

Defend and reforge
the Communist Party!
Workers of the world unite!

THE LENINIST

Monthly paper of the
Leninists of the CPGB.
No 24, October 1985, Price 30p

Real sanctions are workers' sanctions

STRIKE AGAINST APARTHEID

BRITAIN is one of South Africa's most important trading partners as well as the leading foreign investor there.

This no doubt at least in part explains why Thatcher's government has been so tardy when it comes to sanctions, when other notable traders with and investors in apartheid like the USA and France have imposed them.

We all know that Thatcher and the class she serves do not give a damn about the horrors of apartheid, the misery of the 'homelands' system, let alone the degradation and want suffered by millions of super-exploited black workers. All that matters to them is making sure that the big profits to be made out of this brutal system keep flowing into Britain and into the never satisfied coffers of our transnational industrial corporations and bloated banking empires.

Of course the same applies to Reaganite USA and 'socialist' France. But the ruling circles in these countries, the plutocrats, the heads of the giant monopolies and banks, as well as the government bureaucracy, are increasingly convinced that only by cracking the whip of limited sanctions can Botha and the Nationalist regime be persuaded to keep taking steps along the road of controlled reform of apartheid, the alternative to which they rightly fear is the precipice of revolution.

Reagan and Mitterand are obviously aware that their imperialist interests require changes in South Africa; this leads them to make concerned noises about the inequalities of apartheid. They are confident that their countries' transnationals could, with not too much trouble, cope with limited and tinkering cosmetic changes in the form of capitalist exploitation in South Africa. But this is not at present the case with Thatcher.

Because of Britain's far greater relative exposure in South Africa (i.e. when the size of Britain's GNP is compared with that of other imperialist powers and their investments in the country) and, again in relative terms, the lack of flexibility of British imperialism (as a result of its long term decline and poor economic health), Thatcher is extremely wary of doing anything that might jeopardise British investments in and trade with South Africa. This being not least because of fear of possible dire repercussions on Britain's domestic situation and standing as a major imperialist power if the apartheid goose stopped, no matter how temporarily, laying its diamond-studded golden eggs.

Confronted with this, some are concentrating their efforts on ensuring that the Iron Lady follows the lead of the 'socialist' Mitterand and Star Wars Reagan. This, it is argued, is the "most effective" form of solidarity we can deliver to the South African masses in their struggle against the apartheid monster. We disagree.

Surely it must be transparently clear that Reagan's and Mitterand's sanctions alongside the EEC's "restrictive measures" (which Thatcher fell into line with with little



Ron Todd: on the same day he pickets against apartheid he talks to the South African ambassador at Transport House

difficulty) are not only in economic terms of little or no importance but what motivates them is a desire to save capitalism in South Africa and promote the sordid interests of their own imperialism. If this is the case, why fall into the trap of thinking that if Britain were to impose its own sanctions they would be any different in substance?

It is certainly possible that as a by-product of mass protest by opponents of apartheid, or pressure from other imperialist powers, Thatcher might soften her stubborn, intransigent position and take measures similar to Reagan, who with one eye on the Congress and the other on the millions of US citizens outraged by the obscenity of South Africa announced limited sanctions at prime TV time.

That Reagan, who mourns the US defeat in Vietnam, who glories in the Marines' triumph in Grenada, and who has wet dreams about repeating this success in Nicaragua is not aiding the cause of the South African blacks is blindingly obvious. His sanctions are imperialist sanctions designed as a sop to public opinion and to promote US imperialist interests. In other words, they are fake solidarity.

It would be foolish to think otherwise. To imagine that Thatcher would, or could be, pressed into support for a national liberation struggle is like pleading to the devil to perform saintly miracles. Thatcher, the victor over Argentina (the enemy without), the victor over the miners (the enemy within), the loyal servant of British imperialism which has butchered countless millions in cold blood for the sake of hot profit (an imperialism which actually laid the foundations for the present obscene system in South Africa), is hardly likely to do anything different from her hero in the White House. So if Britain imposed sanctions they would be in essence exactly the same as those imposed against Ian Smith's Rhodesia, when under both Labour and Tory government British owned

transnationals continued a flourishing trade in a whole range of products and services.

That most of the left and workers' movement in Britain are doing little more than joining the Liberal Party, the *Financial Times*, and the Church of England in calling for Thatcher to do a Harold Wilson, to follow Reagan and Mitterand, speaks volumes about the crisis that grips it. For this is no simple matter of blockheadedness but a cowardly cop out from the struggle for working class political independence.

The Labour and trade unions tops are of course tied hand and foot to British imperialism through their complete commitment to British imperialism's prosperity and their determination to get back into the "corridors of power" with the election of the "next Labour government". This means putting forward "realistic" demands that commit nobody to anything, limiting solidarity to token protests and the consciences of individual consumers.

Because of this, Neil Kinnock can unhesitatingly call for sanctions against South Africa, as the only way to stop revolution, from a Tory government. This is at the same time as refusing to countenance a Labour government releasing imprisoned miners, reinstating those sacked, and reimbursing the NUM for the funds legally robbed from them by the bosses' courts during the Great Strike.

In the same way, a TUC which only voted by the narrowest of margins to call upon the "next Labour government" to review the cases of sacked and imprisoned miners found it ever so easy to overwhelmingly call for the Tories to impose sanctions.

With the sanctions ball safely in the Tories' court the Labour and TUC fat cats can sit back with a self-congratulating supercilious smile and admire their magnificent solidarity. They then proudly parade outside South Africa House, and in front of the press and TV

reporters display their gaudy indignation at the refusal of Thatcher's government to act.

Unfortunately, most leftwing papers praise and flatter these emperors of the labour movement. Only genuine revolutionaries have the audacity to cry out loud 'these emperors have no clothes'. We say that solidarity must be real. That far from waiting for Thatcher to fight apartheid we should be taking up the cudgels against apartheid ourselves.

There can be no question about the fact that there is a growing section of the working class which is not only morally opposed to apartheid but is prepared to take concrete action. This is what we should be promoting, not the empty gestures of proved traitors like Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis.

The impounding of sophisticated defence orientated milling equipment destined for South Africa by Southampton dockers is not an example the TUC and Labour Party tops want to see repeated. Indeed there is every reason for them to fear such workers' sanctions like the plague. For these sanctions could damage the prosperity of British imperialism and lead to violations of bourgeois legality. Not only that but they do not rely on the Tory government having a brainstorm, but on direct, militant, and therefore independent action by workers.

That the splendid action by Southampton dockers has been so little publicised, or belittled as only providing an example for the Tories to follow as the *Morning Star* did, shows that rank and file workers have gone way beyond their leaders, and would-be leaders; they have, as workers will, instinctively grasped the fact that solidarity with the South African liberation movement must mean action, not TUC paper resolutions and Labourite hot air.

Imperialist sanctions against South Africa are and can only be a sop. The left should be exposing them, not creating illusions in them.

In the same way we should make it crystal clear that transnationals disinvesting from South Africa has nothing to do with big business sympathy with the downtrodden masses but is dictated by one thing and one thing alone: difficulties in obtaining sufficient profit and concern as to South Africa's stability and thus future profitability.

The struggle of the South African workers and masses could be greatly assisted by direct solidarity. This should not be doubted. South Africa is dependant on foreign imports in a whole range of vital areas both in its economy and defence. It is also reliant on continued inflows of capital, as well as exports of gold, diamonds, and the like. It is therefore very vulnerable to workers' sanctions, despite desperate and astronomically expensive attempts to develop alternatives to imports like the Sasol coal to oil plant. Moreover, workers' sanctions would of course have a great political impact. The South African workers undoubtedly yearn to feel the warmth and encouragement of international proletarian solidarity as they gird themselves for the 'final battle'.

Workers in Britain could, with sufficient determination, see to it that all exports of arms related equipment is blocked. In this, those in the factories that manufacture such material are obviously in the front line, but rail, road, dock, and airport workers as well as seamen have an equal responsibility.

Other workers should also look for ways they can add their weight to the fight against apartheid, not least workers whose employers have subsidiaries in South Africa. We could augment mass demonstrations like the Anti-Apartheid Movement one on November 2 with militant proletarian direct action: pulling the plugs out on telex and telephone links, refusing to move South African goods, or preventing trading in the Rand are all good examples.

And with skillful propaganda and careful preparation such actions can become even more militant, encompassing protests by a whole spectrum of the population from doctors to black unemployed youth, as well as the decisive action of the organised working class in solidarity with the masses of South Africa. What is more, it must be realised that if we could get miners, steelworkers, teachers, hospital workers, and bankworkers, etc. to unitedly halt work even for a day to demand, say, the release of Nelson Mandela, or in protest against a South African Defence Force incursion into Angola, we would not only be striking a mighty moral and physical blow against apartheid but also one against our main enemy, the British bosses and the Thatcher government. We would thus be taking a stride forward in obtaining our own liberation. Certainly, the overthrow of apartheid would rock a shaky British imperialism to its rotten foundations and for that reason if for no other we should spare no effort in solidarity with the heroic masses in South Africa.

Jack Conrad



THE LENINIST

Handsworth and Brixton

THE uprisings in the Lozells area of Handsworth and Brixton in September are yet another reminder of the double oppression suffered by blacks in this country. They suffer higher unemployment, poorer housing, and more murderous police attacks than other sections of the population. This is what lay at the heart of both uprisings.

It was to be expected that Home Secretary Douglas Hurd attempted to shift the blame for the uprising from the decay of the British capitalist system itself and its inherent racism to the victims of the system themselves. That Neil Kinnock echoed him and prattled on about "criminal elements" and the need for "more community policing" was also expected.

What should not be expected though was for those claiming the proud title of communist to cover up for Neil Kinnock and other leading Labourites joining the Tories in their attack on the black youth of Handsworth and Brixton. But this was exactly what the *Morning Star* did the day after the Handsworth uprising. Not content with using apparently unedited establishment biased copy straight off the tape it limited its report of Kinnock's reaction to "I think we have got to commit ourselves to a renewal of opportunities for youngsters" thus giving him a progressive veneer.

With this opportunist conjuring act the *Morning Star* could then conclude its pathetic full of good Labourite intentions editorial on the subject with a cretinous declaration that "Getting rid of the symptoms" of inner-city decay, mass unemployment, etc. "means getting rid of the Tories". In other words the *Morning Star's* cure for the degeneration of British capitalism is the "next Labour government."

Yet as we all know the "next Labour government" under Kinnock (or any Labourite successor or replacement) would be just as committed to running the capitalist system as the Tories. And whether the *Morning Star* likes it or not running the capitalist system of necessity means containing the oppressed simply because today the capitalist system is reeking with decay from every pore. What communists should be setting their sights on is not the "next Labour government" and Neil Kinnock as PM but "getting rid of the Tories" and the system that they and the Labour Party so loyally serve. Anything else is to dupe the masses that their problems can be solved within the capitalist system.

So if the key task is to get rid of the capitalist system itself there must be no illusion-mongering in Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party. Certainly we have no truck with out of focus liberal suggestions that all that is needed is "proper" community policing let alone a so-called "proper anti-drugs drive". Such ideas are social democratic not communist.

For Leninists the uprisings in Brixton and Handsworth cry out for working class leadership, working class discipline, and working class action. Our Communist Party should be going all out to win the broad working class to the cause of the oppressed black youth, it must seek to harness their spontaneous anger and hatred of the system in a revolutionary direction. And far from seeking to reform the police and to make them accountable, we must pose the perspective of a multi-racial workers' militia to maintain working class order in areas like Handsworth and Brixton against the police, against the system and for a new social order which can really abolish unemployment, poverty and racism.

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 October 1985

LETTERS

Sexuality

There has been a number of letters in *Focus* on the theme of sexuality. Most of these letters have been incredibly superficial, with the exception of one, which was a letter from Pamela A. V. Edwards, *Focus* May 9. This letter raised a number of important issues.

The basic feature of writings on sexuality vary from those who promote a particular view of sexuality, usually their own, and those who would separate the question of sexuality from its 'aetiology', to use an expression of Pamela's. There are those who believe that sexuality is simply a socially constructed phenomena. This view suffers from being one-sided. It completely separates sexuality from its material biologically objective basis, i.e. production and reproduction of biological life. Sexuality is a means to an end, although of course civilisation, amplifying human will, allows us to separate means from ends.

Those who view sexuality as being 'only' a social construct favour this view because it seems to them that sexuality can be manipulated in this or that direction. It seems that this view is particularly favoured by the 'Gay' movement. It helps them to present their view that heterosexuality is only a social construct, a purely socially determined phenomena. If this theory is correct it would apply to all the various forms of human sexuality, or distortions of it.

As far as 'gay' liberation is concerned, there seems to be a generally superficial attitude to the issue of sexuality, and added to this a kind of silent consensus to reject any scientific investigation. It is this important recognition which Pamela put forward in her letter to *Focus*. She correctly points out that, "We are asked to analyse the social origins of family break downs, intra-marital conflicts, child and spouse abuse, drug addiction, hooliganism etc., but gay liberation objects to such an understanding of its own roots."

If we add to this that we are also asked to provide an explanation and theories of racism, and indeed even theoretical probings into the nature of heterosexuality itself, then we should also ask why gay liberation objects to theoretical probings and consequently an understanding of its own roots. It seems that as long as gay lib and indeed Marxism fail to provide a theoretical explanation of the roots of homosexuality, instead of simply describing effects but not causes, then the whole subject will remain a mystery.

T. Miller
Wandsworth, London.

Class against class

I once used to consider myself a 'Eurocommunist'. It used to be so easy when someone came up to me and said something about Soviet dissidents to piously say that our Party condemned it and to wave a copy of the *BRS*.

However, I read Emile Burn's book (which has some pretty dubious bits in it) and found that Eurocommunism was not real Marxism. Also, I found that the Euros kept arguing for our Party to align itself with the Labour Party, feminism, pacifists, loony ecologists, homosexuals, and all kinds of wealthy bourgeois types who live in the lap of luxury while the workers have to exist on paltry wages.

As you correctly point out, most CPs under Euro leadership have declined. Even the PCI lost votes to the fascists in the recent local elections.

I decided that I ought to side with the left wing opposition in our Party. *The Leninist* seems to be the only serious opposition group (although *Straight Left* are to some extent, but this is marred by their pro-Labourite attitude and their apparent support for the Euro-dominated Party leadership). However, I have certain disagreements with *The Leninist*.

Firstly, you say that during the 1950s and 1960s boom, living standards for the workers rose. In fact there was still poverty and unemployment in the capitalist countries. Certain groups of workers secured increases in real wages. However, the reason for the expansion of capitalism was a big increase in the rate of exploitation; therefore the workers became relatively impoverished during that period.

Secondly, you condemn the 'Class against Class' policy. Yet this was in many respects positive. During this period the Party led some great strikes of textile workers in Yorkshire and Lancashire. The attacks on the Labour Party were basically correct. The slogan 'VOTE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' GOVERNMENT', which the Party put forward at the 1929 General Election, was a good one. It is a pity we do not use it today — we might get more votes.

Lastly, I got the impression reading your article on homosexuality/AIDS in the May issue of your paper that you do not oppose the permissive society. The permissive society is a cesspit of degeneracy. It is a tragic product of the profound crisis of bourgeois society, along with drug addiction, corruption, vandalism, etc. In a socialist society there would be no place for excessive and self indulgent sexual behaviour.

Yours fraternally
Henry Barrett
Lincoln

Jack Conrad replies:

Comrade Barrett misses the main point about our emphasising the rise in living standards of workers in the 1950s and 60s. For many in the communist movement this period was one of continued general crises of capitalism; for us it was one of capitalist boom. This doesn't mean that workers were not more highly exploited but that this could be done while allowing substantial increases in real wages — something that for those in work continues today; and might this not have some bearing on why workers in Britain have remained so conservative in their outlook?

As to the so-called "Class against Class" line. Yes, it has the look of militant revolutionism but this was a veneer. Objectively during this period the world communist movement continued its rightward drift. The class struggle slogans, the revolutionary demands were nothing but hopeless posturing with little or no content.

What about the "permissive society"? Comrade Barrett declares that there will be no place for "excessive and self indulgent sexual behaviour" under socialism. Well if we take him at his word how does he propose to enforce this? Will socialism see scenes similar to Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran where adulterers are spied upon and then punished by stoning? Will homosexuals be likewise executed? How else to end such "degenerate" behaviour?

No, comrade, such an approach is alien to Leninism and the building of a communist society. After all, it was Lenin's Bolshevik government with legalised homosexuality and sought to free sexual relations between men and women from the demands of cash nexus. But socialism is nothing more

than capitalism with the dictatorship of the proletariat. It inevitably carries with it features of capitalism. In the Soviet Union for example you will find vandalism, corruption and drug addiction. Just listen to the speeches of comrade Gorbachev castigating top level corruption in the CPSU or the massive problems caused by alcohol if you do not believe us.

As to communism it will be by definition a "permissive society". Whether people in such a society will drink beer, vodka, or tea, just plain water, go to bed with someone of the same or the opposite sex or both (and how often they do so) we think is a matter for them to determine not us.

Communist ban

Several months ago, the Thatcher administration announced a ban on communists and "subversives" working within the public services. This move is quite clearly an attempt by British capitalism to take the most politically conscious elements among the working class out of the arena of political and economic struggle. In succeeding with this aim, British capitalism would then launch a major offensive against the wages and conditions of a working class that would be led by liberals and right wing social democrats.

However, what has been the response to this new government measure by the Executive Committee of the Communist Party? There has been none, it has offered a deafening silence on this issue. The reason why it has done so is not hard to find, for the Executive Committee has deliberately concealed this measure from Communist Party members and the working class because to have recognised it would have meant waging a struggle that would have had to have gone beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality — something, of course, in total contradiction to the Euros' class collaborationist Broad Democratic Alliance.

Yours fraternally
Mike Bourne
Stafford.

Terrorism

Western politicians and all the media are overflowing with the big problem of international terrorism, mainly because the Americans are caught up in it. Terrorism manifests itself in grave and cruel actions, it disrupts the internal life of states and people, does harm to law and order and international relations.

Being a retired miner, my concepts might be somewhat different to the professional propagandist. First, I am positively against terrorism, and absolutely sure that Marxism and Leninism never approved of the use of terrorism as a method of obtaining political objectives. There is nothing in common between terrorism and the working people's genuine struggle for freedom from exploitation and oppression. So what is the real truth? And who are the guilty ones?

The vast majority of people in the world would accuse the United States administrators, political leaders, and their imperialist partners, they misrepresent the nature and essence of terrorism, they discredit Marxist-Leninist theory, portraying all revolutionary national liberation struggles against neo-colonialism and oppression as terrorism. The United States expansionist policy all over the world riding on the waves of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, protecting American "spheres of interests"; there are numerous examples of this kind of terrorist policy, to mention just a few: Chile,

El Salvador, the Middle East fully supporting Zionist Israel's acts of terrorism against Palestinians, US now getting ready to practice terrorism in Nicaragua.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Hopkins (Retired miner)
Caerphilly

Tory terrorists

If, as they say, the first casualty of war is Truth, Northern Ireland's green fields and grey cities are strewn with victims mown down by bullets of lies and hatred. That suave, unctuous, little mini-man, Leon Brittan, appeared so often on our telly that one wondered who owned him — the government or C4? With unblinking eyes, and mock sincerity, sweetly sick and common also to his cronies, Reagan and Thatcher, he invaded our living-rooms to tell us how much he hated "terrorism". He did not, of course, define it with any precision, but he meant Brighton, the South African freedom fighters, the Sandinista, the PLO and, above all, the Irish Republican Army. His list did not include his own great, heroic nation which sent a mighty armada on the Southern Atlantic seas to quell ... a ramshackle army of Argentinian greenhorns; it did not include the cowboy Reagan's invasion of Grenada, nor the battering of striking miners in Britain by terrorist policemen, nor murder in Lebanon by the Israeli forces, nor the planting of bombs disguised as toys to blow the hands off innocent children, all done by American and French trained Afghanistan bandits operating from bases around Peshawar in Pakistan. No! To Leon Brittan and his Tory friends, real bandit country is around the small town of Crossmaglen, County Armagh.

