protégé Iglesias.

What the situation in Spain is crying out for is a real break from Eurocommunist revisionism and the opportunism that gave it birth and sustenance. The workers in Spain have no interest in a "union of communists" which includes in it rats like Carrillo or in diplomatic manoeuvring to win other 'clan chiefs'. It needs a Leninist PCE and this can only come with protracted and relentless ideological struggle against all forms of opportunism.

*José Montiel*

## The cancer of Eurocommunism

EUROCOMMUNISM was heralded by its proponents as the dawning of a new golden age for our world communist movement. Reality has proved otherwise.

Eurocommunism is nothing more than a further stage, perhaps the last, in the process of social democratisation that has been taking place for many years in the communist parties of the capitalist world.

Faced with the prospect of being excluded forever from the centres of governmental power and the danger of being whittled down to the level of a large sect because of the close identification of their parties with the somewhat tarnished image of living socialism, many a right opportunist leadership opted for ditching 100% support for the Soviet Union and declaring 100% support for their own capitalist state: a move that at least in Western Europe was given the ideological cover of so-called Euro 'communism'. But wherever it happened, Japan, Australia, or Britain, the results have been almost without exception disastrous.

Italy. The exception to this rule is undoubtedly the PCI. Having survived the (what could have proved disastrous) strategy of the "Historic Compromise", the PCI readjusted itself in 1980 and now calls for a "democratic alternative" to Christian Democracy. Of course this "democratic alternative" has got nothing to do with socialism or even the class struggle; no, it aims at strengthening the Italian state, galvanising the "superior energies of Italian democracy" by drawing

"competent and honest people together from all the different parties as well as from outside them." In other words the PCI, which fully supports the EEC, NATO, and Solidarnosc, and attacks the Red Army for being in Afghanistan, has more or less metamorphosed into a social democratic alternative party of government. All it is awaiting is the seal of approval from a still wary ruling class which fears the PCI not because of itself but because of the potent expectations invested in it by the working class.

Australia. The CPA has now less than 1,500 members compared with a peak of 25,500 forty years ago. The liquidationism of the Euro type leadership means that it is now falling apart. In Victoria 23 of the 32 members of the state committee recently resigned in order to form an "independent specialist organisation" orientated towards the Australian Labour Party. As well as this, archrevisionist NEC member Brian Aarons is now calling for the CPA to reconstitute itself as a radical petty bourgeois party along the lines of the West German Greens. The centrists long ago split to form the Australian Socialist Party which has managed some, though unspectacular, growth.

Netherlands. The CPN is in deep crisis. Its *Morning Star* style "broad labour movement" paper *De Waarheid* is on the verge of bankruptcy; in the 1970s it had seven MPs, now it only has one; and membership has

declined to the point where its youth and women's organisations are defunct. But the crisis is political. The Eurocommunist "Renewers" in the leadership have adopted pacifism and feminism and some are seeking to liquidate the CPN into a new party based on Euros, the Pacifist Socialist Party, and the Progressive Party of Radicals who have become the representatives of what is called the "new social movements". In a reaction against this some centrists called "Horizontalists" have formed the League of Netherlands Communists with the intention of establishing a new party next year, while other "Horizontalists" insist on fighting in the CPN in order to salvage it.

Finland. The CPF was after World War II the biggest party in parliament; today its popular vote has been halved and it is only the fourth largest party. The Eurocommunist leadership of the CPF under chairman Arvo Aalto is determined on a "historical compromise" with the bourgeois parties, something which it is felt can only be achieved by eliminating the centrist opposition around the *Tiedonantaja* paper whose supporters controlled eight of the CPF's 17 district organisations before the gerrymandered special congress effectively split the party. The centrists objected to the Euros setting up parallel organisations in the areas they controlled and therefore boycotted the congress, while denying they were intending setting up a new party. They are now considering taking the whole matter to the bourgeois courts.

## REVIEWS

## A new challenge

## East End Challenge

## POLICE TERROR OUT OF EAST LONDON



Tower Hamlets North/Newham YCL, *East End Challenge*, March 1985, pp.8, £0.15

WITH the contempt of the Young Communist League's leadership and Eurocommunists for the working class as represented in the draft resolutions to the recent YCL congress, it was inevitable that YCL branches would start the publication of their own local journals. Possibly the final straw for many YCL members was that *Challenge*, the national paper, was not printed for 8 months during the most acute and historic class struggle since 1926 — indeed this did not seem to worry YCL General Secretary Doug Chalmers et al., who offered the YCL membership the excuse that because of shortage of finance *Challenge* could not be published!

One of these new local journals is *East End Challenge*, produced by the Tower Hamlets North/Newham YCL, with the reason for its publication given by its editorial: "It is being produced to be our organisation's local voice about issues which directly affect working class youth in East London." The journal's editorial also calls the YCL "...a revolutionary Communist youth organisation", so the paper should consequently be a revolutionary Communist youth paper. Indeed, in this respect, it is of interest to see what Lenin had to say on the matter of a Communist newspaper, he said "...what we need above all is a political newspaper. Without a political newspaper a movement worthy of being called a political movement is unthinkable... Without it our task — the task of concentrating all the elements of political discontent and protest, of enriching the revolutionary movement of the proletariat with them — absolutely cannot be fulfilled" (V.I. Lenin, *CW* Vol 5, p.8).

The articles presented in the paper on the police, racism, communists and new technology, and the World Youth Festival, are mainly descriptive in nature with little in the way of analysis (except on communists and new technology) which is not necessarily a mistake given that they appear in a youth paper. There are a number of errors contained within the articles, the most glaring one occurring in the article "Fascists out of East London" where it is said of the National Front "There is no doubt that the National Front is a mainly working class movement, and its supporters and sympathisers are mainly from working class backgrounds". This is incorrect as the National Front has no deep roots in the working class and it draws its support from petty bourgeois elements and the lumpen proletariat on a rabidly reactionary programme.

It is prudent to ask how young people will view the paper and whether or not it will

realise an increase in their consciousness. The answer to this question must be in the affirmative, for the main strength of the paper is that it successfully ties together the struggles of youth with the struggles of the miners, black people, and women and points to the common interest of the working class in ending capitalist rule in Britain and establishing socialism. Because of this it is possible that the paper will gain some recruits to the YCL within East London: indeed, the YCL members who have produced the paper will undoubtedly use it as a hard hitting agitational paper among young people alongside their other work.

*East End Challenge* shows what can be done given the political will on an undoubtedly shoestring budget, for it again should be stressed that *Challenge*, the YCL national journal, was not published for 8 months during the historic miners' strike, and this with 4 full time workers with a combined annual income of £26,000 plus the organisational capacity behind the YCL. If the actions (or lack of them) of these YCL bureaucrats are compared with the fine attempt by a small number of YCL members in the Tower Hamlets North/Newham branch to publish a local "agitational" youth paper, then the contrast is blinding!

*East End Challenge* is important for it is far in advance of the petty bourgeois/reformist *Challenge* as regards political content, and represents a start at an attempt to produce, at a local level, a revolutionary paper for young communists and young people.

Dennis Gee

## The truth about Gramsci



Robert Griffiths, *Was Gramsci a Eurocommunist? — a reply to Roger Simon*, Cardiff Marxist Forum, pbk. pp.18, £1.00

COMRADE Griffiths's pamphlet is very welcome. It is welcome because unlike so much material coming from the opposition it is a work of quality. It is welcome because it devastatingly proves that the Eurocommunists have no right whatsoever to claim Antonio Gramsci as their own. And it is welcome because even in its self-limited terms of reference of "contrasting the revolutionary Marxism of the real Gramsci to the Eurocommunist reformism of the dummy Gramsci sitting on Roger Simon's knee" it reveals the weaknesses of centrism, even though stretched to the left as is comrade Griffiths's centrism.