Now, in fact, Crossmaglen is a town of many fine, splendid people who have had their lives ruined by the SAS and the occupation forces of the British Army. During the war against fascism forty years ago, a small RAF radar station with a staff of twenty or so was billeted on a hill a hundred yards outside the town. The folk were friendly and hospitable for we were at war with the Nazis, not the Irish people. I never dreamed I would live to see the day when the equivalent of the old Black and Tans would come in their jackboots into Crossmaglen and shoot dead with one of their vile plastic bullets a little Catholic girl, that they would cage themselves in a stupid, ramshackle 'fort' in the huge square to be reviled and detested by ninetyfive percent, if not all, of the local inhabitants who are nationalist, and a number of them socialist in out-look. We, radar operators (I was stationed there for two years before being 'posted' to Burma) used to drink at the Bar in Paddy Short's public house just off the Square. And not just at the Bar! The owner used to invite us into the 'kitchen' after closing time on a Sunday afternoon for a cup of tea, a game of whist or solo, and a blether. He did not enquire into the height of our radar masts or our 'line of shoot' for signals over neutral Eire. He wanted no information to pass on to the Nazis; he hated them as much, perhaps even more, than we did. Today Paddy Short is a Civil Rights leader in Crossmaglen. My entire sympathy goes out to him in that bitter but noble struggle.

A great number of people, even in the labour movement, find the Ulster situation too complicated for their understanding. Yet, in essence, it is quite simple. The Six Counties is the correct definition for that part of Northern Ireland still controlled by Great Britain. Ulster is the most northern province of Ireland and

contains nine counties, the Six Counties previously mentioned and three additional counties, Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan which belong to Eire. How did all this come about? When Churchill, Carson and Co. were drawing up the boundary for the division of Ireland into Eire (The Irish Republic) they shrewdly realised that if they included the nationalist-voting Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan the parliament in Stormont, Belfast could very likely be controlled by the nationalists. And this they did not want to happen! So they gerrymandered the system and excluded these three nationalist counties. The Protestant Unionists were thus assured of a permanent majority plus an additional six seats without any election at all for Queen's University, Belfast. Thrown in as a measure of good luck, businessmen were allowed a vote for their shop or premises and a vote for their place of residence. Protestant businessmen being in the majority could easily ensure victory for Unionist candidates.

To conclude my letter, have you heard this one about Pat and Mick? Well, you certainly will have some wait before you hear it from me. The people's struggle for their rights in Ireland is anything but a joke.

Roy Henderson
Glasgow

Pure sect

Having been bureaucratically excluded from the CPGB since writing my last letter, I have come to the conclusion that none of the trends you constantly polemicise against offer any road to communists other than that leading to the Labour Party and reformism. I now recognise that any participation of your 'Revolutionary Opposition' is a waste of time given the severe limitations your propaganda is subject to and the simple fact that the CPGB has been dead as a potential working class vanguard for decades before most of the contemporary left was even born. There is, however, a party which is actively engaged in working class struggle at this very moment, completely independent of reformism, revisionism, or any other of Stalin's legacies, which I would urge all communists to support: the Revolutionary Communist Party. As most of your past criticism of the RCP seemed to concern its international outlook, does *The Leninist* not insist that the first duty of proletarian internationalism is to fight for revolution in the communist's own country? Well, this is exactly what the RCP is doing. The answer to your problems, comrades, is therefore straightforward: fight back with the party of the future, the RCP.

Yours
Gordon Lee
Edinburgh

Ian Mahoney replies:

Gordon's political evolution has been as spectacular as it has been swift. Last month he was featured in our letters column as 'John Eatwell' advising communists to support the *Morning Star*. This month he has apparently decided to bow out of communist politics altogether in order to support the left sectarians of the RCP.

This dramatic course reflects, we believe, two things. Firstly, the personal political instability of Gordon himself. Secondly, and probably more importantly, the disarray and disintegration that is speeding up in the ranks of the Chaterites, especially the younger elements.

In effect Gordon is blowing out of

the struggle and is unable to even offer an internally consistent justification for this desertion. For example, we also believe that none of the other trends in the CPGB we polemicise against are revolutionary.

Similarly, the comrade cynically distorts the tasks of communists in their own country to justify his appalling Anglo-centrism. This narrowness fits in quite well with the RCP's own insular contempt for the world revolution and the world communist movement.

The ex-comrade is also rather pretentious in attempting to explain his decision to join the RCP on the basis of their freedom from this 'Stalinist legacy'. If this is your criteria, why choose the RCP particularly? There are a myriad of Trot and petty bourgeois lefts who can claim this 'purity'.

No, Gordon, you are simply making grandiose claims for a rather low-level defection. You are joining the RCP because it is a dynamic active left group, which happens to be growing in your area at this particular time.

This ex-comrade's retreat is therefore symptomatic of the weakness of the national organisation of *The Leninist*, not of any particular strength in the politics of the RCP. (By the way, comrade, perhaps you should examine some of our comments on the RCP's role during the miners' strike and then judge if our criticisms are purely concerned with this little sect's "international outlook". Any reasonably well-informed RCP'er will tell you different, I assure you.)

Floating alliance

We wrote to you floating the idea of an alliance and urging cooperation. In our opinion your first reply was too sectarian in tone. This can be seen by comparing it with the reply we got from Workers Power. A number of red herrings were introduced by you (e.g. Soviet Union) in order to dismiss our proposal. The issue of the Soviet Union is of major importance, but we would welcome a real debate instead of sniping at each other. Before our exchanges become counterproductive let's set aside previous debate and explain our point of view again.

All revolutionary Marxists today face at least two major problems. First is the employers' offensive and the splits within the movement as a result. The situation in the NUM is the most obvious example. In these circumstances we must wage an ideological and practical struggle against sectarianism and for a unity policy. That policy must be the united front. We totally reject the popular frontist or class collaborationist policies of the Eurocommunists and their Labour Party allies, particularly on the NUM Executive.

We support this policy and urge all other militant workers to do the same. We uphold this policy in whatever way we can because it is the correct policy in present circumstances. It has nothing to do with the size of our group, unless you believe that small groups have a duty to uphold sectarian policies or urge cooperation with the bosses' popular fronts. If you choose to attack us for this then you are de facto giving aid and comfort to the supporters of the alternative anti-working class policies.

We agree with you that the united front can be built around specifics for example support for jailed and victimised miners. However we do not counterpose this to the need to win the ideological battle against the enemies of the united front i.e. the popular frontists and sectarians.

The second major problem is

related to the first. You are right to say that classically the united front is a tactic urged by a united Communist Party proposing action with the reformist socialists and anarchists. This may have been possible in the 1920's but today communist forces are divided and the fragmentation is increasing. This obviously weakens our ability to influence events at a time when revolutionary leadership is needed more than ever.

The struggle of our class demands the unity of all revolutionary Marxists in a single united party. Yet we all realise that this is impossible because of significant ideological differences. We would be failing in our duty if we let this stand in our way. We must unite but we cannot merge. Therefore we propose an alliance which is de facto a united front. We unite on specifics but maintain our independence. For example we have proposed a conference of all those who support the building of a new minority movement. Whilst this is not the classic united front it is a special application because of the fragmenting communist movement.

This is not a sectarian trick designed to 'expose' anybody. Anybody who needs exposing will expose themselves. If your attitude to the Soviet Union is a barrier to our proposal then that is a better exposure than pages of polemics from us. We trust not. You are quite right that our general proposal needs to be made concrete. This was always our intention. By now you will have received our proposals for a joint inter-union rank and file conference around support for the jailed and sacked miners, opposition to the anti-union laws and British withdrawal from Ireland.

In repeating our call for cooperation we hope we have made our reasons clear and we hope they are ones with which all 'Leninists' can agree.

In comradeship
Organising Committee R.D.G.

Militant

During recent discussions with supporters of *Militant*, two main reasons were given as to why they stay in the Labour Party rather than join the Communist Party. Firstly, they argued, the mass of politically organised workers are members of the Labour Party and political work must be carried out where these workers are organised. Secondly, and resulting from the first reason, *Militant* can transform the Labour Party into a party that will establish socialism within Britain.

To answer these points, one only has to turn to Lenin's *Speech on Affiliation to the British Labour Party*

delivered to the Second Congress of the Communist International, to find Lenin's analysis of the Labour Party. In particular, Lenin took the view that the Labour Party was not the political expression of workers organised in the trade unions because it was "led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie". Now the question here is: has the Labour Party changed in any fundamental way from the position it held in 1920? The answer to this must be no, but more than this, it has sided with British imperialism on countless occasions and has thus continued its full blooded social chauvinism, it has attacked the living standards of British workers, introduced military rule into the Six Counties, and has introduced anti-union legislation.

It is also clear that while the Labour Party could continue to obtain mass working class support throughout the years of post war boom when workers could gain reforms, concessions, and above all rapidly increasing living standards, in times of severe economic crisis such as now and certainly in the future, reformism becomes a liability to the working class, who, because of objective conditions, need to undertake revolutionary forms of action in order to defend their living standards and jobs. Because of this the Labour Party is now a party of crisis that is being exposed in front of the eyes of workers.

It is of course an obvious truth to state that the CPGB is suffering from rampant opportunism, but it is also true to state that the CPGB still remains the highest achievement of the British working class and is part of a world movement of approximately 80 million communists. This movement that Trotsky called "dead for revolution" has among its constituent elements the CPSU, the CPT, the CP of Cuba, and parties such as the Vietnamese CP that have on their own, or with fraternal assistance, carried out successful socialist revolutions. Although the bulwark of this movement, the CPSU, can in no way be called Leninist, its achievements must be compared with the "achievements" of the parties of the so-called Fourth International — are these parties (to misquote Trotsky) "alive for revolution"?

Dan Wentworth
Liverpool

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

No Autumn Rest

Our Summer Campaign has come to a triumphant end. Every comrade taking part in the campaign fulfilled their minimum target indeed most comrades exceeded the minimum of three weeks income, one comrade by over 300%. This is a magnificent example of communist self sacrifice, an indication of the sort of dedication that is a vital necessity if our Communist Party is to be reformed. Because of the Summer Campaign we are now well on our way to be able to purchase the typesetting equipment we so desperately need in order to cut the time between when *The Leninist* is written and when it is printed as well as branching out into the production of books and pamphlets. To ensure we meet our target and that *The Leninist* keeps coming out our readers are urged to transform their sympathy for *The Leninist* into concrete support. Thanks to AD, LF, VG, HY, BJ, and WR for donations last month.

Is the Communist Party disintegrating?

Where is Chater going? Is a split now inevitable?

Do 'Straight Left' have the answers? And just what game are the Euros playing?

CHATER'S TIT

The Communist Campaign Group has opened itself up to individual membership, the majority of the NW District Committee has gone over and a new publication is promised. All this adds up to a recipe for a split.

THIS AUTUMN WILL see a series of Communist Campaign Group meetings which will culminate in either de facto or by proclamation the formation of some sort of pro-*Morning Star* version of the New Communist Party. That the NCP has proved a flop incapable of coming up with one useful idea let alone providing anything in the way of leadership for our class is widely recognised. What of the NCP Mark 2?

Yes, undoubtedly it could just about pull more members away from the CPGB than the NCP. Yes, it will be able to pepper its leading committee with a few big name trade union functionaries. And maybe it might be able to secure more international recognition than the isolated NCP, which only has friends amongst the friendless. But this does not add up to a vanguard party that can lead the working class into the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that Chater's NCP Mark 2 will, despite the hooah its launch will be greeted with in the *Morning Star*, suffer the same desert island fate as the NCP (at best) or the Titanic (at worst).

Far from the NCP Mark 2 being an ideologically cohesive craft the only thing that makes its construction possible is hostility to the Eurocommunist majority on the Party Executive Committee. Once out at sea the various strands, factions, tendencies, cliques, and drinking circles that make up the pro-*Morning Star* grouping would cease working in more or less the same direction and start coming into headlong contradiction.

The trade union big wigs would want to have a free hand in their wheeler dealing with the TUC, Kinnoek, and even the Tories. They would demand the right to come to their own decisions on such matters as compliance with the Tories' anti-trade union balloting laws and woe betide any party leadership which objected to certain union policies: 'my union's democracy is higher than the party's' will come the swift retort. So that good old 'left socialist' Ken Gill could continue to imply as he did in front of TV cameras at the TUC that those miners "properly" tried and "found guilty" of "serious offences" cannot expect help from the trade union movement. And his union can carry on with its lavish propaganda (also carried in the *Morning Star*) promoting the virtues of Britain cooperating with its imperialist allies in building a new generation warplane to combat the Soviet Union's Migs instead of buying off the shelf from the US for the same purpose.

Will those who imagine they are working in a communist party go along with this? Surely argument will break out as the crew begins to realise that the officers are taking them in a social democratic direction. In the event of this, will those tired old souls who have

boarded the NCP Mark 2 in order to retire from the cut and thrust of politics, who have gone along as passengers for the ride so to speak, will they rebel or take to the lifeboats?

And what about international questions? Will Chater, Gill, and Hicks, who concurred with the CPGB leadership's condemnation of the interventions in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, change their tune? Perhaps this will depend on who is paying the piper? If the *Morning Star's* courting of the Labourite left leads to marriage, would 15,000 sales in the socialist countries and the leverage this can exert precipitate a divorce in the event of an Afghanistan-like international crisis?

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, one thing is for certain: the NCP Mark 2 does not look unsinkable and there are a hell of a lot of icebergs out there.

Because those planning the NCP Mark 2 are acutely aware that the majority of those with whom they hope to crew their craft are against the venture, work has to proceed

surreptitiously and without a hint of principle. This project, built as it is on subterfuge and deceit, would in normal times be a non-starter. Fortunately for those determined to have their own party as well as their own paper there are powerful forces in the highest echelons of our Party who are hell bent on seeing to it that all who do not share their particular view on the "nature of Thatcherism" should pack up their bags and if they will not join the NCP then they might as well be press ganged into the NCP Mark 2.

It takes two

We thus have a paradoxical situation where the splitters in the pro-*Morning Star* grouping are deliberately seeing to it that the extreme Euros are allowed to expel as many as possible from the Party. To do this they encourage, manipulate, and promote as many petty and futile acts of defiance as they can. Presented with this gift the Euros gladly comply by wholesale expulsions. And to give an extra helping hand to Chater's NCP Mark 2 the Euros have launched what can only be called a witchhunt, all so that at the end of the day they can have their "pure" Euro Party.

Indeed, it seems that so determined are the extreme Euros to

get a CPGB with not the slightest taint of 'Stalinism', or any other 'ism' with a working class social composition, that they are already imposing quarantine restrictions on new recruits; and not being content with keeping some of these poor fellows out in the cold for a year or more, they are now telling those suspected of having non-Euro thoughts that it is "against the Party line to read the *Morning Star*". Thus in practice the *Morning Star* is going from a paper Party members have no longer a duty to support and read to the point where to do so is considered an act of treachery. We thus have the unfortunate situation where not only are the Euros acting in a manner they would have previously branded as 'Stalinist' but they are working in tango with the splitters for an NCP Mark 2, which they hope, and are almost sure, will sink in next to no time with the loss of all on board.

That *Marxism Today* is keeping quiet on these inner-Party goings on is not surprising. For although carrying full page adverts for the Party of lively debate, non-stop action, and democratic socialism comrade Jacques is well aware that reality is a million miles from this dynamic go-ahead freethinking picture. For he and his Euro comrades are not only set to break

all Party records when it comes to suspensions, reregistrations, and straightforward expulsions but there is a growing Big Brother list of publications which Party members are forbidden to "sell, promote, or support" and, as we have indicated, at grass roots level this is often interpreted to mean not being allowed even to read.

Of course people being people there is the ever present allure of forbidden fruit. And while consumption of the stodgy *Morning Star* is distinctly unappetising and *Straight Left* and *Education for Tomorrow* invariably lead to indigestion, *The Leninist* and the Straight Leftists' restricted circulation newsheet *Communist* have a growing band of avid readers, not least in St John Street.

Communist

Having mentioned *Communist* it is worth noting that the Straight Leftists have recently conducted a large scale mail drop of a "personal letter" from comrade Brian Topping, the expelled Straight Leftist former Secretary of the Northern District (see 'The life of Brian' box). There are many points where *The Leninist* and comrade Topping agree. But this is of course conjunctural: while at the

The Life of Brian... Straight Left letter July '85

Dear Comrade,

Four and a half million working people are unemployed. Many more millions are in line to be thrust into the ranks of the poor. Mass unemployment and poverty remain two of the key issues of the political and class struggle.

Internationally, imperialism continues to develop its war preparations against existing socialism, while at the same time seeking to perfect its aggressive plans aimed at the national liberation and anti-imperialist movements.

Against this background the need for a revolutionary Communist Party in Britain has never been greater. However, perhaps it is not entirely accidental that because this is the case, our Communist Party is being pushed to the brink of disintegration.

The crisis in our Party is approaching a watershed.

The new self-defined Eurocommunist majority on the Party Executive Committee has declared war on all Party members, branches, borough/area committees and Districts who they suspect remain loyal to *revolutionary politics* as opposed to the social democratic politics of Martin Jacques and Co.

In this situation, the question as to what communists should do for the best is acute. Inevitably, the idea of some sort of breakaway, even of the formation of another new party, is being widely canvassed. This course should be firmly resisted. However bleak the situation in the Party may be, the route into the wilderness offers a still bleaker prospect.

How is it possible to say this?

Splitting offers no solution for several reasons.

One. It would divide the revolutionary element in the Communist Party further, separating one section of what is already a small body of opinion (within the context of British politics) from others.

Two. It would isolate those who supported it from all those Party members and sympathisers confused and distressed at the current situation, but unwilling to listen to arguments from those who stand in opposition to the Party.

Three. It would be a split with no cohesive ideological foundation — hostility to the EC's destructive actions and paranoiac pogroms may be a basis for positions within the Party, but it is no basis for the launching of a new organisation which would immediately have to face up to the hard questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics, international questions etc. on which there exists considerable divergency.

Four. There is no sound organisational basis for a new party, which would have few, or no cadres/supporters in the crucial industrial areas of the country. It would be an isolated sect. And the *Morning Star*, established as being a paper of the broad labour movement, could hardly provide a substitute by turning itself into the journal of a small new party.

Five. It would cut us adrift from the international communist movement, of which the CPGB remains a part.

Six. If the '85 PPPS AGM holds any lessons at all, it is that the majority of the Party membership are against the general policy and political line of the

Executive Committee. A process likely to continue as increasing numbers begin to appreciate the full implications of the EC's position.

Finally, the lesson of the NCP should be conclusive. The primary effect of their splintering action was to weaken the revolutionary forces. Further, in eight years, despite some very limited international support, the NCP nationally and in many localities is non-existent and has been unable to give any positive lead or contribution to the wider labour movement. Its one hope has been to attempt to pick-up recruits from the CPGB and even in this it has had few successes. Moreover it has not been free of its own factional dogfights and splintering.