But before we get down to our criticisms we must state that he has done an excellent demolition job against the Euro comrade Roger Simon and his book *Gramsci's Political Thought*. Comrade Griffiths systematically dissects the claims that Gramsci was somehow a forerunner of Eurocommunism and shows these claims to be based on a combination of misunderstanding, hopes, and plain dishonesty. Gramsci was a Marxist-Leninist utterly opposed to the reformism, parliamentarianism, and philosophical idealism upon which comrade Simon bases himself. Indeed, as comrade Griffiths shows, Gramsci devoted his life to fighting for the

dictatorship of the proletariat, soviet democracy, and world communism, arguing that this could only be achieved via violent revolution.

Because of this we can with complete honesty say that we are in the same ideological tradition as Gramsci. But what of comrade Griffiths? Even on page one he is attacking the very Gramsci he seeks to defend by claiming that "the criticism" of Gramsci "from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint would be ... that he tended to undervalue the parliamentary struggle, was obsessed with 'insurrection' as the final apocalyptic show-down with capitalism, had an exclusively revolutionary perspective of hegemony, and was too industrial and 'workerist' in his approach to Communist Party organisation and membership."

This is not "Marxist-Leninist" criticism, comrade Griffiths; it is centrism. Gramsci was quite right in his contempt for the bourgeois parliament; yes, communists should use it as a propaganda platform but only in order to more thoroughly expose the capitalist system and rouse the workers. As to "insurrection", Gramsci wasn't "obsessed" with it but understood that without it socialism was a pipe dream. In this and his broad approach to building the Communist Party in Italy he was inspired and fully in line with Lenin and the decisions of the Leninist Comintern.

Because of his centrism, comrade Griffiths actually accuses comrade Simon of a "narrow interpretation of the *British Road*" (p.14). In exactly the same centrist way, after quoting Lenin when he declared that in Western Europe communists must wage a "long and persistent struggle" in order to "dispel and overcome" bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices which were "imbued" in the backward masses and how this could "only" be done effectively "from within" parliament, Griffiths illogically maintains the following:

"From the above, it is clear that the communist parties did not contradict Marxism-Leninism in their defence of bourgeois democracy — including its parliaments — against fascist attacks in the 1930s, a defence which they linked to the struggle for socialism." (pp. 8-9)

Those with even a skimpy knowledge of the history of our movement, certainly someone like comrade Griffiths, must be aware that the communist parties in the 1930s did not link their defence of bourgeois democracy to the "struggle for socialism". Instead of exposing the sham of bourgeois democracy as Lenin demanded they strengthened illusions in it; indeed, it was exactly this deviation from Marxism-Leninism that led to the reformist, utopian *British Road* and similar programmes in all communist parties in capitalist countries. Comrade Griffiths might have proved that comrade Simon has engaged in monstrous distortions but this gives him no right to do the same.

To be generous we should conclude that comrade Griffiths is suffering from centrist blindness. This seems to be the case; certainly time and time again we find him drawing conclusions that in all fairness just shouldn't be made. For example, while admitting that Gramsci wrote that socialism must function democratically and "guarantee all anti-capitalist tendencies" freedom to operate "and offer them the possibility of forming a proletarian government" Griffiths completely sidesteps the whole question of socialist democracy and says this does "not necessarily" mean "different anti-capitalist parties" and declares that Gramsci was loyal to Stalin even though he actually quotes him criticising Soviet "bureaucratic centralism" and attacking the "narrow clique" which was defending its "selfish privileges" by stifling oppositional forces (p.17). At least comrade Griffiths has the decency to say that such criticism "could not be reasonably regarded as anti-Soviet" (*Ibid*).

On the other hand the fact that after again quoting Lenin, this time on the Kautskyites (i.e. centrists) who "vacillate between reformism and Marxism", comrade Griffiths implies that it is comrade Roger Simon and his crew who are "Kautskyites". Such an elementary mistake, it seems to us, can only be a result of confusion resulting from comrade Griffiths's attempt to break the Eurocommunist claim over Gramsci while claiming his mantle for modern day

centrism. It is a brave attempt but the centrist dummy Gramsci sitting on comrade Griffiths's knee is no more the real revolutionary Gramsci than the Eurocommunist reformist dummy Gramsci sitting on comrade Simon's knee.