Splitting is what the class enemy would want for the Communist Party, an objective shared with the hard-bitten Eurocommunists. There has to be an alternative. The Party can and must be saved from impending disaster. Starting now, new efforts must be made to build the Party on the ground, unite and develop it in the class struggle and win new forces for communism, in spite of all the difficulties.

On all key issues the sectarianism and isolation of the EC and its supporters is crystal clear. On the campaign against poverty and homelessness, their response has been to print a glossy "top people's" pamphlet, to enable the lucky few to view from a distance how the other half lives. On the campaign to build on the recent victories to win back the jobs of victimised miners and to win an amnesty for those in court or jail — the EC are held in contempt.

For the revolutionary forces in the Party, the exercise of communist leadership on these and other issues is still possible.

Unity has always been our most reliable ally. Discipline and self-restraint can frustrate the plans of our enemies inside and outside the Party. If we stand firm and press on to build our contacts, influence and prestige in the national and international struggle against the class enemy — our time will come! It is eighteen months since the Euro witch-hunt began by expelling myself along with three other comrades, and banning from office five Marxist-Leninists on Tyneside. During this time I have tried to continue my communist work among the organised working class and peace movement. My successes and failures in this task have not shaken my commitment to the international communist movement, to the CPGB, to our paper the *Morning Star* and to the cause of socialist revolution in Britain. On the contrary, it has reinforced my view that there are no short-cuts to reclaiming our Party.

With Communist Greetings, fraternally

Brian Topping

former Full-time District Secretary,
Northern District Communist Party of Gt Britain.

TITANIC

moment Straight Leftism is against a split, this results from different reasons to our opposition and is motivated by very different aims to those of *The Leninist*.

The Straight Leftists' only excuse for a strategy is that of one day, some day, winning a Party congress. In fact in the early 1970s comrade Fergus Nicholson ('Britain's Lenin' according to many a Straight Leftist) was touting around what he grandly and somewhat mysteriously called the "1979 Plan". This concoction of wishful thinking and downright hoodwinking purported to show that by 1979 various international, political, and ideological factors would coincide so as to enable the centrist opposition in the Party around comrade Nicholson himself and Sid French to win the day at that year's November Congress.

Now we all know that as it turned out Fergus was wrong, wrong, wrong. But that is a detail, at least for the Straight Leftists. If it had not been for Sid French leading his 700 off to form the NCP then ... well maybe ... we could have won, reason the Straight Leftists, half to console themselves and half because they actually do believe it.

In the wake of the 1977 split the Straight Leftists decided that it was only a matter of time before comrade Gordon McLennan tired of the Euros and joined the centrist opposition in a grand anti-Euro alliance and then ... As things turned out they were both right and wrong. Comrade McLennan did not break from the Euros but Tony Chater and the right opportunists around him did. Far from this resulting in the grand anti-Euro alliance, the crisis in the CPGB proved too dynamic, too centrifugal for the weak forces of Straight Leftism to handle let alone harness; and no bleatings from comrade Topping about the damaging effect of a split, or dark mutterings about 'what the class enemy would want', and implications about police agents, can pull the Chaterites back from the NCP Mark 2 brink.

Chater's Titanic?

And why if comrade Topping thinks that police agents are working behind the scenes in the Chater faction, did his friends vote for the Management Committee slate at the last AGM of the PPPS?

No wonder there is a thread of despair running through comrade Topping's letter. All the pub room plottings for nearly two decades are crumbling before their eyes. Against the elemental forces of the crisis of British imperialism and the consequential crisis of opportunism their pathetic calls for 'unity' are useless, declarations that 'our time will come' self-deluding.

Comrade Topping is transparently sincere. His commitment to the cause of the working class and socialism are not to be questioned. But, and it is a big but, his loyalty to Straight Leftism objectively propels him along the road to liquidationism. Yes, despite the countless statements about the need to keep the Party intact, the importance of

the Party, etc., comrade Topping's politics negate his fine sentiments.

Straight Leftism might not be as far gone in its liquidationism as Chater but its politics means that it is only a matter of time before this trend deserts communist politics.

Straight Leftism is already committed 100% to the election of the "next Labour government" and will subordinate everything to achieve this goal. What is more, the Straight Leftists have as a *principle* called for communists to join the Labour Party and have worked against the CPGB standing candidates against Labourites at every possible opportunity.

The cause for this is simple. The Straight Leftists believe that socialism will come in Britain, not via a proletarian revolution and the violent smashing of the old state machine, but through a Labour Party parliamentary majority and a Labourite programme of reform supported by a loyal trade union movement. Indeed, because they have the same left reformist perspective as the Chaterites it comes as no surprise that comrade Topping calls them "revolutionary forces" when it is as plain as a pike-staff that they are committed to a reformist programme. Doesn't Chater even call the *Morning Star* the "daily living embodiment of the *British Road to Socialism*"? To pretend that the BRS has any "revolutionary content" as the Straight Leftists do is just another example of their shabby political opportunism, which while it parades around as principled is in reality centrist to its rotten core.

Given this there can be no question of Leninists entertaining the slightest illusion about the pro-Party potential of Straight Leftism. Yes, we must strive to win the honest elements from its clutches, but as to the ideology and political platform of Straight Leftism it must be mercilessly put down. No doubt there may be some floating political driftwood who might be tempted to look for an easy option by grasping Straight Leftism as a 'pro-Party' ally. But all such alliances end in almost instant failure. The CPGB will not be reformed by looking for easy options, by cobbling together an August Bloc of anti-Leninist, anti-Euro, anti-Chater forces. Not only is the raw material for such a grouping thin on the ground but the ground on which such a bloc if it was to be built is by definition simply anti-Leninist and thus thoroughly opportunist and unprincipled.

The CPGB can be reformed. But only through principled, uncompromising, Leninist ideological struggle. This will be done by winning forces who recognise in practice as well as theory that what the working class in Britain needs is not the CPGB of 10 or 20 years ago but a CPGB firmly based on the proletarian doctrine of Marxism-Leninism and the strictest adherence to working in a disciplined, democratic centralist way. Only this perspective offers the Party life and the working class liberation. All else is in the end doomed.

David Sheriff

British Berufsverbot

Thatcher imposes a British Berufsverbot, the CP must now fight back

ON APRIL 3 THIS year the government announced measures that represent possibly the greatest attack yet by the state on communists, socialists, and militants. These measures were spelt out in a revised policy for the employment of people on work "the nature of which is vital to the security of the state". In basic terms, the measures ban communists from working in the public services, but this can apply to anyone who "is, or has recently been, a member of a communist or fascist organisation, or a subversive group, acknowledged as such by the minister, whose aims are to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by political, industrial, or violent means." Furthermore, this ban (or suspension) can also apply to associates or sympathisers of those who may fall into one or more of the above categories.

There are three points to note here. Firstly, the powers of the state have been increased to include not only those working in the civil service (as in the old 1957 rules) but also those working within the "public services" such as British Telecom, the Post Office, and the Civil Aviation Authority. Secondly, and also for the first time, "subversives" are covered by the new ruling — this is in fact a new category formulated by the government. Finally, the government makes clear that it can deem any industrial action as acting against parliamentary democracy, the consequences of this being that thousands of workers could be sacked before or after such action was planned or taken with the aim being to render such action impotent by attacking individuals on a mass scale.

The communist reaction

In view of this major attack by British capitalism against individual members of the CPGB and the CPGB itself, what has been the response of the Executive Committee of our Party to this capitalist state offensive? Well, the response has been very limited. Certainly there has been no CP initiated campaign against these attacks.

This is a great flaw in the work of the Party and one which should be rectified as soon as possible. The Communist Party leadership has condemned the Thatcher administration's banning of trade unions at the GCHQ centre. Similarly, it has made great play out of its defence of individual civil servants such as Sara Tisdale or Clive Ponting who have breached the security conditions of

their employment in order to blow the gaff on some underhanded manoeuvre of the government. Surely it should now launch an active campaign against these proposed anti-democratic measures. After all, at stake is not simply individual CP members, but the safety of the Party itself against the attacks of the state. Not to do so is to abrogate the Party's responsibilities as a militant defender of democracy and the logical conclusion of this is that in future struggles against the bourgeoisie, there will possibly be many more Des Warrens, sacrificed in the pursuit of respectability in the eyes of British imperialism.

West German Berufsverbot

Given the position of our EC over the question of 'British Berufsverbot', it is of some interest to note that the head of the international department, Gerry Pocock, appears on the list of contact addresses for the National Campaign Against The Berufsverbot (NCAB) (the British section of the organisation fighting the denial of civil and political rights to communists and radicals in West Germany). There are a number of interesting parallels between West German Berufsverbot and the measures recently announced by the government. For example, the NCAB indicates what Berufsverbot means in practice, namely "the ban or dismissal from public sector employment because of moral or political views critical of government policies; blacklisting; victimisation; witchhunts; and West German McCarthyism," and although many of these practices have been carried out in Britain, it is important to recognise that the state has now put them onto the statute book thus providing greater scope for their implementation in the future.

Berufsverbot has had a major impact in West Germany. According to Horst Bethge of the EC of the West German anti-Berufsverbot campaign there have been "6,779 cases and measures of Berufsverbot and 6,400,000 cases of political screenings since 1971" affecting not only communists but also social democrats, liberals, and peace movement activists. In addition, information on 239 organisations and 287 newspapers and journals is stored in police computers. As the NCAB correctly states, Berufsverbot "is a political measure in the battle of ideas, in the ideological class struggle", but it is also "government policy for time of crisis".

Thus, in all the world's imperialist countries, Berufsverbot in one form or another is almost inevitable as a

prelude to the more massive persecutions of communists and socialists at the time of general crisis which in Britain because of historical and objective factors, is likely sooner rather than later.

The reasons for Britain's 'Berufsverbot'

Therefore, these measures are part of a political response from the bourgeois state to the crisis of British imperialism. For one of the main aims of the measures is to take many of the most class conscious workers out of the arena of class struggle resulting in a trade union movement (at least in the public services) led by right wing social democrats and liberals that would be a lamb to the slaughter as the ruling class attempted to solve its crisis by attacking to an unprecedented degree workers' wages and conditions. Certainly the state is out to increase its control of the trade union movement. It is also certain that as the crisis of British imperialism deepens so there will be a commensurate rise in the utilisation of anti-communist, bourgeois propaganda in order to isolate potential militant leaders and also possibly to divert the attention of the working class away from the real cause of their misery; so it is likely that the capitalists will use "democracy" and "defence of the national interest" when they appeal to the population for support before they sack, incarcerate, or even shoot 'the internal enemy, the communists'.

Therefore, communists must not look at the question of 'British Berufsverbot' in isolation from other state attacks on labour such as GCHQ, privatisation, successive anti-union laws, the increased powers of the police, YTS, and the weakening of the powers of the wages councils; and it is important that communists actively campaign among the working class, linking their immediate struggles with the need for basic social and political change.

The attack of the state on fundamental democratic liberties is being stepped up. Communists must be in the forefront of the fightback, for these attacks are the prelude to the much bigger onslaught that is set to come our way. Until the working class and its leadership learns the basic class lesson of defending your own, we will never be in a position of challenging the state in any meaningful way.

NO TO 'BRITISH BERUFS-VERBOT'!
DEFEND ALL WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES!

Bob Archer



Third NRFMM Conference

IT IS A PITY in many ways that the latest issue of *Rank and File Miner* (No 2 Autumn 1985) does not give a more extensive report of the National Rank and File Miners' Movement's (NRFMM) third conference.

On the front page of this edition is a brief summary of some of the resolutions adopted by the conference. But, as with any conference, what really would be of interest are the discussions and debates that led to these decisions. Also the report is rather 'patchy'.

For example, one of the resolutions not mentioned in this article proposed by a Notts miner correctly congratulated the Editor and all those responsible for the production of *Rank and File Miner* No 1: as the resolution itself stated, this was "a real step forward" for the NRFMM. The resolution also went on to identify the key problem as the need for a "firmer political basis" for the paper.

To resolve this sticking point it was proposed in the resolution to create an editorial board for the paper, with responsibility for overseeing the political direction of each edition and ensuring that the adopted politics of the Movement are to the fore in each issue. This was accepted in principle. Unfortunately, one of the main opponents of the election of an editorial board on the day, comrade Billy Mathews of Hatfield Main NUM, a *Morning Star* supporter, managed to convince the conference to put off the actual election until the next conference. On the other hand, miners sympathetic to *The Leninist* who were active in pushing the idea of an editorial board argued that there was a need for swift action on this point. Conference decided, however, to delay the elections to ensure a more representative editorial board could be elected at the next gathering.

Another resolution not covered in *Rank and File Miner* was one which expressed its disgust at and demanded a public retraction from *Straight Left* for a scandalous article in its July 1985 issue which branded the NRFMM (amongst others) as "thieves and splitters". Unfortunately *Straight Left* has so far refused to even print the NRFMM's case, let alone a retraction.

As the Communist Party declines, fractures, and degenerates politically there is no strong political force which can fill the gap it leaves and give a militant lead to workers. Thus, the Rank and File Movement can still sometimes produce some ambiguous statements which are symptomatic of the fact that it still has to fully break the hold of 'official labour movement' politics over all of its ideas. Nevertheless, this conference was a good one for the movement in that it helped clarify the politics of the organisation and point the way forward. What the NRFMM needs to do now is sharpen up and push the 'hard' edge of its politics more forcibly in the paper, the *Rank and File Miner*. In our view, the proposal to create an editorial board was the key to doing this. This will help ensure the Movement's success in rebuilding the NUM from the bottom up as a fighting union.



Notts rank and file miner

AT THE National Rank and File Miners Movement 3rd Conference we talked to a delegate from the Notts coalfield about his decision to join the CPGB and the problems he sees in building the Party.

The Leninist: You took the decision during the course of the Great Strike to join the Communist Party. Why did you do this?

Miner: Well, basically I felt the need to be involved in some sort of political organisation. Most of the people I knew around Nottingham were in the sort of party I'd like to join: the Communist Party.

The Leninist: Did any of the Trotskyite groups appeal to you?

Miner: No. I have weighed the sort of policies that they have put forward and when you get down to it a lot of them are either 'nothing' organisations or end up as actually reformist.

The Leninist: But the majority of the trends within the CPGB are opportunist, yet you joined. What was your attitude to the tendencies in the Communist Party?

Miner: My district, East Midlands, is basically pro-*Morning Star*, some Straight Leftists; and I thought, they cannot be all that bad, you know, being anti-Euro, because I really was very anti-Eurocommunist from my years standing outside the Party looking in.

The Leninist: Are there a lot of miners who stand outside the Party in the same way as you used to, but take note of the debates and battles inside it?

Miner: Well, in fact there are quite a number in Nottinghamshire who used to be in the Party that came out because the Euros were taking control. They just gave up and came out, you know. But they still look to the Party in many ways.

The Leninist: What is the state of Party organisation in your coalfield?

Miner: It is distinctly lacking. They used to have a lot of cadres in Nottinghamshire, for instance. They had leaders like Joe Whelan, and they were key figures. When the people like that went then things really started going downhill. They used to have one or two CP pit branches in Notts; when they went and the other organisations went down to the present numbers we have got now, which is *nothing* really, the whole area seemed to shift rightwards.

For instance, there used to be a Communist branch near Kilverton pit. Now I think there are only one or two members and there is no functioning branch at all. Also, if you look at today's conference (the NRFMM 3rd Conference — TL), a Communist Party-type organisation was really lacking. There is nothing to coagulate, gel things together. There is an awful lot of energy being wasted. It's like 'pissing in the wind', you know; or rather, 'against the

wind'.

The Leninist: Did your attitude to the communist movement internationally affect your decision to join the CP?

Miner: Over the last few years the main thing I have really been thinking about is the Solidarnosc thing; I was totally against that, of course. I mean, some of the Trot groups were actually coming out and saying 'this is great, the workers are breaking away from the tyranny of the Stalinists' and all that. It is like saying the people who organised the fascist trade unions against Allende in Chile were 'freedom fighters'.

And on Afghanistan, for example, I was very interested in that.

The Leninist: But what about the CP's historical link with the Soviet Union; didn't that also colour your attitude and lead you to join?

Miner: Well, I suppose you could say in essence that it is supposed to be the party of Lenin, the British section of it. But I have found since I have joined certainly that there is not a lot that is Leninist about it. I mean, whether it is Euros or *Morning Star* or Straight Leftist or whatever.

The Leninist: Yet there are a lot of potentially good communists involved around the *Morning Star* or *Straight Left*. Don't you find that?

Miner: From what I see of these people, they seem to be willing to clutch at straws. Some of them go along with the *Morning Star* line, and yet actually disagree with a lot of it. Yet they will tail along because it is 'against the Euros', and the same reasoning leads some to grab hold of *Straight Left*.

As far as most of the comrades I have met who are in opposition to the Euros, it is just a question of being in an opposition, full stop. They do not really go into it in depth, they just toe the line of these various tendencies hoping that it is going to be an effective force against the Euros.

The Leninist: It is doomed, isn't it, that lesser of two evils soft option?

Miner: Well, when you get down to basics and you look at the Euros and the *Morning Star* and *Straight Left*, they are basically the false opposites. Some comrades probably know this, but they don't let on.

The Leninist: We have spoken about other tendencies in the Communist Party, but as a communist miner who came across *The Leninist* quite late in the Great Strike, we would be interested to hear your views of our paper.

Miner: The first time I ever encountered it was through your advert in the *Morning Star*. I sent away for (I think it was) the October '84 edition, and after that it just went from there.

I found it the most stimulating paper in the CP in many ways. When I got my first copy, which was about October time, I was realising, along with quite a few other guys, that things in the strike were starting to go backwards. By then we had Scargill running down to London to Acas and the TUC, and then we had problems with Nacods, and all of these things started to cloud the issues. We were just drawn into a trap. As far as we were concerned, by October/November time a lot of us had decided we were going to be out till the end but the crunch was going to come in January/February, which it actually turned out to be. **The Leninist** during that time offered a way forward.

The Leninist: What were your impressions of today's NRFMM conference?

Miner: It seems to be stuck. There is no central politics, idea, or road that the movement says we should be treading. It just appears that they are going left, right, centre, this way, that way and not really getting anywhere. And also the number of people turning up is actually diminishing. Even though, the one good positive step they have made is having their own paper. But then

again, the paper lacks the same thing the actual organisation lacks: political direction.

The Leninist: If it could get off the ground properly, do you think there would be a basis for such a rank and file organisation in your coalfield, for example, in Notts?

Miner: Oh, definitely! The experience I have had at my own pit bears that out. The fact that guys that were really good when they were out on strike and were active doing all sorts of things are actually doing *nothing* now, basically because they have nothing to do. If they were on strike they would be OK probably, but now they are back at work they cannot really handle the situation, especially in a minority area like Notts.

I mean, out of a membership of about thirteen hundred there were about 80 of us on strike and so there is quite a small force.

The Leninist: You organised Marxist-Leninist reading classes with other miners during the strike. Have you found that these miners also have retreated politically since the strike's defeat?

Miner: With those study groups we needed more time actually and the trouble was that the strike got into dire straights before they got off the ground properly, so a lot of this setting up of study circles was very patchy. They got broken up because we had too much to do; we had picketing our pit, we had picketing power stations, we had to go out fundraising, speaking to meetings to raise money, and all this. Really we were doing a 25 hour day, and so they suffered.

The Leninist: Don't you think in some ways they point the way forward for both militants in the NUM and the NRFMM, towards an organisation, a party based on scientific working class theory, on Marxism-Leninism?