David Sherriff

## O'Riordan's mud flies



1922 communists in Ireland fought arms in hand with the IRA...

Mike Millotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland: the Pursuit of the Workers' Republic Since 1916*, Gill and Macmillan, Holms and Meier, 1984, hdk, pp.326, £25.00.

THIS book deals with the communist movement in Ireland from its hopeful formation and the inspiring if somewhat erratic contributions of Connolly and Larkin to the present sad state of the Communist Party of Ireland, dominated as it is by conservative opportunism. Because Millotte writes as a partisan of the Socialist Workers' Movement (the Irish SWP) his book does have serious weaknesses, yet as a result of the well researched and extensive source material from the Irish communist movement itself it is undoubtedly the best work on the subject available today. Because of this it provides a devastating critique of the process of degeneration undergone since the Communist Party heroically fought side by side with the IRA during the battle to defend the Four Courts at the beginning of the civil war in June 1922.

Interestingly, a hostile review of *Communism in Modern Ireland* by the Chairman of the CPI (and former General Secretary) Michael O'Riordan appeared in the Party's *Irish Socialist* of December 1984. Comrade O'Riordan's rubbishing of the book in fact rebounds on the CPI, such is the poverty of the criticism, not least the attempt to damn it simply because the author is a "Trot" and his research was supervised by Con O'Leary, Professor of Politics at Queen's University, Belfast.

Comrade O'Riordan flings mud in a transparent attempt to avoid answering the many pointed attacks Millotte makes: how the communists in Ireland followed every twist and turn of the Soviet state; how they failed to develop a scientific and consistently revolutionary programme; how their movement was plagued with liquidationism; and how attempts to win mass influence have come to naught.

Comrade O'Riordan fails to explain the constant and unprincipled changing relations with the republican movement and the IRA. Even when the Irish communists did exert short-lived influence over the ranks of the IRA it failed to transform this into genuine anti-imperialist unity, let alone a united front which would see the triumph of the democratic revolution and the opening up of the road to socialism.

Comrade O'Riordan has a completely non-Marxist, non-revolutionary approach to the national question: indeed, except for a brief period in the early 1920s the communist movement in Ireland has held opportunist positions towards the national struggle, swinging from nationalism to national nihilism (which virtually denied the democratic struggle) to the present day when

this has been combined with deep rooted reformism. These poitics are justified by a theory of stages unconsciously borrowed from the Mensheviks which declares that socialism can be placed on the "agenda" only when there is working class unity in the Six Counties, only after democracy has been achieved. The *Irish Road to Socialism* thus has all the utopian reformism and rotten liberalism of its British counterpart.

Comrade O'Riordan is a product of that section of the world communist movement which believes that communism will be achieved if the working class adopts the Soviet Union as a new fundamentalist religion. Therefore he finds Millotte's comments about World War II not merely offensive but sacrilegious. But the truth has to be faced. During World War II the Party in the Twenty-Six Counties was liquidated into the Irish Labour Party. In the Six Counties it supported Unionism and attacked those who insisted on continuing the fight against a now fully stretched British imperialism. O'Riordan and his comrades lined up with the imperialist oppressors in their imperialist war with Nazi Germany, and although he declares that Britain's victory sparked off "a mighty wave of national liberation" the fact was that this wave never swept away British domination of Ireland: something Irish communists are in no small way responsible for.

The period after the re-formation of an all Ireland Communist Party through the merger of the Irish Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Northern Ireland in March 1970 makes up the epilogue of *Communism in Modern Ireland*. Unfortunately the third Communist Party of Ireland has failed to meet the challenge posed by the existence of a revolutionary situation in the Six Counties. And it has not just failed to extend this revolutionary struggle and link it to the powerful developments in the class struggle in the south but it has actively opposed the anti-imperialist struggle in both theory and practice. So although the CPI in the Twenty-Six Counties has attempted to give itself a "green" colouration in order to win respectability with the labour bureaucracy this has always gone hand in hand with strident opposition to the armed struggle.



...Today Irish communists attack those fighting for Irish freedom.

Millotte exposes the socialistic and republican claims of the CPI; he even quotes the case of comrade Andy Barr, Chair of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, who during the "Ulster Workers' Council" lockout was provided with a helicopter by the British Army after his comfortable union-supplied car ran out of petrol. Comrade O'Riordan fulminates against Millotte's claim that Barr had a chauffeur but remains silent about the fact that neither comrade Barr, the trade union movement, nor the CPI were considered a dangerous threat by British imperialism.

Were Connolly or Larkin ever provided with transport by the imperialists in their work? We doubt it.

Kevin Sheahan

## A new Iskra?



Harry Pollitt: a pure Marxist-Leninist?

Jim Arnison *Stop the Rot: the Crisis within the Communist Party* J Bowden 1985, pbk. pp.12, £0.40

THIS pamphlet by comrade Jim Arnison details the events in the North West District of the CPGB as they are seen by the centrists around the *Morning Star* and presents a more general critique of events seen through the prism of the struggle in the North West District. Because comrade Arnison is a relatively recent oppositionist, certainly because for him the social democratisation of the CPGB in only a very recent phenomenon, he displays both a certain naivety and impatience characteristic of those who have just had their eyes opened to the extent of the degeneration of our Party.

He opens his remarks with a little story from the Manchester Area Committee. Apparently a letter was sent by a branch complaining about the Executive Committee allowing the names and addresses of all Party members to be placed on a central computer list to facilitate the posting of *Focus*. The branch felt that this would be a gift to MI5. Comrade Arnison innocently declares that "One would have imagined that the letter... would have been treated with some respect" (p.3) Instead it was received with general mirth and even giggling. Comrade Arnison seems to believe that MI5 has not already got a full list of CPGB members. Given the total lack of security training, the religious belief in the sanctity of parliamentary democracy enshrined in the Party's programmes going back to comrade Arnison's model leadership of Harry Pollitt, surely the Euros were entitled to laugh.

For those who imagine that the Euros have got something to do with Marxism-Leninism, comrade Arnison's pamphlet will be a revelation. He quotes them chapter and verse denying the Soviet Union is a "bedrock of socialism", dismissing the "leading role of the Party", and elevating the "new social forces" above the working class. What a discovery! But let's not be ungenerous; better late than never, as they say.

This said, comrade Arnison's perspective of struggle is typically centrist. Instead of wanting to take the battle in the Party to a higher ideological level, instead of seeking to clarify all the issues and their historical causes, going for a good fight, he calls for burying differences and reconciliation.

Thus when it comes to the EC's fight to capture the *Morning Star* and the energy and money devoted to this, comrade Arnison can only bleatingly complain that everything should have been thrown into fighting for a victory for the miners. This is of course demagoguery. The question for communists was to first decide how victory for the miners could have been won. We called for a general strike, with or without the TUC, for Councils of Action, and for Workers' Defence Corps. The Euros looked to winning vicars, public opinion, and the 'Plan for Coal'. Which platform would comrade Arnison have thrown everything into? More

damningly, comrade Arnison's dismissal of the inner-Party struggle as some sort of squabble shows that in reality, for all his orthodox declarations about the need for a vanguard Communist Party, he is incapable in practice of showing the working class why they need it, how they are to get it, and the fact that in order to build such a genuine communist organisation accounts will have to be settled with all forms of opportunism. Talk about the Euros having "infiltrated the Party of the purpose of destroying it from within" are a poor substitute for scientific analysis and principled ideological struggle (p.7).

In the same way, complaints about the leadership's crude use of bureaucratic centralism against the North West District Committee are all no doubt justified but in no way excuse the *Morning Star* grouping's gerrymandering at the 1984 PPPS AGM and its disgraceful limiting of sectional meetings to two this year in a deliberate attempt to fix the result. Such actions show an ideological poverty verging on bankruptcy.