Miner: That is the basic ingredient. Without it, when an organisation like the NRFMM is just starting off, without that input it can just peter out and die or end up as just another Labour Party-type reformist, tin-rattling sort of organisation, full stop. I mean, I know we are supposed to be raising money for sacked miners and imprisoned miners or even collecting money for fellow workers abroad in struggle. But that is just one aspect of it; it is not your main thing, it is a side issue, a very important side issue, but nevertheless it is your back-up.

The Leninist: We think at the end of the day what is required is a Leninist Communist Party. And that, I suppose, is our final question. How do you think we are going to get one?

Miner: As far as I can see now, we have got to recruit more people to the Communist Party, but recruit them around *The Leninist* tendency. Because it is actually the only tendency that makes things worthwhile really.

□ Support the class war prisoners. Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are appealing against their life sentences. Picket called by Newport Miners' Support Group, Rhymney Valley Miners' Support Group, Oxford Miners' Support Group, and Bristol and Avon Miners' Defence Committee. October 21 and 22 8.30am outside Brixton Prison main gate, 9.30am outside Appeal Court, London. Details from Ray Davis 0222 886695, Gethin Jones (NUM) 0685 842228, Mary Crofton 0633 215 983.

□ The 2nd edition of the NRFMM paper *Rank and File Miner* is now out: 25p plus p&p from D. Moore, PO Box 3, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. For speakers from the NRFMM or information write to D. Moore or phone one of the following numbers: Doncaster (A. Robe) 0302-844 446, London 01-278 4444 Ex. 2827, Birmingham 021-236 1240. Donations should be sent to A. Robe, 74, The Crescent, Dunscoft, Doncaster, South Yorks.

Crisis in South Africa

THE THUNDER OF REVOLUTION

Section 1

ADVANCED WORKERS throughout the world are following with rapt attention the unfolding events in South Africa. In that country a classic revolutionary situation exists and is maturing with blind elemental power and thundering vigour. The imperialist chain is threatening to break, international capital has been thrown into a panic by this prospect and is in a quandary as to the best way to divert and ultimately turn back the revolutionary wave. Token sanctions? No sanctions? Even real sanctions?

While the forces of imperialism cannot see any straightforward or easy answers to the crisis of apartheid, we must be absolutely crystal clear that we have a duty to the South African masses that requires more than sympathy, that as the revolutionary drama is played out what is demanded is our direct solidarity against the machinations of imperialism.

The purpose of the first section of this article is to look at some of the central objective features of the revolution in South Africa. The second section to appear in a future issue of *The Leninist* will present its many rich lessons to the attention of our readers and outline what forms of solidarity will promote the cause of the South African masses. It will also look at those forms of 'solidarity' which play into the hands of interests which are determined to see to it that the revolution stops half way, that the overthrow of apartheid does not uninterruptedly lead to a South African Socialist Republic.

Given the complexities, the uneven tempo, and the spontaneous stage of the revolution our efforts will inevitably contain tentative ideas, limitations, and even conjecture. So while we will present a body of definite facts and conclusions, some of what we say will take the form of discussion and thinking aloud. Despite this we trust that our efforts will facilitate clarity when it comes to exactly what is going on in South Africa and aid those seeking to genuinely aid the revolutionary struggle in that country.

Even before the appearance of the second section of this article we must definitely declare that liberal revulsion against apartheid is inadequate. Our solidarity must go to a higher plane than respectable "bishops to brickies" appeals to the good will or supposed self interest of big business and government in the advanced capitalist countries to fight apartheid. We look primarily to direct working class action in the ports, airports, shops, telephone exchanges, etc. to impose sanctions. We do not place much hope in isolated individuals rocking apartheid because they stop buying Rockmans or close down their Barclays account. Likewise, we are for more than the repetition of ANC slogans. As to attempts to impose the dead hand of British Labourism onto the vital burgeoning revolution in South Africa by calling for a trade union based workers' party there, this is in our view as stupid as it is dangerous. Against those who would limit 'solidarity' to calling upon Thatcher to follow Reagan's lead and in contrast to the myriad faces of British

political backwardness we present our thoughts.

1. South Africa's place in the world

There is a natural but wrong tendency on the left in Britain to simply present the South African economy as an appendage of the monopolies in Europe and North America. While not denying the links we will show that this is a half-truth, that South Africa has developed monopoly capitalism in its own right and does actually play the role of a junior imperialist power. This is an elementary question which if we ignore or belittle can only lead us to fail in our analysis of what is a stake in South Africa as well as failure to understand what the tasks confronting the masses there are. To understand the problems and prospects of the revolution in South Africa we have to consider the country not in itself but in its world context.

Britain conquered the Cape in 1896, ending 150 years of Dutch rule, and gaining control of the vital sea route from Europe to India. In the subsequent century it extended its power into the hinterland to incorporate the Boer republics. This long, bitter, and often frustratingly costly struggle to annex the Orange Free State and the Transvaal was driven by the allure of enormous deposits of diamonds discovered in Griqualand West in 1870 and in 1888 the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. But Britain was not just concerned with extracting plunder in the manner of the Spanish conquistadors for this was the dawning of the epoch of imperialism.

What this meant was that not only were commodities moved about internationally but capital itself was exported from the metropolitan countries in order to exploit labour on a world scale. In consequence the Coloured population, African tribes like the Nama, the Khoi, and the Xhosa, as well as the Afrikaners and the English settlers were drawn into an international division of labour within the British dominated world capitalist system.

Now, as is well known, the world capitalist system is broadly speaking divided into oppressed and oppressing countries.

Undoubtedly, throughout the nineteenth century the relationship between Britain and the Cape and then, with the twentieth century, the Union of South Africa was that of the imperialist exploiter and the exploited colony. But certainly with the ending of the world colonial system in the wake of World War II the imperialist club was open to new members amongst which there was South Africa.

South Africa's membership of this world imperialist club was not based on the country as a whole possessing a sophisticated level of technology and a highly skilled and well educated population as was the case with say Switzerland, Sweden, or Denmark. No, South Africa gained entry on the basis of mineral wealth that would put El Dorado to shame, foreign capital, and an abundant pool of cheap and easily exploitable labour. South Africa is therefore as Botha has declared "both a First

and a Third World country".

Thus, although the South African economy is today on a per capita basis far behind the United States and even Britain, it is no "neo-colonial client state" or even amongst those medium developed capitalist countries which stand at a transition stage like Turkey, South Korea, Ireland, or Brazil. It has developed monopoly capitalism and is able to operate as a junior imperialist power. So, despite the fact that many of the corporations which operate in South Africa started out primarily concerned with mineral extraction and had their headquarters in London they have long since diversified, often shifted their base to South Africa itself, or been joined by indigenous capital which has reached the stage of monopoly. Indeed, there can be no doubt that local and overseas monopoly capital have developed in an intermeshed and interlocked fashion to such an extent that they are to all intents and purposes the same creature.

2. South African monopoly capital

So let us look at the details of South Africa's monopoly capitalism and the emergence of finance capital.

Because South Africa's industrial revolution was a result of the export of capital, mainly from Britain, it was inevitable that from the very beginning its capitalism would show strong monopolistic tendencies. Monopoly capital having been transplanted ready made from Britain into South Africa allowed little room for small scale concentrations of capital to grow. In fact, as a result of the "group system" first pioneered by Cecil Rhodes (the country's first important capitalist) the concentration of capital is today higher than in North America or Europe.

The "group system" relies on one corporation or finance house owning a majority or more often a large minority of shares in a whole array of companies, control being exercised through the appointment of directors and various "experts". Thus if we take the top 100 South African companies quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange we do not find 100 separate organisations (as we would in the main in Britain) but a spider's web of interconnections leading to six giant corporations, which between them are already in control of over 80% of the company assets listed on the exchange.

By far the largest of the six is Anglo-American, which is estimated by *Who Owns Whom* (a South African publication which details the ownership of 10,000 public and private companies in the country) to control 56% of the assets. Companies administered by the corporation produce more than 36% of the country's gold, equivalent to about a quarter of the capitalist world's total production. As well as this, Anglo-American accounts for 26% of South Africa's coal output and has from the 1950s, on the basis of huge profits obtained in minerals, branched out into numerous secondary industries along with banking and finance. A recent example of Anglo-

American's expansion into the financial sector was the merger of its Anglo-American Life insurance company with Southern Life in alliance with Barclays Bank in a 40:30 deal which produced the country's third largest life insurance group. The upshot of Anglo-American's growth through the "group system" is that it now controls assets though to be worth a cool R9.8 billion.

The other five giants are: SANLAM, the life insurance company, which through its control of 38 companies accounts for 9.4% of the stock exchange assets; Barlow Rand with 25 companies under its belt and 7.4% of the assets; the Old Mutual Life insurance company; the mining finance house Anglo-Vaal; and finally Rembrandt, which is a group of industrial companies concentrated in tobacco and liquor.

While some of the six directly own banks (SANLAM has four small ones), banking is more or less completely dominated by Barclays and Standard Chartered. These big two are still in terms of effective ownership branches of British banks and represent the most important foreign capital in South Africa. The South African owned Nedbank, Volkskas, and Bankorp come a long way behind the big two in terms of assets but both the foreign and the South African banks have merged with industrial capital to form finance capital.

Although the banks do not operate by acquiring a controlling ownership of companies in the mining and industrial sectors they have thousands of personal and business connections with the giant corporations. For instance, Barclays, which in 1982 had assets of R10,795 million, has as has been mentioned over Anglo-American Life a close relationship with Anglo-American which is indeed the bank's second largest shareholder after the British parent company. Standard is likewise linked with Old Mutual, which in turn is the main shareholder of Nedbank, which is itself now cooperating with Allied, the third biggest building society.

Centralisation and concentration have in fact led the banks to conclude formal or informal agreements linking the whole financial sector. As well as Barclays joining up with the insurance groups Southern Life and Anglo-American Life with a 30% stake, Standard is the centre of a confederation which includes Liberty Life and the country's biggest building society, United. This process of agglomeration, involving all the main banks and financial centres, is almost certain to continue as the building societies and insurance companies look for partners and the banks seek to further expand their activities.

Alongside the conglomerations of finance capital there has been the massive growth of state monopoly capitalism financed mainly through foreign borrowing. The largest component in this sector is SA Transport Services which runs the railways, harbours, and airways and has assets worth R11.8 billion. ESCOM, the electricity supply corporation, is valued at R11.02 billion and this is followed by the Post Office, the state arms manufacturer

Armcor, and the iron and steel corporation ISCOR.

Thus, outside agriculture the South African economy is in essence controlled by nine power centres: the state, the big two banks, and the six giant financial/industrial monopolies.

3. Junior imperialism

With the development of monopolisation and finance capital comes the drive to expand outwards. To a large extent this has been blunted by the nature of the South African state itself, the fact that it rests on an internal *colonialism of a special type*, as the South African Communist Party describes it. This means that there has been ample opportunity to expand internally and obtain "super profits" within the borders of the country.

Despite this and foreign exchange controls some of the giants have set up operations in the advanced capitalist countries. Anglo-American has Charter Consolidated as an investment vehicle in Britain; Rembrandt has for some time owned tobacco companies in Britain, Federal Germany, and the USA; SA Breweries (which is in the Anglo-American group) has recently taken over hotels and casinos in Atlantic City; while Liberty Life is busily acquiring insurance and property companies in Britain.

But more significant perhaps is South Africa's goal of building a 'constellation of states' in the south of the continent, its growing regional imperialist role which it now exercises. This is done through a combination of being the focus for the region's transport system, electric grid, and trade, as well as its mines paying large remittances from migrant labourers who would otherwise be unemployed. So while there can be no question about the detestation the leaders of the 'front line' black states feel for the white supremacist regime in Pretoria, many have through necessity been forced to bend the knee to the power of South Africa. The realities of these economic factors and the willingness of the South African government to unleash its awesome military machine have overcome many a scruple.

Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland have openly admitted their dependence; Namibia is of course occupied by 100,000 South African troops; and the government in Mozambique has been made, by South African sponsored terrorism, adverse circumstances, and downright backwardness, to sign the Nkomati Accord.

This led to the Frelimo government deporting cadres of the South African revolutionary movement, raiding ANC homes and offices in Maputo, all this taking place under the watchful eye of a joint Mozambican/South African commission.

Zimbabwe has similar restrictions on the activity of the ANC and like the other 'front line states' welcomes labour migration to, and more trade with, South Africa, as well as direct investment. Even Angola, which has around 20,000 Cuban troops stationed in the country against the South African backed Unita, has agreed to enforce a *cordon sanitaire* along the Angolan-Namibian border in which neither Cuban or SWAPO forces are allowed to operate.

So when we look at the question of foreign investment in the South African economy it must be against the background of the development of indigenous finance capital and South Africa's role as a junior imperialist power. This said we must not fall into the opposite trap of dismissing foreign investment as irrelevant.

4. Foreign investment

After World War II there was a significant shift in the pattern of foreign investment in South Africa. Before the war it was primarily British and concentrated in mining. (British owned companies still account for around 60% of private holdings in the mining sector; contemporary names like Rio Tinto Zinc, Consolidated Gold Fields, Charter Consolidated, and Lonhro instantly spring to mind.) Even those companies which are locally owned developed with the aid of foreign capital in the form of portfolio investments in stocks and shares, that is, indirect investment. But

in the 1950s and especially the 1960s this pattern changed. Foreign investments increasingly took the form of transnationals investing directly in the shape of local branches or subsidiaries.

This meant that by the 1970s mining only accounted for 7.5% of direct foreign investment while manufacturing had leapt to 43.8%. In the process, British capitalism has been reduced from an overwhelmingly dominant position as the imperial "motherland" accounting for the vast mass of foreign investment, to merely the leading investor.

Anyway, today it is thought that around 2,000 foreign companies operate in South Africa. Behind many of them, dominating most, overshadowing all, are 65 of the world's giant transnational corporations. Of these 11 are from the USA, 19 from Britain, 11 from Federal Germany, 3 from France, and 3 from Japan. According to the Anti-Apartheid Movement total foreign investment in South Africa by these transnationals and their minions is £31.5 billion (at mid-1985 market value) of which 46% is direct investment. This makes South Africa one of the prime recipients of the export of capital outside the export of capital from one major imperialist power to another.

Now it is common to exaggerate the degree of importance South Africa and the investments there have for the big imperialist powers. Some, casting an eye over South Africa's production of gold and other vital minerals and its high percentage share of reserves, draw the false impression that if apartheid were overthrown the 'West' would grind to a halt.

Of course under any government mineral production is likely to continue and the 'West' would undoubtedly continue to be the main market. Even short term disruption caused by strikes or even revolution would have little effect as alternative supplies could be easily found or stockpiles turned to until normal levels of production were resumed. In the case of gold even if all South Africa's mines were closed the results in terms of the world capitalist economy would be far from cataclysmic. Not only would other sources be opened up but it should be remembered that more than 90% of all gold ever mined remains available to gold markets, with known stocks exceeding 20,000 tonnes being equivalent to more than 30 years' South African output (*Financial Times* September 4 1985).

Nonetheless, South Africa is an important element in the world economy and a rich source of profit. What the big imperialist powers fear is turmoil becoming endemic in South Africa and disrupting capital accumulation. For this reason the transnationals and their governments back home have been calling upon Pretoria to offer sufficient reforms to quell civil unrest. Most of the imperialist powers have even imposed token sanctions to reinforce the pressure for reforms to save the system. In other words sanctions have been imposed as a way to pull South Africa away from carrying on along a road most imperialists fear will lead to the precipice of revolution. And although these forces do not in reality give a damn as to what colour skin ministers in South Africa have, what they know is that as things stand the overthrow of apartheid would usher in a revolutionary government that could well nationalise the massive investments of the transnationals.

Even if for one moment we were to imagine that things would not go that far, the collapse of apartheid, or even a controlled step by step peaceful abolition, would almost inevitably mean that the rate of exploitation of the black proletariat would drastically decline as the pay differentials between them and whites was whittled down through a combination of economic struggles and the end of laws which restrict blacks in selling their labour power on an open market. Such a situation might not only see an exodus of skilled white workers as their wages came down with black competition but of course a sharp decline in the rate of profit. Thus South Africa's position as a junior imperialist power could well collapse and certainly the incentive to invest there would decline significantly.

To avoid such unpleasant scenarios the imperialist powers along with the transnationals are doing their utmost to push the Botha regime into introducing reforms which will dampen down black unrest but would leave monopoly capital free to extract huge super profits. To achieve

this difficult if not impossible feat many imperialist governments have resorted to sanctions in order to emphasise to the South African government the importance of their imports, the importance of their markets for South African exports, as well as the importance of the transnationals to South Africa's economy.

Though investment from abroad equals only about one-tenth of the country's capital stock, transnationals play a key role in the economy. We have already had cause to refer to the banking sector and the dominant position of the two British controlled banks, Barclays and Standard. With the post-World War II change in emphasis the same role is also now played by foreign companies in the fields of motor vehicles, oil, pharmaceuticals, computers, and other high technology areas.

All in all it is clear that not only did foreign investment open up South Africa in the first place, providing the backing for the country's transformation into a junior imperialist power, but today plays a crucial role in a range of strategic areas including financing South African owned industry, mining, farms, as well as the state itself. The extent of the interlocking of foreign and local capital was reported to mean that 80% of private industrial production is controlled or influenced by foreign companies, while a South African survey concluded that in 1974 nearly 74% of manufacturing companies were dependent for 90% of their technology on foreign owned firms.* In other words, in many ways foreign and local monopoly capital are the same creature.

So although foreign capital wants to see change, it along with local capital has every interest in ensuring that black workers remain open to super-exploitation. Because of this, governments in the US, France, and Federal Germany will only push so far. As to Britain with its relative greater exposure, it is extremely reluctant to take a lead in doing any pushing for fear that dramatic change even within the parameters of apartheid could seriously damage its interests. This is partially because of the huge amount Britain has at stake there and partially because British capital would be least responsive to change as a result of its deep roots in apartheid society.

An example of this is the fact that as so much of Britain's investments are in mining, in this sector wage differentials between black and white workers are as much as 1:8, compared with 1:4 in manufacturing, even a reform of apartheid could see black wages spiralling upwards and British profits spiral downwards.

Anyway there can be no doubt that the black population should not look to the transnationals as allies against apartheid. At the end of the day to fight against apartheid is to fight against monopoly capital itself.

5. The gravediggers

We have said that the dramatic economic development of South Africa rested on the discovery of abundant mineral wealth and that the exploitation of this was wholly funded by the export of capital, knowhow, and technicians from Britain. However, the key element, the factor that alone is capable of creating *value*, that is *labour power*, has not been dealt with. This is something we will now rectify.

While the mining companies relied on skilled labour exported from Britain when they opened up the gold, diamond, and coal fields of the Rand, unskilled labour was soon entirely native. This had the immense advantage of being in relative terms (that is to the world market) extremely cheap and thus, again in relative terms, extremely profitable. To maintain this situation the racism of the Dutch settlers was by degrees slowly institutionalised until a whole array of oppressive legislation has been placed on the statute book to regulate and control black workers.

The pass laws, the migrant labour system whereby black workers are housed in company compounds and have no legal right of tenure, as well as regulations reserving skilled jobs for whites: the entire apartheid edifice of institutionalised inequality and racism has been used to maximise the profitability of capitalism in South Africa. In other words, the development of capitalism in South Africa has been bound up with racism.