The fact that comrade Arnison does not have a clue about Leninist norms of Party life, the principles of open ideological struggle, and the necessity for honesty in politics should not surprise us. After all, comrade Arnison is a centrist who as we have said looks to the Harry Pollitt leadership and even that of John Gollan as a model of 'Marxist-Leninist' purity. Nothing could be further from the truth. These leaders planted the seeds of Eurocommunism with their centrism and right opportunism. Only when comrade Arnison fully realises this can his fine sentiments about the need for a genuine Communist Party start uniting with practice.

Unfortunately it seems possible, at least from the rather cryptic remarks at the end of the pamphlet, that comrade Arnison and Co. are already despairing of the CPGB after their brief flurry of inner-Party struggle. But let him speak for himself:

"If the worst happens and their gerrymandering and deceit succeeds at the congress then the essential task is still to ensure the survival of the *Morning Star*."

"The future of the Communist Party would then be very much in question. There would be no basis for working class, labour movement support for a party which has given up its Marxist-Leninist traditions and principles."

"But there would still be the need for such a party in Britain." (p.12. Our emphasis.)

Other than the fact that the CPGB leadership abandoned Marxism-Leninism in practice decades ago, the moot point is that comrade Arnison seems to be giving notice of a split. He and his friends seem to believe that the *Morning Star* can play the role of Lenin's *Iskra* and build a vanguard party through its columns. Well, judging by the *Morning Star's* amateurish theorising and polemic so far, judging by the continued attachment of the grouping around the paper to the Euro inspired and thoroughly reformist *British Road* (1978 version), and judging by comrade Arnison's honest but shallow pamphlet their attempt to repeat history is destined to end in farce.

Jack Conrad

## Death in Albania

Enver Hoxha, *With Stalin*, Nentori, Tirana 1984, pbk, pp.224, £1.50

Enver Hoxha, *Report to the 8th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania*, Nentori, Tirana 1981, pbk, pp.281, £1.50.

"THE ALBANIANS have fought unceasingly for centuries against many savage enemies, much greater in numbers, in order to defend their national identity and their very existence," stated Enver Hoxha to the 8th Congress of the party he helped to found and led until his death in April this year. Indeed under the banner of the Communist Party of Albania (which became the Party of Labour of Albania according to Hoxha at the suggestion of Stalin after World War II) the people of Albania not only fought against invasion from Mussolini's Italy but

successfully drove out the Nazi troops that were sent to replace them.

Under the leadership of Enver Hoxha the fierce sense of Albanian nationhood was combined with a contradictory fire and brimstone version of Stalin's politics. This has meant that after going along with Khrushchev until the early 1960s, then China until the late 1970s, Albania now declares itself the world's only socialist state and denounces both the Soviet Union and China as social-imperialist powers. What is more the world communist movement apparently now only consists of "former communist parties" which "have been transformed either into genuine parties of the new bourgeoisie" in the socialist countries or "component parts of the structures of the bourgeois state ... in the old capitalist countries."



Enver Hoxha in 1949

That Hoxha and Albania reached such despairing conclusions is at least in part due to the continuation of national chauvinism even after the triumph of socialist revolution. The Albanians had bitter experience of this phenomenon being a small nation and vulnerable to the designs and ambitions of larger nations. In order to solve its "Albanian problem" Yugoslavia sought to incorporate Albania — a fact that certainly encouraged Hoxha to join Stalin and the Cominform in attacking Tito as a "Trotskyite fascist" in 1948. Unfortunately the USSR acted with similar arrogance when, in seeking to develop a plan for a national division of labour inside Comecon, Albania was relegated according to Hoxha into a "fruit-growing colony". Even the geographically distant China demanded political dove-tailing when it was seeking to align itself with US imperialism against the USSR — something Albania refused to comply with. In fact Albania not only rejected the so-called "three worlds theory" peddled by Mao but declared that China like the USSR had restored capitalism.

Specific experiences, especially bad experiences, can often be enlightening, certainly Marxism-Leninism develops by constantly testing theory against reality. But if one's world outlook is taken from the distorted version of Marxism-Leninism developed by Stalin then there is a great danger that negative experiences lead to a totally subjective response. Thus ironically while it was Stalin who tended towards Great Russian chauvinism in his handling of small nations Hoxha could only see this in his successors. Likewise the Soviet Union of Stalin was painted by Hoxha as a model of socialist democracy while only with Khrushchev did bureaucracy and revisionism triumph.