Through the imposition of a rigid colour bar, by denying black workers basic political rights, capitalism in South Africa was able to develop on the basis of "super-profits" and the super-exploitation of black workers without exporting capital. Today this means that profit rates there are estimated to be twice as high as those in underdeveloped capitalist countries and perhaps three times higher than those appertaining in advanced capitalist countries like Britain.

Thus, although the growth of capitalism has meant that Africans were steadily urbanised and transformed into proletarians, this took place on the basis of a special type of colonialism. Because of this, as well as society being characterised by a contradiction between labour and capital, there also existed a related but nonetheless separate contradiction, *inside* the boundaries of one country, between the oppressed colonised nation and the oppressing colonising nation. This meant that far from white and black workers recognising their common interests in the face of the employer and the employers' collective state machine, white workers (first those of English origin and then the Afrikaners) were coopted into the system of oppression. They dropped their radicalism of the early part of this century, which had seen them engage in militant trade union struggles culminating in the 1922 Rand Revolt. In return for exclusion of blacks from skilled jobs, and guarantees of wages of at least four times those of blacks, white workers gave up all political independence.

What this meant was that white workers and their unions, far from seeking unity with black workers against the employer, sought unity with the employer against black workers. In other words, the white working class became a racially determined labour aristocracy with a twisted psychology and the bigoted politics that go with it, that make the Protestant workers of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland or the Southern US whites appear moderates.

This buying off of the white working class, the integration of the white unions into an elaborate state machinery of conciliation and collaboration represented what could be called a 'historic compromise' between monopoly capital and white labour. Of course, this was only possible through bribery obtained from the ruthless exploitation of the black working class, on the basis of their super-exploitation.

The labour aristocracy in nineteenth century Britain was won to side with its 'own' ruling class because of the promise of juicy crumbs from the imperialist plunder of the empire. But compared with the numbing effects the crumbs won by Britain's labour aristocrats had on their potential for class struggle, South African white workers have been lobotomised by the size of the crumbs and the proximity of the colonised nation from which their privileges are derived. This has meant that the only militant action they have displayed for many a year is that directed against the black workers.

It was the skilled engineering workers like those of the Clyde, Sheffield, the Midlands, and London who launched a militant strike wave while their bosses were waging war in 1917, who produced many of the founders of the CPGB in 1920, who came out in solidarity with the miners in the ten days of the 1926 General Strike, and who 46 years later again joined miners, this time to close Saltley Gates power station. In contrast to this South Africa's white workers have long been among the most reactionary defenders of the apartheid system and loath to take any strike action.

True, there were revolutionary elements in the white working class which came together to form the International Socialist League in 1915, but after the mid-1920s this strand, which had gone on to form the Communist Party of South Africa, lost all mass influence among white workers. And far from these workers being content with the concealed racial chauvinism of the South African Labour Party they flocked to the banner of the openly racist Nationalist Party. Indeed, it has been white workers who have provided the base for the Nationalist Party's right wing opposition against Botha's recent attempts to reform apartheid and have to a certain degree even started to move towards the ultra-right Conservative Party.

In contrast and contradiction to the lamentable taming of the white working class, the development of colonial monopoly capital in South Africa has created a militant black proletariat. Unlike the colonisation of

* This was defended in the *Morning Star* by comrade Paul Fauvet under the following editorial introduction: "Far from Mozambique abandoning its principles in the recent talks with South Africa, it remains opposed to apartheid", a rosy picture not shared by the ANC or the SACP.

* S Clarke *Financial Aspects of Economic Sanctions on South Africa* IUEF 1980, reporting the *New York Times* and then quoting a survey conducted in 1974.

other African countries like Kenya, Congo, Angola, and Mozambique, where there were large numbers of white settlers, South Africa was not only allowed to industrialise but developed by severing its political ties with the metropolitan power and becoming imperialist in its own right.

This meant that for the black proletariat there was a double burden: that of capital exploiting labour and that of the colonist exploiting the colonised. The independence of the colonist from Britain did not change this pattern. In fact, the colonial style of exploitation was if anything intensified as South Africa sought to compete on the open world market, something that was only possible through the creation of 'super-profits' from the sweat of the black proletariat which was reduced to a helot-like existence, housed in sprawling dormitory towns when employed, herded out to barren 'homelands' when unemployed.

Understandably, the intensity of exploitation of the black proletariat and the denial of its basic democratic rights completely alienated it from the system. And because of the colonial subjugation experienced by all other sections of the black population (in this we include of course not only Africans, but Coloureds and Asians) the same applied to the sparse and insubstantial stratum making up the black urban middle classes. While this inevitably creates difficulties in forging working class political independence, the dramatic economic growth experienced by South Africa, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, meant that the proletariat grew at a staggering pace through the absorption of the rural blacks, making it the fastest growing class in the country and potentially the most powerful.

Facts speak for themselves. In 1951 there was a total of 536,275 workers employed in manufacture; this reached to over one million by 1970; six years later the figure was 1,362,079, of whom around 60% were African, 25% white, and the rest Coloured or Asian. Because of brutal police repressions, not least the banning of democratic organisations throughout the 1950s, starting with the banning of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1950 and culminating in the suppression of the ANC in 1960, militancy was effectively beaten back. Throughout the 1960s a sullen calm hung over the South African labour relations scene. With the Communist Party and the ANC forced underground, the South African Congress of Trade Unions effectively smashed along with its affiliates, reaction ruled. That only 2,000 workers took part in strikes in 1969 amply testifies to this.

But with the continued growth of the working class, the never ceasing drive by capital to increase the rate of exploitation*, and spiralling inflation there were created the tinder dry conditions for an explosive outburst of militancy and organisation which has not abated to date. The 1973 strikes acted like a spark. They shattered the facade of social peace imposed through decapitating the democratic legal black opposition to apartheid. In Durban 165,000 workers struck and in the following year the explosion became truly national when strikes broke out in the Orange Free State, Transvaal, Natal, and the Cape. Out of the conflagration of this spontaneous combustion new democratic unions sprang forth fighting to break the black proletariat from the shackles of white trade unionism and subordination to the white labour aristocracy.

These democratic unions have proved the dynamic behind the meteoric growth of trade unionisation in South Africa. Membership rose to 974,970 in 1980, an increase of 261,836 in five years. And three years later this figure had increased by 58% to well over one and a half million. Of these only 38.8% are now in the established racist, white led unions which have inexorably declined as their black members turn to the democratic unions (which have gone from only having 66,000 affiliates in 1974). Now, because of proletarianisation and the rise of the new unions, African workers form the largest group of organised workers.

Today it is thought that around 43% of all trade unionists are African compared with 33.3% who are white and 22% who are Coloured or Asian. And of course it must be

remembered that this still represents the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the potential of unionisation amongst Africans. With only 15% of them organised there are 4.5 million more to be recruited.

Naturally enough the democratic unions have been propelled against the apartheid system and the burden of national oppression. The obscenities of institutionalised racism allows no fence sitting. So even those union leaders committed to narrow trade unionism have been forced on more than one occasion to take up the cudgels against apartheid. As a result, many of the democratic unions have taken up questions that go beyond the confines of workplace issues. The rise of the democratic unions is therefore a tremendous step forward for the black working class in as much as they mark the transition from black subservience and disorganisation to the rudiments of class organisation after the defeats of the 1960s.

Unavoidably out of this trade union milieu have come various brands of economism and even the mooting of the suggestion that the trade unions should set up a 'workers' party'. The ideologues of such ideas have been enthusiastically greeted in Britain by the likes of *Socialist Organiser*, *Workers' Power*, and other Labourites because of their hatred of the world communist movement. Like the economic theoreticians in Britain their parallels in South Africa of course do their best to belittle or ignore the South African Communist Party, the ANC, and the liberation struggle. Instead of confronting the necessity of supporting the liberation movement and drawing from the rich theoretical and political heritage provided by the SACP and its programme they have, like the innocents they are, picked up all manner of petty bourgeois radical nonsense as well as workerist arrogance.

Because of this the SACP has rightly considered it vital to publish considerable material going over the lessons of Lenin's struggle against economism and the need to come to grips with building the SACP as a guarantee that the working class can go from being a class in itself, as to a large degree it still is, to the point where it becomes a class for itself.

Only by making this transition can the working class achieve true political independence and take the leadership of all oppressed classes and strata in the struggle to overthrow apartheid. Without a Marxist-Leninist party such a perspective is not only impossible but it is inevitable that the struggle of the working class will at worst simply remain at an economic level or at best it will see the revolution against apartheid stop half way and the chains of white racism will be exchanged for the chains of a black bourgeoisie. But more of this anon.

6. Problems come home

For white South Africa the 1960s were a golden age. Foreign capital was flowing in, producing growth rates of around 10% per annum. The challenge from the blacks had been effectively crushed: those who had abandoned peaceful struggles for the gun were under lock and key on Robben Island; and around South Africa there was a cordon of white colonial regimes keeping the danger of "Marxist" revolution at a safe distance.

But with every year that passed during the subsequent decade the gold bit by bit rusted and turned to dross. The feelings of strength gave way to the psychology of the laager, and the forces of revolution rose again like Antaeus having been given new sustenance and vigour by the ever present burning anger of the masses. All around the South African whites the spectre of "communism" took solid form and undermined what had seemed so safe and destined to last for ever.

Revolution far away in Europe catapulted guerrilla forces to power in what had been the anti-communist buffer zone. In the place of friendly Portuguese colonial administrators in Maputo and Luanda, South Africa now confronted what it regarded as little less than agents of Moscow and the devil combined. The wake of this overturn saw the position of Ian Smith's regime rapidly deteriorate until only US and British diplomatic intervention could save the day for a compromise deal. The situation in Namibia likewise swung against South Africa as the forces of SWAPO found sustenance across the border in Angola and stepped up their armed struggle.

Internal developments compounded the

problems facing South Africa. Not only had the upsurge of black working class militancy rocked the apartheid edifice, but reflecting this and the dramatic changes in the south of the continent with the collapse of the Portuguese empire, protests by black school students in Soweto quickly escalated into what can only be described as an uprising.

In spite of brutal police repression the Soweto struggle against the imposition of Afrikaans in schools broadened out in next to no time to encompass a general fight against apartheid itself. Hundreds of thousands of workers struck in solidarity with the school students as blacks across the country gained new confidence in their power. The explosion in Soweto set in motion a mass movement which has drawn in the majority of the black population.

It has seen political strikes involving tens of thousands of workers, protests such as the boycott of the Republic Day festival organised by the government to mark 20 years of the white republic, and the emergence of a whole array of organisations based on the communities, culminating in the formation of the UDF and the successful boycott of the sham elections to the tricameral parliament by Coloureds and Asians and the boycott by Africans of the local council elections.

These heady developments have created a popular sea in which the revolutionary forces can swim. On the armed front large numbers of youth radicalised by the heroic Soweto uprising, inspired by the example of the MPLA and Frelimo, made their way out of the country in order to join the ranks of the ANC. With this influx of enthusiastic recruits and the increasing activity of the masses Umkhonto we Sizwe has been able to increase the number and effectiveness of its armed actions.

These problems confronting South Africa could have been possibly contained with the time honoured methods of the rhino whip, shootings, and mass arrests. But rising militancy of the black population coincided and was fired by an organic crisis in the apartheid system itself. In part this crisis was paradoxically as a result of the very success of apartheid itself: its ability to super-exploit the black working class and attract foreign capital. As well as this paradoxical aspect South Africa has suffered the direct consequences of a general stagnation of the world capitalist system and its growing instability. These factors have exacerbated the political unrest in the country which in turn has exacerbated the economic problems going to make South Africa a mass of contradictions, all adding up to a weak-link in the imperialist chain.

Throughout the 1970s the country was experiencing growing economic difficulties. This saw growth rates slump from near 10% in 1970 to only 1.4% in 1976 and less than 1% by 1982. Not only that, but inflation soared as the government ran up huge budget deficits and the country suffered a persistent balance of payments deficit as the regime attempted to develop strategically important areas of the economy as well as buoy it up in general through the development of state monopoly capitalism. Faced with galloping inflation (running at 16.5% in 1982) blacks found that obtaining basic necessities such as meat, bread, milk, rent, fuel, and transport became ever more difficult, not least because this was a time of growing mass unemployment. (This stood at 3 million by the early 1980s or around 20% of the economically active black workforce.) With no social security system for blacks the standard of living of the black population as a whole has declined, leading to pauperisation in the 'homelands'. Those in work had to engage in bitter struggle to keep their wages up with the rise in prices. Despite this real wages for Africans "fell by 1.5%" (*Financial Times* September 4 1985) in the first 3 months of 1985, showing that there is both a relative (i.e. in relation to productivity) fall in the conditions of the masses and an absolute deterioration.

These problems to a degree are symptoms of the wider problems of the world capitalist economy, but South Africa experiences the stagnation of the world capitalist economy as we indicated in a paradoxical fashion.

South Africa's rise as a junior imperialist power was possible because of a number of different factors: the mineral wealth below the soil, cheap and easily exploitable labour, and the openness of the capitalist world economy after World War II. With a steady inflow of foreign capital, the active collaboration of the white working class,

and the blacks beaten into submission, their movement into urban areas regulated and controlled, their leaders imprisoned, the South African economy boomed. Even when the world capitalist economy began to stagnate in the late 1960s and early 1970s and then go into a sharp economic downturn beginning in 1973 because so much of its wealth was derived from the sale of gold, the time honoured hedge against bad times, South Africa managed to ride the recession without coming unstuck.

Of course when the price of gold did inevitably fall with the strengthening of the dollar South Africa came in for trouble. This coincided with the growth of political instability and the coming home of inherent limitations within the apartheid system itself. This was not just an unfortunate coincidence for South Africa's rulers but a direct result of the apartheid system itself, rooted as it is in the national oppression of the blacks and their super-exploitation.

With declining rates of profit becoming an increasing problem in the major imperialist powers it was inevitable that the transnationals would look to areas in the world where greater profits could be obtained. South Africa was a natural outlet for surplus capital. It offered, as we have seen, very high rates of profit, a seemingly unassailable political system (certainly compared with other countries with such high rates of return), and a government committed to an open economy which would allow profits to be repatriated. During the 1970s capital flowed in eager to exploit the advantages offered by the apartheid system.

But there were flaws. Apartheid rested on an 'historic compromise' with the white working class which gave it wages at least four times higher than blacks and a monopoly of the skilled jobs as well as the brutal oppression of the overwhelming majority.

Now, in the 1930s whites were easily able to fill all the skilled jobs. The reservation system did of course result in higher wages but this could be afforded because of the linked suppression of black wages. With the influx of foreign capital in the form of direct investments and the shift of production to areas like motor vehicles, electronics, computers, and building construction the pool of skilled labour soon dried up while because of capital replacing living labour the number of unemployed shot up.

In other countries with a huge reserve army of labour training skilled labour would have proved to be little problem but in South Africa there was the apartheid system with all its rigidities, job reservation, and sub-standard 'Bantu' education.

7. Revolution

We can sum up these problems facing the apartheid regime in one sentence. There is a revolutionary situation in South Africa. At root, as we have shown, this is a result of the inability of the system to gain any form of meaningful consent from the majority of the population combined with severe economic problems which have already led to the country defaulting on its international debts. Interlaced with this has flowed an unfolding process of unrest, with mass political strikes and demonstrations, revolts with street barricades, the execution of collaborators, and the use of molotov cocktails: the beginning of revolution. So undoubtedly if we take Lenin's famous pinpointing of the essential symptoms showing the existence of a revolutionary situation there can be no doubt about the fact the last two of the three are fulfilled in South Africa today.

Lenin described a revolutionary situation as being

"(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peacetime', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the

* According to figures taken from *The African Communist*, output per man employed in manufacture increased by nearly 260% between 1951 and 1970, and 45% between 1970 and 1979. Using the same source it is clear that the rate of exploitation has gone up broadly in line with these figures (No. 101 second quarter 1985).

circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action." (CW Vol. 21 pp. 213-4)

While we have already produced ample evidence to show how the situation in South Africa has conformed to Lenin's second and third major symptoms since the Soweto uprising in 1976, what of the first and perhaps key symptom? Well, according to the statement of the South African Communist Party issued after its 6th Congress "The revolutionary situation in South Africa is maturing," not only do "growing numbers among the exploited classes and the oppressed fully realise that revolution is necessary" but "increasingly, the ruling class acts in a way which shows that it cannot rule in the old way." (*African Communist* No 101 second quarter 1985)

What the SACP comrades are referring to are the attempts by the Botha government to manage the crisis by restructuring apartheid. This involves more than junking 'petty apartheid'. Confronted with a maturing revolutionary situation the ruling class has developed what it calls a "total strategy". This was first outlined in a White Paper by PW Botha when he was Defence Minister. He defined it as a "comprehensive plan to utilise all the means available to a state according to an integrated pattern in order to achieve the national aims."

The "national aims" have been variously described as "saving the nation", "stopping communism", and withstanding "challenges to our territorial integrity and political and socio-economic order as well as to exert pressure on other, mostly weaker states, to make their behaviour consonant with our interests."

Under the umbrella of the 'adapt or die' "total strategy" the Botha government has carried out some far reaching reforms of apartheid in order to save apartheid. 'Independent' black states were created, job reservation went, along with the outlawing of the democratic trade unions, the prohibitions on inter-racial sexual intercourse, and the smothering curbs on black businesses. And in an effort to give employed urban blacks a stake in the system they were granted the right to own 99 year leases and elect local councils. With the same reasoning Botha sought to extend the system's popular base by incorporating the country's 2.5 million Coloureds and 0.8 million Asians into a block with the 4.5 million whites against the 20 million plus Africans. By introducing a tricameral parliament, with a multi-racial (though white dominated) cabinet, it was hoped to wean the Coloured and Asian masses away from a close identification with the African population and the cause of revolution. As we know these sops far from satisfying the black masses infuriated them and provided a fissure through which their "discontent and indignation" could "burst forth". What is more although Botha managed to win considerable support for his "total strategy" from the English speaking whites the ending of job reservation and other such moves were seen as a slippery slope by the ultra-right in the Nationalist Party. This has resulted in deep divisions in Afrikanerdom and the defection of many Afrikaner voters to the breakaway Conservative Party of Dr Andries Treurnicht.

With the black masses pushing with increasing determination and audacity for change, Botha has also been presented with strong arguments from foreign and local monopoly capital advocating even more deep going reforms leading to "power sharing" and even talks with the ANC. While these divergent pressures have created a political crisis for the ruling class they are united on the need to preserve white privileges and safeguard the interests of big business. As a result, while there have been stormy debates about the superstructure of the apartheid system all sections of the ruling class recognise the danger of revolution and the necessity of defeating it. Because of this, although there have been a few pious voices raised in concern about the "degree of force" used against black demonstrators not even the Progressive Federal Party, the liberal opposition in parliament, has gone as far as to suggest a straightforward one person one vote system of bourgeois democracy, let alone the legitimacy of overthrowing the government.

What this means is that the liberal bourgeoisie is just as frightened of revolution as the most rabid member of the

Broederbond. In essence what divides the *verligte* and *verkrampte*, the reformist from the reactionary, the liberal white English speaking professional in the Cape from the Afrikaans speaking white farmer in the Transvaal, is *how* to defeat the revolution.

At present Botha's "total strategy" plies an uneasy course between reform and naked repression with reform meant to be taking first place. But in practice it has proved to be the other way round. Indeed there can be no doubt that force and enhancing the power of the armed forces are an integral component of "total strategy" balancing the reforms. To contain the rural human dumping grounds euphemistically called "homelands", to crush urban uprisings and strikes, as well as to combat the guerrillas of Umkhonto we Sizwe and impose South Africa's hegemony over the whole of the South of the continent, militarisation proceeds apace.

From 1961 to 1981 military expenditure increased at the staggering rate from R72 million to R3,000 million (in 1982 this went up by 8% and in 1983 by a further 15.9%). Total manpower in the armed forces went up in the same 1961-81 period by 486,000 from 106,000 to 592,000; at the same time a nuclear capacity has been achieved, and an independent arms industry created. Armed might has already been used against Angola when SADF forces swept into the southern part of the country in the largest military operation ever conducted in southern Africa; and Namibia is occupied with around 100,000 SADF personnel permanently stationed there.

The SADF has in particular concentrated on building up special anti-guerrilla forces such as the Reconnaissance Commandos, 44 Parachute Brigade, and 32 Battalion. These forces have been deployed not only in Namibia and South Africa itself but have penetrated deep into Angolan territory (including the oil installations at Cabinda), while in Zimbabwe and Mozambique ANC activists have been assassinated. South Africa has also sponsored and trained anti-government rebels from the MRN operating against Mozambique, as well as UNITA in Angola and the LLA in Lesotho.

But it is inside South Africa that most of the energy and contingency plans of the SADF is directed. The roles of the police (the SAP) and the army have to all intents and purposes converged. Joint actions and patrols became a standard feature even before the declaration of a state of emergency in many black areas this year.

And as a direct response to the danger of revolution and as a consequence of the growing power of the military/industrial complex the generals of the SADF now play a very important role in government. The State Security Council, consisting of senior military and top ministers, has been transformed into an effective decision making body, "the most important functional element of the ... new executive presidency". Because of this many functions previously the preserve of parliament have been transferred to the NSC. In fact "the planning and implementation of 'total strategy' is the special responsibility of the NSC" (*African Communist* No 94 third quarter 1983).

It is abundantly clear therefore from all this that the ruling class "cannot rule in the old way," that confronted by fundamental economic problems and the dramatic growth of mass activity the apartheid regime has been forced to respond by both conceding reformist sops to the black population and resorting more and more to the mailed fist where the velvet glove has not done the job, and in turn when this has failed yet more reforms. In other words a classic revolutionary situation exists in South Africa today.

Now, although a revolutionary situation has existed since 1976, this situation must sooner or later be resolved one way or another. The masses can successfully carry out a revolution that will smash the existing state (the problems of doing this will be discussed in the next section) or the ruling class will negatively resolve the revolutionary situation through the imposition of fascism.

There are of course some looking at South Africa today with all its state racist ideology, pass laws, mass arrests, detentions, and outlawing of popular organisations as fascist already. So what is fascism? In essence fascism is not racism, nor authoritarianism, or even the use of force; no, fascism is counterrevolution and the

imposition of a monolithic regime based on naked terror.

In South Africa not only are there various white opposition parties but a host of black organisations opposed to the government in particular and apartheid in general. True, their operations are severely restricted and many of their leaders are now under detention, but there can be no denying the existence of democratic trade unions, black consciousness organisations, and alliances like the UDF and the National Forum. What is more, these organisations operate (and are still at the time of writing *allowed* to operate) *within* the law as it exists.

This is not to deny the oppressive character of the Botha government or the obscenity of apartheid. But to simply brand it as fascist because of its growing authoritarianism and militarism would be a mistake in terms of theory and, leading from this, there flows an underestimation of the growing danger of real fascism coming from either the army or an ultra-right party like the Conservative Party or the HNP. And who can doubt that with the spiral into social anarchy in South Africa that an army take-over to 'restore order' would have mass support from the country's whites or that South Africa could even produce a mass Nazi-type movement?

If the masses are not for one reason or another strong enough to resolve the present crisis positively by overthrowing the government through revolution the pressure on the ruling class to resolve the crisis negatively through a fascist solution will become immense. While the totalitarian lawlessness of fascism would carry dangers for the ruling class (after all, the sword of lawlessness cuts both ways) it could drown the revolutionary movement in a sea of its own blood. Given a choice of revolution or fascist counterrevolution the heads of big business who have recently made a great song and dance calling for liberal reforms, and have even met ANC representatives in Lusaka, would unhesitatingly choose the latter.

To save their system they would not only be prepared to see millions of blacks carpet bombed, napalmed, or poisoned with chemical weapons, but have their own political rights curbed, their own parties banned, and even some of their own number suffer under the arbitrary whip of counterrevolution. Fascism would therefore not only use terror against the masses but in order to resolve the crisis inside the ruling class a monolithic system would be imposed on the ruling class by the most reactionary section of the ruling class in order to save the system itself for the ruling class as a whole. Although this is not the situation today, the rapidly deteriorating fortunes of the Botha regime places such a possibility on the agenda for the ruling class and only revolution can remove this possibility.

8. The subjective factor

Having discussed the existence of a revolutionary situation in South Africa and the danger of fascism in some detail we must now turn to the subjective factor for this is now the key question and the nature of the revolution itself. When we talk about the subjective factor what we mean is firstly the level of consciousness of the masses.

Well, there can be little doubt that the masses in South Africa are determined to make a revolution. They detest the apartheid regime, they are prepared to die to see it smashed.

Who can forget the BBC transmission of Bishop Tutu pleading to one of the vast funeral demonstrations for an end to violence and the rhythmic chanting in the background from the mourners "We want AK 47s," "We want bazookas". Indeed in the absence of AK 47s and bazookas the willingness of militant youth to use rocks and molotov cocktails in their place testifies to a yearning to fight. And far from such heroism being isolated to one or two areas, what we see today is a nationwide crisis, which has seen black townships become no-go areas, apartheid become unmanageable, and government spies and stooges getting their just deserts in a wave of revolutionary terror.

That such developments have gone hand-in-hand with the flowering of revolutionary consciousness cannot be doubted. The coffins of those murdered by the racist police and army are invariably draped with the black, green, and gold flag of the ANC and

at some of the militant funeral demonstrations the ANC flag has flown side-by-side with that of the SACP. Even semi-official opinion surveys have revealed soaring support for the ANC amongst blacks and the massive popularity of Nelson Mandela. All going to show that the masses are looking for leadership from the forces of revolution and have less and less faith in the likes of Tutu and his pacifist message. They now understand that as the apartheid regime will not listen to the voice of reason it will have to hear the atonal chorus of rat-tat-tatting AK 47s and the swooshing thunder of bazookas.

This brings us to the second aspect of the subjective factor, the organisation of the masses as a whole and the organisation of the vanguard and its policy. Well, we have dealt with the rise of the democratic trade unions and mentioned in passing the existence of umbrella organisations like the UDF. They certainly point to an increasing level of organisation of the masses, in particular of the black proletariat. Of course with the banning of the SACP and the ANC, the arrest of many progressive leaders, and the innumerable repressive laws, a vacuum has been created which has for the moment at least been filled by the church and its Father Gapon-like big wigs. This to a degree reflects backward hangovers in the consciousness of the masses but it also perhaps more importantly shows that at present the revolution in South Africa is at a spontaneous stage.

This can only be overcome, and overcome it must be if the revolution is to have a successful outcome, if the working class vanguard works in a correct way. Since 1921 the working class vanguard in South Africa has been what is now the South African Communist Party. It is therefore essential to look at its work, positions, and perspectives.

For when the objective conditions for revolution are ripe and the masses are looking to revolution the role of the Party becomes crucial. It can truly be said that on its ability to lead the masses, its resourcefulness, and its tactical and strategic positions rests the fate of the revolution. Only the Party can give the masses' revolutionary consciousness a truly socialist content, direct their spontaneous anger at the enemy's weak points, split sections of the white working class away from apartheid, and make detailed preparations for the 'final battle'. No matter how favourable the objective conditions and the subjective outlook of the masses may be, without a Party acting as a 'general staff' the revolution will either stop half way or end in disaster and the imposition of fascism.

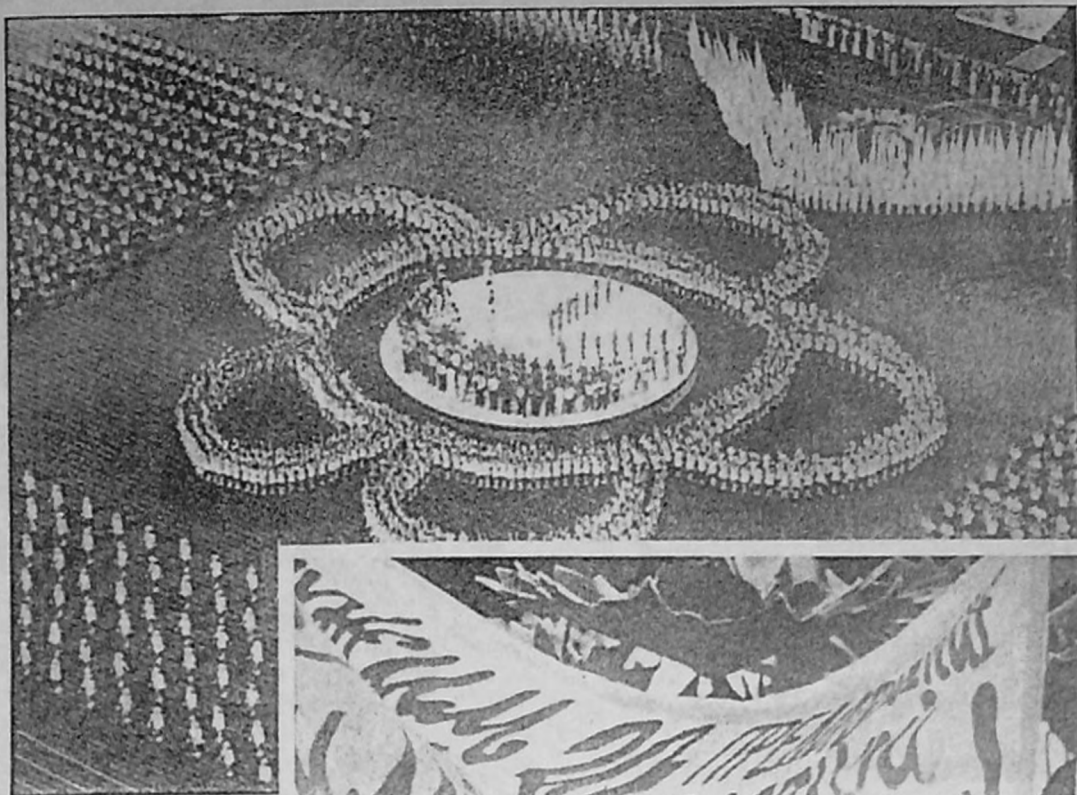
From their publications we can see that SACP comrades are aware of many such problems and dangers that confront the revolution in South Africa. In the latest *African Communist* comrade Mzala warns of the opportunists who are "prepared to make all manner of compromise in order to get into Botha's parliament," and in calling for nothing short of the revolutionary overthrow of the apartheid regime the comrade points out that:

"The class conscious workers will participate in a democratic revolution without forgetting their ultimate aim of building socialism. By coming into an alliance with the other classes of the oppressed nation, the working class does not necessarily trust these allies will guarantee the continuation of the revolution from national democracy to socialism. Its attitude to the new democratic state is not only that it should implement the democratic programme, but that it should be an effective instrument to continue the revolution. To be able to continue this revolution the proletariat must not only play the leading role but must also exercise pressure both within the government and outside it" (No 102, third quarter 1985)

We are confident that if our SACP comrades consolidate their unity around Leninist ideas and organisational principles and follow the same logic as Lenin and the Bolshevik Party did between 1905 and October 1917 they will not only see their democratic revolution but see this revolution uninterrupted go over to socialist tasks. The SACP, the importance of linking democracy and socialism and infusing the one with the other, is the subject of Section II, along with the general lessons communists throughout the world should take from South Africa and the problems of building solidarity with the struggle to overthrow apartheid.

Jack Conrad

Back in the USSR



The 12th World Youth Festival in Moscow. A personal view of Moscow, the Festival, Soviet youth, pop music, and vodka.

EVERY WORLD YOUTH Festival since the year dot (i.e. 1947) has been damned by the capitalist class internationally as another 'Red Plot', and praised to the skies by the world communist movement with delirious cries that *this* was the festival that heralded the dawn of a new era of peace, happiness, endless sunny days, pretty flowers everywhere, etc. This year's in Moscow was no exception.

And whilst it was great fun, with feelings of international solidarity oozing from every pore of all concerned, the politics of the Festival was kept as inoffensive as possible without totally abandoning the theme of anti-imperialism. Imperialism was painted as something unpleasant and nasty, accusing fingers were pointed at Reagan, Thatcher, Botha, etc., and appeals made for an end to war and oppression. Yes, lovely I'm sure. Laudable sentiments, but surely communists should have been providing Marxist answers on how to attain this instead of the all too frequent pacifist proclamation from many CPers, noticeably the British, both Euro and centrist. Mind you, at least the centrists could retain their 'pro-Sovietism', however sickly-sweet, for more than five minutes after setting foot on Gatwick tarmac, which seemed too much to ask from our hypocritical Euros. (Are you listening, Brian Jones?)

It would be unforgivable to lump all participants with those mentioned above. The struggle, passion, and sincerity of the Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, South Africans, and others are intense and undeniable.

On the other side of the coin one cannot help feeling somewhat bemused by the British YCL's definition of 'progressive youth', which seems to include both the Young Conservatives and Young Liberals, two groups invited by the British Preparations Committee under YCL prompting.

Of course, in a World Youth Festival in Moscow the political contributions were of great significance. The Soviets are now commemorating the 40th anniversary of the defeat of fascism, something of great importance to all Soviets, young and old. Twenty million martyrs to the cause of socialism and the working class are not lightly forgotten. The Soviets' sincerity in their appeals for peace on this anniversary made a profound impression on the Festival.

Comrades from the Komsomol, the Soviet YCL, expressed their solidarity with Irish Republicanism by their assistance to Sinn Fein delegates after delegates from Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, and the pro-imperialist Workers' Party insisted

that a photographic exhibition displayed by Sinn Fein, 'Belfast Exposed', in the delegates' hostel be removed. The Komsomol, on being informed of this, offered to display the exhibition in the Komsomol HQ where many more people would be able to see it than would have been otherwise possible.

Soviet solidarity was also extended to a group of young British miners at the festival, guests of Soviet miners.

Even if consisting of too many rallies and too few discussions, where such discussions did take place (and they were not infrequent, both inside and out of the conference halls) they proved productive. The Festival is made by its participants, hence this writer's somewhat less than enthusiastic welcoming of elements which are thoroughly reactionary, Broad Democratic Alliance or not.

Those of us who could tear ourselves away from the Festival for some time were well rewarded. Moscow is a place of no small interest, especially during Festival week. The only problem in moving from point A to point B was being waylaid by hordes of Muscovites who would invariably converge on anybody even suspected of being a foreign Festival participant and bombard them with questions, badges, and postcards. On 'escape' from these enthusiastic crowds and arrival at the aforementioned point B it always proved worth a good scout round. If point B was anywhere near worth its five kopek Metro ride it had to have a multitude of busts, statues, and paintings of the revolution. The museums of the revolution acted like magnets for eager young revolutionaries. Funny places. Remember all the photos you hear about with many old favourites like Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Bukharin deleted; they're all there (or rather, they're not). It must be some achievement to graphically describe the formation of the Red Army and not mention Leon Trotsky once, but they've done it. It is almost convincing. The early copies of *Iskra* are all there, too; and believe you me, Tony, they are hardly comparable to the *Morning Star*.

You learn far more from talking to Soviet youth than all the museums, monuments, and galleries together. Initially our first personal contacts with Soviet youth consisted of pre-arranged socials, with too few interpreters, and consequently too many embarrassed silences. But once the ice was broken they showed no reluctance to talk and socialise; and, brother, do the Soviets know how to socialise, invariably with copious amounts of alcohol. In the USSR now there is a complete ban on drinking in public; a most unpopular law. Still, most drinking

is done in small groups in people's houses, in Moscow almost entirely flats; in general, far better than those slapped up for British workers, and much cheaper (about 3% of a worker's income is spent on rent).

Soviet youth are generally far more politically conscious than here. Visitors were quizzed about their opinions on Afghanistan, Marxism, Trotskyism, revolution in the West, and so on and so forth.

Since all young men in the USSR must do military service, Afghanistan is a subject of burning importance to Soviet youth. The war against the counterrevolutionary Mujahadeen is undoubtedly supported, but with a certain air of reluctance, mainly because no-one wants to end up on the wrong end of a bayonet and also many soldiers who fought there were disturbed by the hostility from many of the Afghan peasants. Overall they feel that it is a dirty but necessary war.

They have little confidence in revolution in the West, but will concede (formally) if pressed that this attitude is decidedly unMarxist.

Whereas Afghanistan proved surprisingly easy to talk about, one decidedly dodgy subject was inner-Party democracy in the CPSU. I asked what sort of debates they had in the Party. They seemed genuinely surprised at the question; "Debates? We have no debates, we have Lenin's programme." I refrained from commenting on the 1960 "Lenin's programme". But I did draw their attention to the fact that under Lenin inner-Party debate had flourished. "Ah," said they, "but that was a long time ago!" Apparently so.

Another no-go area, to a certain extent at least, was that of homosexuality. People got very uncomfortable when the subject of gay oppression reared its ugly head, but would concede that discrimination against someone because of their sexual preference was not strictly in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. But definitely not a popular subject at Soviet parties.

Women's rights are a far less touchy subject. Socially a greater degree of equality exists than in the capitalist countries, and male workers are more aware in this

respect than in the West. Soviet women are still to an extent shackled to the home by the family. Young mothers that I met complained at the lack of kindergartens and such like. These problems are thankfully being confronted by the Soviet state, even if all too slowly for many women.

It seems in the USSR, like everywhere else under the sun, the police are not the most popular of people. Less so those anti-heroes of all the best spy stories, the KGB. The Soviets I met with expected a little chat with the KGB after we left. This as far as they were concerned was a pain in the arse, a wasted hour, no more. I think we can safely dismiss stories of electrodes, hot needles, and saltmines.

Politically the Soviets are intrigued by Britain. They are amused by our plethora of Trotskyite sects. Trotsky himself provokes interest as his works are unavailable in the USSR. (The old 'forbidden fruit' syndrome.) They have also got the idea from the *Morning Star* that the miners won the Great Strike. Whoops!

British and American music is really big over in the USSR, and listening to some of the Soviet bands over there I cannot say that I am surprised. We were quizzed for hours on end about Western music. Most of this is brought in on the black market for astronomical prices. There does tend to be a fetishism of Western imports, which is unfortunate. Soviet culture is very rich, and it is rumoured that life is possible without Levis.

That which made the biggest impression on me and many others was from a brief stay in Leningrad. The mass war graves of those who died in the defence of Leningrad in 1942-43, and the memorial erected in honour of them were intensely moving. This memorial really meant something: a sincere, burning desire by the Soviet state and people for peace. The Festival, for all its shortcomings, was genuinely geared to that end. Our task is to achieve that peace the only way it can be attained: by fighting for world socialism. Let us restore the faith of Soviet youth in world revolution.

John Bell

and...