The results of Hoxha's leadership were therefore contradictory. Albanian independence was rigidly guarded — a major achievement for a country which has suffered countless foreign invasions, but being isolationist it remains one of the poorest in Europe. As well as this although the rightism of the world communist movement was correctly castigated Hoxha threw out the baby with the bath water and substituted making Tirana the centre for the tiny, disorientated, and irrelevant remnants of the Maoist splinters for fighting in the real thing warts and all. This said there can be no doubt that with the death of Enver Hoxha the Albanian people has lost a great leader and the world communist movement a critic who never sought the dubious favours of imperialism.

Jack Conrad

*The fight against ratecapping*

# The Labourite left collapses

"AT THE end of the day nobody sat down and thought what do we want to get out of ratecapping." (Ken Livingstone, interview, *Marxism Today* May 1985.)

On the contrary, we think 'comrade' Ken had a very clear idea of what he wanted out of the 'fight' against ratecapping: to further embellish his radical left-wing image he had so assiduously cultivated. By enraging the bourgeois press over several years by such token acts as inviting Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams to London and promoting various radical GLC quangos he established himself as the main figure amongst a new generation of inner-city left Labour councillors. After being the *enfant terrible* of the media he developed considerable skill in presenting an urbane and reasonable personality, faintly humorous and eccentric (with a well publicised affection for amphibians) but one that was quite unruffled when faced by a hostile press. And the radical left in London loved it. So did various Trotskyite groups, such as the Socialist League (*Socialist Action*), London Labour Briefing and *Labour Herald*, who all led the applause.

But the main *cause célèbre* of 'hard left' GLC leader Livingstone was the campaign against the GLC's (and the other metropolitan authorities') abolition and the campaign against ratecapping.

### Why ratecapping

The Tory government's reason for ratecapping has nothing to do with their hatred and contempt for the working class. It is not simply an expression of vindictiveness against old age pensioners, women, youth, and blacks within working class communities. Neither is it mere policy, called 'Thatcherism' or otherwise, but a part of a strategic ruling class attack on working class organisation and living standards in response to the deepening crisis of capitalism and the approaching general crisis. The ruling class and their favoured governmental party do not necessarily want to cut working class living standards, but if they want British imperialism to survive (and they most certainly do!) in competition with the more powerful imperialisms of the USA, Japan, France and W Germany they have to, they must increase the rate of exploitation in order to offset the declining rate of profit. And a key component of that assault is to transfer resources from areas of the



The left, centre and right arm in arm in betraying the workers

infrastructure of state monopoly capitalism, from the health, education, and services used by the working class to the bourgeoisie in the form of tax cuts and the opening up of new areas of direct capitalist exploitation: privatisation, 'Monetarism' and 'Victorian values' are in essence mere ideological embellishments to the central economic necessities impelling government strategy.

### Reformism's response...

... was essentially much the same: witness the attempted introduction of 'In Place of Strife', the Social Contract, and 'the winter of discontent' under the Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan. They tried to reduce working class living standards and weaken trade unions, and it was the 1974-79 government of Wilson/Callaghan that made the first deep cuts in public spending. The only real difference between the policies of Thatcher and those of the Labourite PMs is one of degree or intensity of attack. The crisis is the same crisis, their loyalties are all loyalties to the capitalist system, and their solutions are to make the workers pay for the crisis. So much for Labour in government, but what about the Labour left?

Almost as long as there has been a Labour Party there has been a Labour left, whose role it has been to provide a left cover, a 'socialist' veneer over the bourgeois politics, and to attract class conscious workers to reformism rather than to revolutionary politics. With the reemergence of mass unemployment, cuts in housing, health, and education coupled with the looming

imperialist war drive, new waves of the masses were propelled into politics in the 1970s; the Labour left contained and diverted these forces.