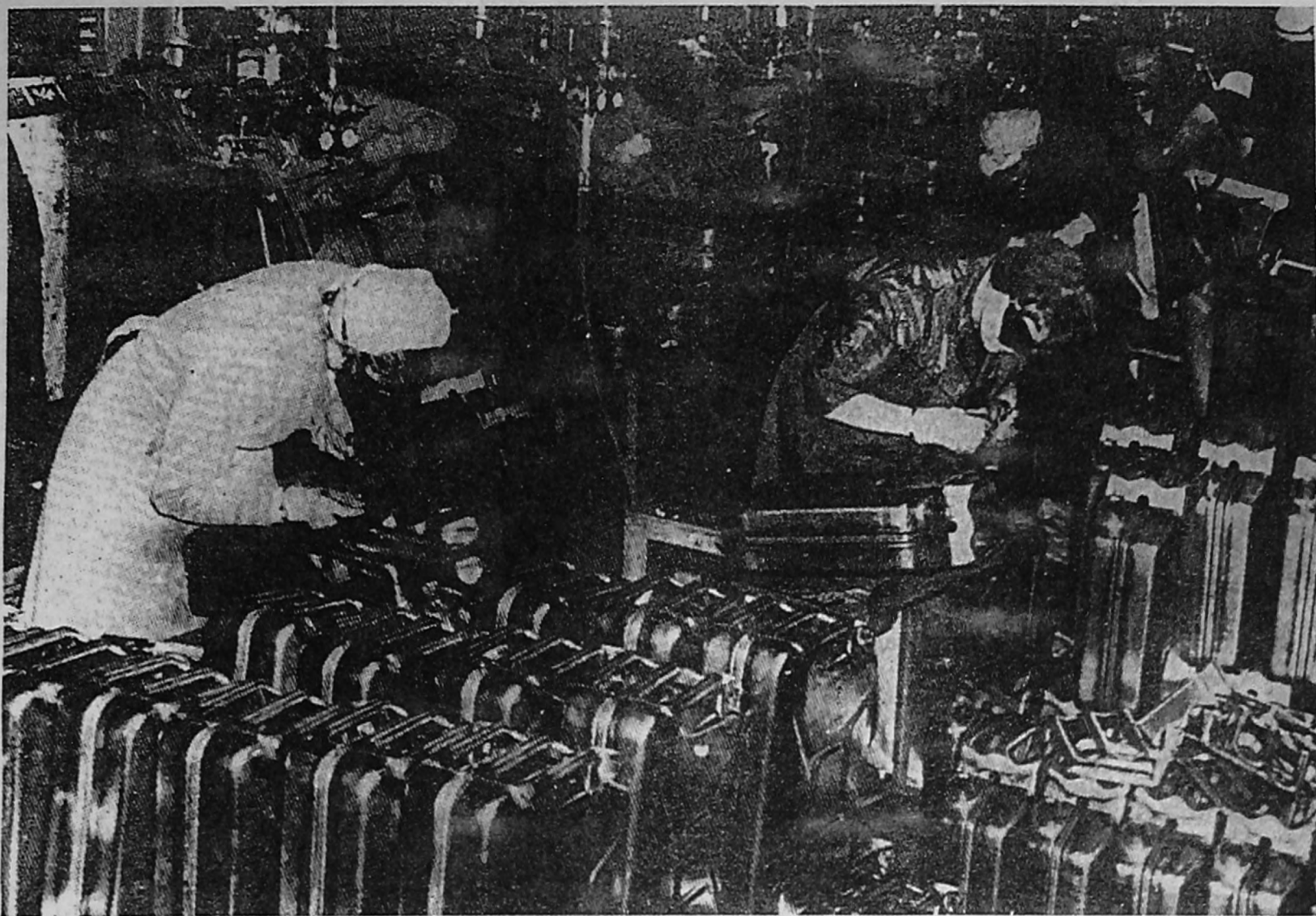
Having miserably failed to reverse its decline during the miners' strike, the SWP is desperate to get hold of disillusioned Militant supporters. No shame in that, you may think, except the SWP is concealing its membership raid under the guise of forming a "united organisation" with Militant outside the Labour Party. What the principled basis for this organisation is one can only imagine. The SWP brands the Soviet Union "state capitalist". Militant sticks to traditional Trotskyism and the theory of the "degenerate workers' state". And if this were not enough, Militant refuses to demand that British troops leave the Six Counties, believes that "an entirely peaceful transformation is possible in Britain", and of course is totally orientated to a "Labour victory at the next election". No wonder the SWP's Socialist Worker Review back in June declared that Militant was part of an "attempt to dupe workers and spread illusions about the parliamentary road to socialism".

So the 'paperites' won and the 'magities' lost. The new Party weekly is to be a paper and not a carbon copy of *Marxism Today*. The voting line up on the Executive Committee was predictable. Comrades around General Secretary comrade Gordon McLennan like Dave Priscott wanted a paper, those close to comrade Martin Jacques certainly did not want a weekly competitor to *Marxism Today*, and as a result the 'magities' found themselves isolated despite the fact that at a grassroots level Eurocommunists had been insistently arguing for a magazine format.

The reason for this is simple and came out very clearly in the letters page of *Focus*. Most Euros can think of better things to do on a Saturday other than competing with *Socialist Worker* and *Militant*. Not only that, but the mere thought of having to actually sell a publication is distasteful to these comrades. Far better, they reason, for *WH Smith's* to do the job for them.

According to the September edition of the Trotskyite *Workers Power* the call by the ANC and South African Communist Party to "make South Africa 'ungovernable'" and for "people's committees" and "people's power" are "abstract". In place of such "abstract" calls *Workers Power* poses the concrete (sic) "independent workers' party" based on the democratic trade unions (i.e. a South African Labour Party).

Whatever disagreement The New Worker may have with some of the tactics of the 'Militant Tendency' in Liverpool it's clear that the real 'bankruptcy' and 'wilful misconduct' is that of the Tory government" (September 20 1985). Does this rather grudging support for the Militant dominated council mean that the NCP no longer fulsomely backs moves by the Labour Party right-wing to witchhunt Militant including cllr Derek Hatton out of the party?



THERE IS an argument increasingly prevalent among feminists (and not least among those in our own Party) which puts forward the idea that benefits and opportunities have arisen for women out of Britain's current crisis. The argument is based on the fact that, relatively speaking, women's employment chances have increased during the period.

Anne Phillips, a Labour Party feminist with *Marxism Today* sympathies, puts it thus:

"Men have been thrown out of the older industries like coal, steel, and shipbuilding. Women have been brought into the expanding service sector and the new industries in electronics and computers. It is a time of crisis, when the industries that used to provide men with their strength are threatened, and the jobs they used to claim as their own are destroyed ... Male dominance has too long a history for easy optimism, but with everything in turmoil, new hopes arise ... The old ways are under threat. Instead of rallying to their defence we should set new terms for a better world." (*Hidden Hands, Arguments for Socialism* series, Pluto Press 1983 pp. 109 — 111.)

It is this type of argument that led to the Young Communist League adopting a policy which rejects the Marxist concept of women representing a reserve army of labour. To justify their rejection of an "analysis of women's oppression that seeks to reduce it to merely a (so-called) class issue", the policy points to the fact that 43% of all workers are women. The argument then runs:

"... while unemployment has risen among full time workers (male and female), there has been a rise in part time employment to the extent that overall, employment opportunity for women has not declined."

Such conclusions are totally unscientific and in reality only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Many workers and communists will instinctively be hostile to these ideas, but because the whole women's question has been so undervalued by the forces on the left who oppose bourgeois feminism many of those who want to fight it are not adequately equipped to do so, a failing that can lead to frustration at best and succumbing to reactionary ideas at worst. To tackle these feminist theories it is necessary to examine what is the source of women's oppression under capitalism.

The reserve army

According to the YCL the concept of women as a reserve army of labour was OK in Marx's time but is irrelevant now. Let us look at the question scientifically and historically.

From the time when machinery was introduced into production, that is, the early stages of capitalist development, women, and for that matter children, were drawn into production in place of skilled men because the machinery meant less skill and strength were needed. Thus:

"Machinery, by throwing every member of that family onto the labour market spreads the value of the man's labour-power over the whole of his family. It thus depreciates his labour-power. To purchase the labour-power of a family of four workers costs more than it formerly did to purchase the labour-power of the head of the family, but in return four days labour

Calling up the Reserves



takes the place of one and their price falls in proportion to the excess of surplus-labour of the four over the surplus-labour of the one. In order that the family may live four people must now, not only labour, but expand surplus-value for the capitalist." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, 1974, p 373).

In other words, the value of labour power of the working class as a whole depreciated as women and children were brought into the labour market.

The advantages for capitalists were huge: surplus value (i.e. profit) was increased because more workers were exploited but also because the rate of exploitation (ratio of profit to the value of work done) was raised. Thus women were progressively transformed into both domestic and wage slaves with men being reduced to the reserve army of unemployed or lower rates of pay.

However, this stage of capital accumulation came to an end in the advanced capitalist countries as profitability came less to rely on the demographic growth of the working population and more on increasing labour productivity.

As capital accumulation develops increases in labour productivity are expressed by a rise in the organic composition of capital, that is, to increase the productivity of the workforce more capital investment in machinery is needed. This leads to a contradiction for capitalism: as productivity increases relatively fewer workers are exploited by a given amount of capital and a larger cost of machinery but profits arise out of the exploitation of workers alone and the rate of profit is measured over the total capital invested and not just that invested in the labour power.

What this means is that there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. The dilemma facing capitalism is that the expansion of capital is based on increase in productivity, but it is just these increases in productivity which tend to bring about a fall in the rate of profit. The cure is also the disease. The result is capitalist crisis.

One of the most important ways in which capitalism tries to resolve the crisis and restore profitability is to drive wages down below the value of labour power. A major way of achieving this is to increase the reserve army of labour and thus put capitalism in a strong position to drive down wages. Women are the ideal reserve army because of their specific oppression: given their role of domestic slave they comply with capitalism's need for a fluctuating reserve army. Available at home to be drawn to the labour market when necessary and able to be thrown back from whence they came when accumulation stagnates.

In the present crisis as the capitalists desperately attempt to restore profitability they once more need an increase in the reserve army to drive down working class wages. It is for this reason that women have increased their proportion of the labour market after men have been thrown out; it is in the interests of capital to pay wages below the value of labour power.

It is therefore the present deployment of women as a reserve army that the YCL and others use to try and prove that there is no longer such a thing. But the ruling class is perfectly aware of the situation, as the *Financial Times* reported recently:

"Women remain in a position of economic disadvantage to men in the industrialised world and the recession

is increasing the barriers to equality in the labour market, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says in a detailed study on the integration of women into the economy." (July 12 1985)

Female unemployment has increased at a lower rate than male unemployment in recent years but women have been crowded into a narrow range of occupations and into jobs requiring little skill or training, reducing their employment opportunities. What about women's rise in the new industries, in electronics and computers? Again as the OECD reports, women are hugely concentrated in the less skilled jobs, whereas men are concentrated in the higher skilled occupations in the information technology sector which will offer growing job opportunities.

But by far the most important feature of the present position of women vis-à-vis employment is the part time nature of their work.

Part time workers

Both Phillips and the YCL put forward the thesis that even though Britain is in crisis women's work overall is not declining. To reach this conclusion they have to include women's part time work in their figures: Women's work is increasingly taking over from men's work, they state (with some glee), and Phillips even claims "the future is female". Yet around 90% of the growth of female labour since 1983 has been in part time work. Of employed women as a whole 56% are full time and a massive 44% part time. Indeed over 90% of part time workers are women.

Part time work spells higher exploitation. Wages are low: the hourly rate for part time women is around 80% of that of full time women about 60% of full time men's. Many get no breaks and holidays are unusual. Often they get no sick pay or unemployment benefit because they fall below the National Insurance threshold. Most are not protected by guarantees against unfair and summary dismissal and many are not unionised. Even when unionised they do not often have time for union activities and the unions themselves are notoriously slow if not downright obstructive in arranging meetings to help more women attend. All this spells a good deal for capitalism for whom part time women workers also means that there is no necessity for companies or the state to provide nursery facilities.

One of the factors that has seen to it that there has been an expansion in part time work has been the law. Before the implementation of the 1970 Equal Pay Act employers, in order to avoid paying women an equivalent rate to men, either turned full time women into part time workers or replaced full time men with part time women. When part time women have claimed parity with full time men doing the same job the courts have seen fit to rule that shorter hours constitute a material difference and justifies a difference in pay rates.

Despite the low pay rates and poor conditions there are plenty of women prepared to tolerate them. The simple reason for this is that even middle class women no longer work for so-called 'pin money' but their wages are an essential part of the family income. As an average,

women now account for about 25% of family incomes.

Who benefits?

All the evidence points to the fact that not only is it incorrect to state that women are benefitting out of the crisis but such a suggestion is reactionary. Far from the relatively high levels of women's employment proving, as the YCL sneers, that the question is not one of class, they show to any Marxist worth their salt that class is of fundamental importance.

Women are being used as a reserve army at the moment, an army of cheap and unorganised labour, which de facto undermines the organised working class. It also means that working class women are even more exploited than their class brothers. So who benefits? It is certainly not the working class, male or female.

Those on the left who argue that this increase in female labour is the dawn of women's liberation are aiding only the bourgeoisie. Phillips, a well paid Poly lecturer, celebrates the fact that the increase in women workers will mean the death of the organised working class, which to her is a 'male' form of organisation: "Instead of rallying to their defence we should set new terms for a better world."

It is hardly surprising that the feminists shied away from the violence of the pickets of the miners' strike and of Warrington. It wasn't their 'femininity' that shrank from workers violence but their class interests.

Working class women need alliances with their bourgeois sisters like a hole in the head. On the other hand these 'sisters' from the petty bourgeoisie's ranks want to use the power of working class women to achieve their equality, an equality with their class brothers against the working class.

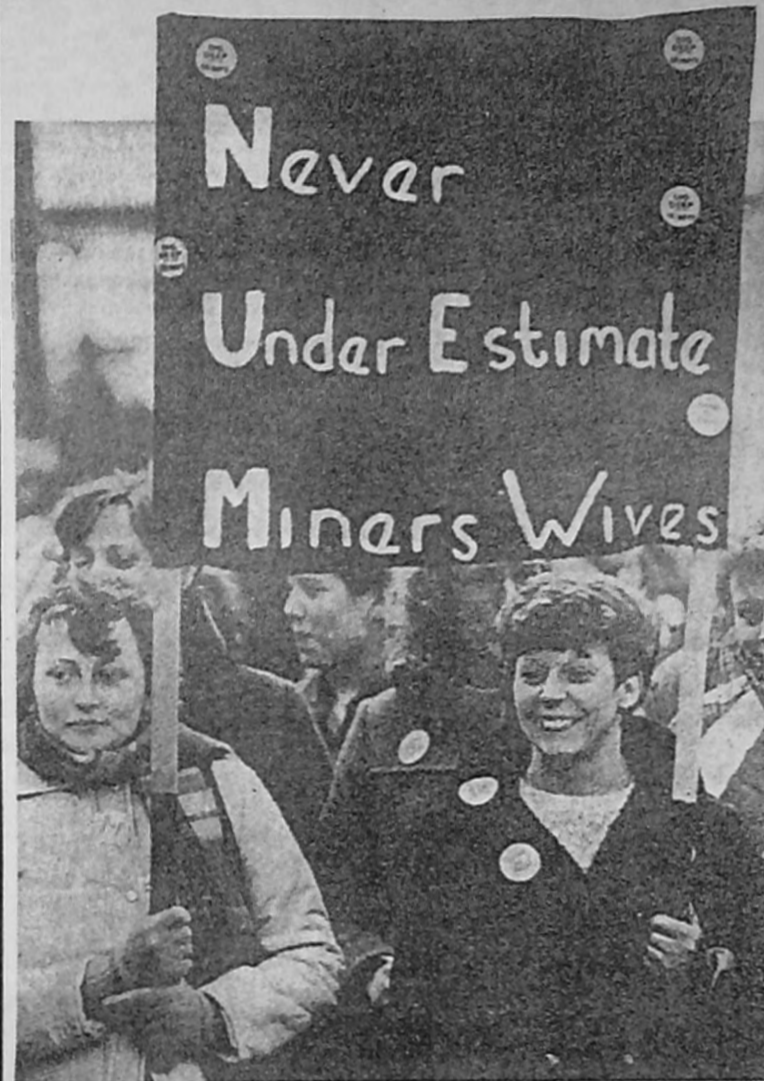
The question that needs to be faced is how to organise working class women against the bosses even though they may not be unionised or for that matter even employed. The answer was glimpsed in the miners' strike when working class women united to fight for themselves and their class.

A working class women's movement is essential precisely because it can organise and educate women in all areas of their existence. Such a movement would present a dynamic and powerful threat to the ruling class, turning against them the very army they so often manipulate and always ruthlessly exploit, an army which the unions have rarely sought to deploy because they have failed to challenge the social existence of women in this society. Working class women have to fight for their rights and working class men must be won to the realisation that the women's fight is their fight; the job of the Communist Party is to lead this struggle.

The ruling class has long been successful in the divide and rule method and the feminist argument is, intentionally or no, part of this process. Women are not in a position of advance at the moment, they are being set up against men in the most cynical way. Arguments to the contrary must be crushed because they only tool up the enemy. The future is no more female than it is male, the future is the working class; it is humanity; it is communism.

Geraldine Duffy

Women Against Pit Closures



THE formation of Women Against Pit Closures, and the fight it showed during the miners' Great Strike, was a real step forward for the workers' movement. The WAPC's first conference did not reflect this. Despite the odds the self-appointed officials won the day.

About 500 women, mostly miners' wives or girlfriends, came to the conference. The majority arrived in an angry mood because the joint planning meeting had ruled that no votes (i.e. no democratic decisions) were to be taken. Right at the start a South Wales delegate, Kath Jones, called for a change in the agenda to allow more discussion, and women from the Midlands called for voting rights.

Ann Lilburn, President of WAPC and chair for the day, ruled against both of them. This led to uproar with women on their feet barracking, shouting "we want a vote" and "we want a conference not a rally". To regain control Lilburn promised that the South Wales motion would be taken after her opening remarks. It was passed by a large majority.

Control was slipping from their hands and so during the break the organising committee, dominated by people like Anne Scargill and Betty Heathfield, called the delegates together to give them a carpeting for having created havoc with their plans, threatening them with "what the press might report". When the conference re-convened the platform informed them that "voting was off".

Many were angry, some heckled, but in the end resignation set in.

The perspective then presented to the conference in the form of draft

proposals and three resolutions was that of a tame, passive "support group". In place of a proper debate and vote on these issues the women were treated to speeches they had heard a dozen times over from Scargill and Heathfield (male versions).

At the end of the divided conference Betty Heathfield encouraged the women to sing "We are women, we are strong". The response was "not euphoric".

Obviously certain aspiring bureaucrats are trying to tame the militancy that WAPC so clearly exuded during the strike. The attempt is to make the campaign into a passive adjunct of the NUM leadership who, let us remember, refused at their conference to give the women associate status. The WAPC conference taught many of the women present that they cannot put their faith in their self-appointed leaders. The urgent need is therefore to work for a second conference that will fight. Pit women are strong but not if they resign themselves to undemocratic leadership of the Betty and Anne variety.

The second conference can and must assert itself against these leaders and institute a recallable leadership that will help take the struggle forward. There are immediate demands to be fought for, not least the continued struggle for affiliate status in the NUM and support for the sacked and jailed men. If all Betty and Anne want to do is organise rallies then they should be replaced with militant pit women who will fight back now or this proud movement will end up a toothless annual rally.

Joanna Leven

State and disillusion

Vittorio Vidali *Diary of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, The Journeyman Press, London 1984. pp. 192 £4.95.*

"Tiberius, one of the greatest and most maligned of the Roman emperors, had as his implacable accuser Cornelius Tacitus, the greatest historian of the time. Stalin, who was less fortunate, had Nikita Khrushchov." (Concetto Marchesi of the PCI, quoted on p. 117.)