There followed the years of caucuses and committee room machinations as the new influx of radical forces were tamed by concessions on nuclear weapons, feminism, and perhaps even more importantly reselection and the promise of new leaders both local and national. From the behind closed doors struggles emerged the posturing leftists and the ex-, semi-, and crypto-Trotskyite councillors who were to be swept to office in the inner-city. Thus, onto the political scene strode Ted Knight, the *Militant* Hatton, and the 'hard lefts' Blunkett and Livingstone.

### Left to right Labourites

After all the militant pretensions of these leaders over the past few years, when 'the crunch' did come, when the date to set a rate loomed up ahead and they would be faced with fines if they failed to comply, then calls for battle turned to 'bottle' and all but a few hard core Borough Councils stood apart from the total and humiliating collapse. The rest have all now set a rate in line with government diktat. After all, their political careers are far more important to them than mere principle or the jobs and services of local workers; they won't lose their jobs through privatisation, will they?

Amongst the excuses that have emerged are, firstly, the argument that the cuts demanded by Minister Jenkin were much less than expected and, secondly, that a majority of

Labour councillors could not be relied upon to stand firm. The first is so feeble as to be hardly worth responding to. If ratecapping is accepted *this* year then how on earth will a fight against the no doubt more substantial capping expected next year be organised? After all, the *principle* has now been accepted by most Labour metropolitan authorities. The second excuse says a lot about the Labour Party, though it still fails to hide the cowardly cop-out by Livingstone, Blunkett, et al.

Though there was undoubtedly a powerful element of typical Labourite cowardice and careerism involved in the retreat, the reasons for the capitulation lie deeper in the very politics of the Labour Party itself, in reformism. In fact the whole campaign had been organised in the usual reformist, *parliamentary* manner. The inner city working class was supposed to remain mere voting fodder and audiences for the 'big personality' Council leaders, and all the propaganda and campaigning was pumped down to them through million pound advertising campaigns and via the various well financed (from workers' pockets) quangos. Furthermore, their whole campaign was a static, defensive one focusing on the maintenance of existing conditions, existing services rather than on the *needs* of the working class. Neither was there any attempt by the Labourites to bring into the campaign the independent activity of the working class, let alone raise the political stakes by uniting the fight against rate capping with the miners' Great Strike. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that millions

of workers looked on it as just a manoeuvre to protect and promote the political ambitions of town hall politicians: an idea containing more than an element of truth.

So there we have it, yet again the 'great hopes' of the Labour Party left have flunked it again. But it really should be no surprise that 'hard' Hatton, 'left' Livingstone, and 'bold' Blunkett made the step to the right, that Blunkett for example has now gravitated towards a semi-Kinnockite position and Livingstone has parted company with McDonnell and the 'new hard left'. We have seen it all before.

After all, haven't most Labour leaders started off at the left to win a mass following within and outside the Party, then moved to the right at a time convenient to their careers? Just remember the Ramsey Macdonald of 1917 who called for soviets in Britain (yes, *soviets!*), the Harold Wilson that resigned from the Cabinet in 1950, the fiery oratory about socialism of Michael Foot, and even the Neil Kinnock of five years ago. We all know what happened to them. And though it is *at this precise moment* unlikely that 'Red' Ken will fade further pink, we have a sneaking suspicion that this avid reader of political biographies has his sights set much higher than merely the member for the safe seat of Brent East.

The point is that not only is the Labour Party a veritable breeding ground for slick careerist vermin seeking to gain power (and often wealth) over the backs of the workers but that it is the most concrete expression of reformism in Britain. And whether individuals move to the right or left is not important, for *fundamentally* their politics ends up the same: keep politics to Parliament, to we MPs and councillors.

### The alternative

As the crisis deepens we will be witnessing many more 'Red' Kens, Colins, and Catherines as Labour Council leaders. Pushed to the fore by the discontent of the masses they will make the same sort of speeches and pursue the same politics, and no doubt sell out the same. But what is needed is not left reformism but a mass revolutionary Communist Party that can mobilise rank and file workers and other oppressed sections not only for the defence of their conditions but for the advance towards socialism.

John Miller