Khrushchov acted out his role of accuser at the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Vidali's *Diary* is valuable not only as an account of Khrushchov's disavowal of his former mentor, but also because Vidali looks deeper than the superficial aspects of the Congress.

In fact it is remarkable how little was said of Stalin until the last, closed session. Before then his name was never mentioned openly; references were only made to a "certain person" and the growth of the "cult of the individual". But as Vidali points out, "Are those who are speaking about that 'certain person' completely free from responsibility? I believe there are a thousand reasons for believing they are responsible, that they are actually accomplices, and that furthermore there is nothing to justify them." Those Central Committee members who attacked the 'personality cult' were the very same who assisted in its creation. They scaled the heights of the CPSU hierarchy by godbuilding, that same deification which they now so glibly and hypocritically renounced. Those leaders at the time of the purges who 'rehabilitated' many of its victims, both living and dead, prior to Stalin's death (Vidali points out) never raised a squeak against the purges; in fact in many cases they were active participants in the removal of their comrades as a means to promotion through the ranks. The 20th Congress contrasts vividly with the previous, and Stalin's last, congress where the 'old man' was praised to the skies by those who such a short time later could not bury him quick enough.

Such controversies, it seems, left the CPSU delegates unperturbed; the same unanimity was shown in the voting of that congress as has become synonymous with CPSU congresses.

The 20th Congress precipitated yet another step rightwards for the world communist movement with the promoting by the CPSU of various national and peaceful roads to socialism, which at that time were being programmed by such parties as the PCI and the CPGB. The CPSU speaker advocating these ideas at the Congress, Al Mikoyan, made no attempt to outline conditions or give examples for such 'peaceful revolutions'.

To complete this position the diminutive offspring of the Comintern, the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), had been quietly dumped. An interesting example of the expendability with which the foreign CPs were regarded is given by Vidali. A rumour circulated through delegates and observers at the Congress to the effect that "Pollitt's Communist Party" was to be liquidated and support given to a "left wing movement headed by Bevan. Poor Pollitt! Only yesterday he was assuring us within 50 years his party would have 50 Members of Parliament. And he wasn't joking." (p. 63) Wait fifty years for 50 CP MPs in a bourgeois parliament; who's laughing? The threatened liquidation never occurred, but that such a proposition could be considered, such a rumour believed by communists speaks volumes. This should not be seen as a break with the past though but rather a continuation down the same road. After all, was it not under Stalin that the world party, the Comintern, was liquidated in a spot of 'horse trading' with the Allies?

Probably the most interesting aspect of the *Diary* is that it represents an important point in the development of the ideology of Eurocommunism. As one of its principal proponents, Vittorio Vidali is a microcosm of that trend. Vidali joined the young CP in 1921, at 21. His early political career was

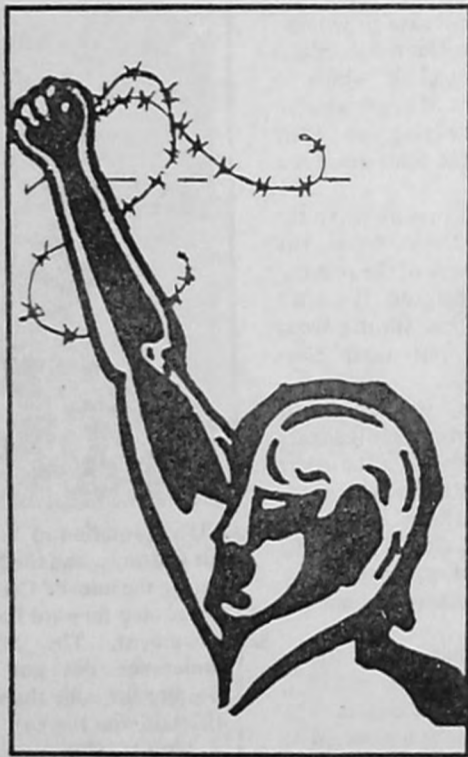
spent skipping from country to country, either as a deportee or to escape arrest for his communist and anti-fascist activities. In the Spanish Civil War he served as a political commissar. But many of his conceptions were challenged by the purges, and the loss of many friends and comrades to them.

The disillusionment in the Stalin myth and therefore with the dominant trend in the world communist movement, centrism, led to a leap rightwards by the PCI, trailblazing for the other future Euro parties. The Italian rightists of the '50s under Togliatti could not be combatted as had been the Italian leftists of the '20s under Bordiga. They could claim, with considerable justifications, to be acting in the traditions of the world communist movement.

The degeneration of revolutionaries like Vittorio Vidali to Eurocommunists scotches the cretinous claims of some centrists that Eurocommunism results from infiltration of our Party by 'agents'. The blame must instead be laid with Stalin, Khrushchov, and those who would continue in the traditions of official optimism and diplomatic internationalism, such as Chater and Nicholson.

Alan Merrick

Euro Turn



Irish Republican Support Group (CPGB) *Ireland: A principled communist position* London 1985. pp.8 25p.

PARTY members who are prepared to stand up against the opportunists' positions on Ireland are a small but growing band. In recognising that "Since 1968, the left of the Party have been guilty of the same sins as the Eurocommunists in relation to Ireland" (p. 7) the comrades of the Irish Republican Support Group stand by our Party's proud heritage of correct perspectives on Ireland in its early years.

All trends in the Party have been coming out of their troglodyte existence, just as we prophesied in the first issue of *The Leninist* in winter of 1981/1982. Dismissed as an unreal suggestion at the time, the trickle of 'dissent' publications has now flooded forth: this small publication, as one of the latest, is a welcome and healthy addition to the list.

Contrasting with publications from other Party sources this publication recognises the importance that an Irish revolution would have on Britain. A defeat for British imperialism in what is in fact its oldest colony "would seriously weaken its ability to rule in Britain" (p. 6). It is clear that the national liberation of Ireland is not a side issue but one which strikes to the heart of imperialism; a victory for our Irish comrades would hasten revolutionary developments in Britain.

Looking at the *Morning Star* group, we

can see it outdoing even some Euros in its rabid anti-republicanism. This is why the Chaterite leaders are attempting to dismiss this publication, despite the fact that several in the IRSG (CPGB) sympathise with the Chaterite position: the 'don't touch' alarm bell at Farringdon Road has been heavily leant on. For the IRSG (CPGB), its future must rest on where it stands in the inner-Party battle. Will it be for the Party or against it?

Ireland and its war threatens the labour bureaucracy as well as the ruling class. Of course, the labour bureaucrats are the recipients of the *Morning Star's* attention at the moment, its present orientation. It is wishful thinking to suppose that the Chaterite rebellion or any new party that may arise from the degeneration of the Party will produce a healthy position on Ireland. If Chater is intent, as he seems to be, on jumping into bed with trade union bureaucrats, then it is quite improbable that the *Morning Star* will carry articles giving any support to the republican movement. If it did, then the big union printing contracts would disappear in a puff of smoke like an Army foot patrol in Crossmaglen. The *Morning Star* has indeed sold its soul to social democratic trade union leaders who fear the republican movement just as much as the ruling class.

In breaking the opportunist veil of silence covering Ireland the IRSG has no hesitation in asserting that it intends to "take the arguments in support of the liberation movement into the heart of the Party" (p. 8). To do so it must not become yet another left cover for the *Morning Star*; if it does so it will do Ireland no favours. What it can do is to rescue the Party's traditions and ensure that its proletarian internationalism again is real and worthy of the name. We look forward to more from the IRSG (CPGB).

Kevin Sheahan

Contact the IRSG (CPGB) through Box 13, Community Press, 2A St Pauls Road, London N1.

Bent Left

Camden Communist Party Miners' Strike: *Experiences and Impressions* London 1985. pp. 24 25p.

THIS tawdry little pamphlet contains the Straight Leftists' impressions of how tailing the NUM leadership was so successful in the Great Strike of 1984/1985. Camden had one of the most active miners' support groups in London; unfortunately it also has a pocket of Straight Leftist hacks planted on it by the trades council. These contradictory factors are evident in the brief outline contained in this pamphlet. As a concise and almost self-contained unconscious critique of Straight Leftism's failures during the miners' strike it does a good job.

The legalities of the miners' strike brought out a lot of ideological weakness in our Party's opportunists. The Straight Leftists have deep illusions about the nature of the police, for instance. This pamphlet complains, like other publications before and since, about the police role in the strike not being "the maintenance of law and order" (p. 9) and their almost 'not cricket' use of new techniques. It then makes no attempt at all to suggest a remedy for the workers concerned. This is a criminal (in terms of working class ethics) omission. Not to tell workers that self defence corps and squads have existed before (including in this country in 1926) and that their formation was absolutely essential in this strike are grounds alone for Straight Leftism to be dismissed by militants. To suggest that this is a 'hard' faction of the Party makes you want to puke.

So how about industrial solidarity? Did the Straight Leftists want a fight at this level? Well they did not want it while the strike was on, the pamphlet pompously explains that: "more than shouts for a general strike are needed to adequately mobilise the power of working people." (p. 13). True, but where were the Straight Leftist campaigns for mobilising any real industrial action on

behalf of the miners? They were nonexistent. It was a general strike that was needed to swing the massive ground support for the miners into concrete form and this was a call constantly blocked or opposed by the Straight Leftist hacks in Camden using the tailist excuse that 'the NUM hasn't called for one' or the SE Region TUC 'wouldn't approve'.

International solidarity with the miners was indeed a boost to morale. Unfortunately for opportunists like the Straight Leftists who consider themselves 'pro-Soviet', not all the socialist countries delivered. Or more correctly they did deliver coal but not solidarity. The case in point, completely ignored in the pamphlet, is the glaring one of Poland. What real proletarian internationalism demands, Straight Leftist comrades, is that our class in state power (e.g. in Poland) materially aids our class under capitalist oppression (e.g. in Britain) by avoiding undermining strategic class struggles (e.g. sending coal). And then, if satisfaction of our class interest is denied, we are duty bound to severely criticise our comrades as in Poland for their damaging actions. It is disgusting for the Straight Leftists to totally ignore the whole question of Polish coal in this pamphlet and to say: "The socialist countries have again shown themselves to be the good friends of working people everywhere." (p. 14)

Feminism obviously causes the pamphlet's writers a lot of trouble. After failing to define feminism correctly they fall flat on their faces by saying that: "The desire to be equal to men did not inspire the women who fought against pit closures." (p. 15) A crude belittling of the women's question invades the section on women's sterling role in the miners' strike; the pamphlet then manages to miss the most important lesson to draw from women's active participation in the strike: the need for a working class women's movement led by communists.

To them, Arthur Scargill personifies the miners rather than leading them. Trade union leaders are the workers for Straight Leftists because they are only prepared to tail trade union militancy rather than pose the tasks the working class struggle demands of its vanguard. Once the miners' Great Strike was declared to be over the Straight Leftists involved in the Camden Miners' Support Group moved to close it down forthwith, an action which typified their deadly conservatism throughout the strike.

The struggle of the miners was a strategic one against a Tory government determined on a war of attrition until the 'enemy within' were defeated. So surely gone are the days when anyone can realistically suggest British imperialism would be able to put "the needs of the people and of balanced economic development before the greed of the capitalists." (p. 7) For communists to suggest this is the height of obtuse and blind opportunism.

Peter Butler

Star Wars

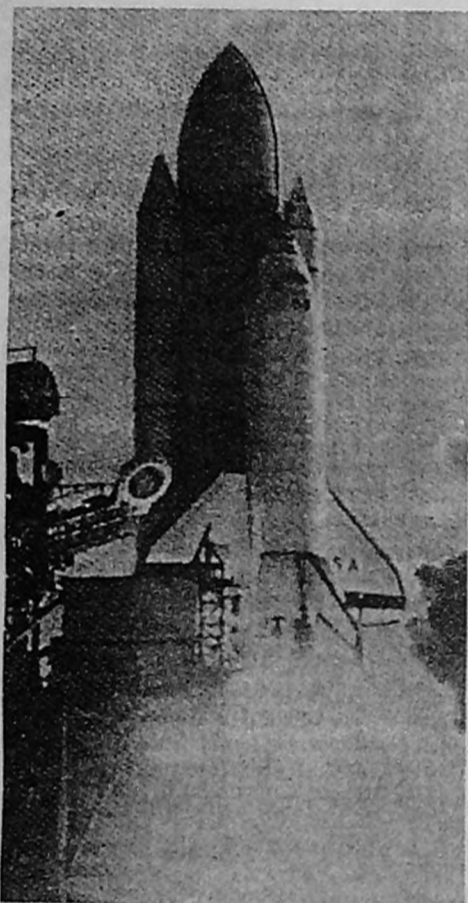
EP Thompson and Ben Thompson *Star Wars: Self-Destruct Incorporated* Merlin Press, London 1985. pp. 72, £1.00.

THE Thompsons are concerned at the balance of terror. They are part of the tradition that sees the achievement of peace through disarming both the USA and the USSR. Their attitude to the first land of socialism is indicated by frequent use of 'Russian' when they mean 'Soviet'. For them, the "Soviet military" are not "innocent" as "Their scientists are also working on laser and particle-beam weapons." (p. 55) The authors agree that the Soviet Union is exerting itself diplomatically to resist a space arms race and actively defending the anti-ballistic missile treaty. They reason that this is because "Such a race would collapse the Soviet economy..." and of course US achievement of a Star Wars umbrella would give it overwhelming military superiority over the USSR.

Communists are well aware that the 'peace' of the world is threatened, if by that is meant the likelihood of nuclear war affecting

drastically it not terminally human life on the planet. But of course wars in the present epoch have been virtually continuous in one country or another. Since the first socialist system was established in Russia in 1917 imperialism worldwide has tried to destroy it and prevent any new revolutions. This led to 21 countries participating in military attack on Russian soil in the early days of the Revolution, including forces from Britain and the USA. Imperialism never gives up, however, nor will it while it lives. That is the stark truth behind the Star Wars preparations. Imperialism will not rest in peace until it has destroyed established socialism.

It is hardly credible to suggest that it is the armaments industry and its search for superprofits that engines the rush to Star Wars. If, as the authors claim, "1 trillion is only the beginning" and an additional "\$50 billion a year" would be required, then of course "Boeing and Lockheed, TRW, Litton, Martin Marietta, Grumman, Rockwell, Textron and Eastman-Kodak" (p. 61) will benefit. The impetus for Star Wars lies in the imperialist system itself, not only in particular sections.



There is a great deal of detail in *Star Wars* about the chemical lasers, particle beams, X-ray lasers, and infra-red sensing advancements that have been recently developed. But what has to be examined in all circumstances is the class whose interests are to be advanced by the advantage given by any single discovery or invention. If the Soviet Union were implementing a Star Wars-type umbrella for itself we should have no criticism, but on the contrary applaud it as ensuring a greater degree of military protection.

When it comes down to conclusions about how the authors intend their readers to act, all we have is a liberalistic and pacifist trio of sentences:

"There is — and has been for forty years — only one shield against chaos: that pitifully weak and yet somehow indestructible shield, the human conscience. It is as full of holes as a sieve, but it has held out chaos for forty years. It is time to put it in repair." (p. 67) If that were it, we might as well start digging our graves now. But of course it is not. Former CP member EP Thompson may have forgotten (if he ever knew) what peaceful coexistence really means; we cannot afford to. If we want to prevent Star Wars or any imperialist war then we have to treat the disease and not the symptoms. Imperialism must be destroyed root and branch. It may well be that "The projected impermeable shield is not possible." (p. 60) That will not prevent imperialism from looking for ways to roll back revolution. Peaceful coexistence only gives a respite, a time for some consolidation of the world revolution.

Thus it is no surprise to Leninists to learn that Reagan considers the Strategic Defence

Initiative sacrosanct, "even if Moscow agreed to deep reductions in missiles and even if all their nuclear forces were eliminated." (p. 46) What Reagan, Thatcher, and similar warmongering representatives of imperialism are after is unconditional surrender. Unless we kill off the imperialist beast we should not be too surprised if it thrashes out in the direction of those countries where our class has established its state power. All imperialist countries face a new world economic crisis which will enhance the danger to their own social system as well as to established socialism. To avert the danger of a new world war we have to grasp the opportunities of imperialism's crisis and carry out a revolution which will sweep away the warmongers forever.

Peter Butler

Destiny

David Edgar, 'Destiny'

THIS PLAY, produced by the Half Moon Theatre in July and August, was written and first produced during the rise of the far right in Britain in the 1970s. It is perhaps more rewarding to see it in retrospect because it must stand up to the examination of time. As the author David Edgar himself points out in the programme:

"... when a nine year old play about (then) contemporary events is revived, it's fair to ask how its view of the times adds up when those times turn into history."

The play portrays a small but growing British neo-fascist organisation called 'Nation Forward' (or NF for short), dominated by middle class activists but facing dissension among its ranks from a 'populist faction'. The play ends with the prospect of Nation Forward making further electoral advances and of even forming some sort of behind the scenes alliance with elements of the ruling class who feared Britain was drifting towards revolution, and who were contemplating giving the 'NF' financial backing to enable it to act as a counter-revolutionary 'surgeon'.

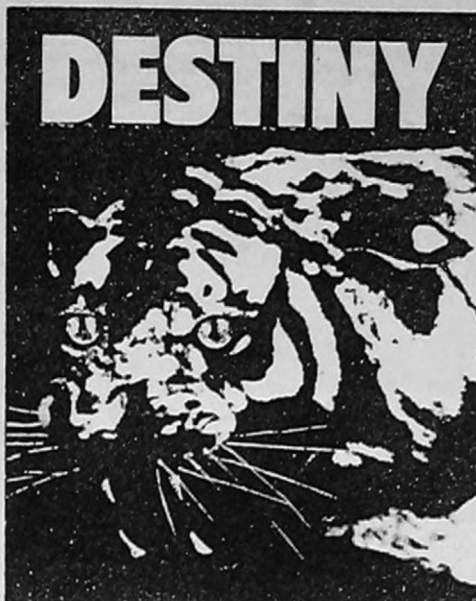
As things turned out, the forecast of this bright and wry piece of drama was thwarted. Edgar tries to analyse why and comes up with two answers. His first explanation is "the astonishingly successful (if now rather underestimated)" Anti-Nazi League which, he claims, successfully publicised the real nature of the NF's ideology. However, it seems doubtful in the extreme that the ANL drained support away from a movement which drew a significant dispirited petty bourgeois and backward working class vote on the basis of the threat of militant industrial struggles, the general decay of old values, and the associated decline of Britain's greatness. Surely to these 'little men' the ANL with its punks, commies, and poofs must have seemed one more example of Britain's degeneration, not its anti-Nazi solution.

Much more significant in reality is the second answer Edgar puts forward, that is, "the rise of the Tory New Right". By the end of the seventies the Tories had put their house in order and come to terms with the fact that the era of consensus politics was now dead; enter the the Iron Lady and all who sail with her. As soon as the Conservatives were able to reassert themselves as full of red, white, and blue grit, for example by Thatcher making statements about a nation "swamped" by alien cultures, the NF support did drain away.

Britain's economic and political crisis was clearly not yet far enough advanced for fascism to be a serious option for the ruling class. Certainly the emergence of the 'new, strong, and patriotic' brand of Conservatism preempted any hopes the National Front harboured about forging links with big business. And in the 1979 General Election the NF took a hammering and subsequently broke up into a myriad of splinter groups.

Drawing lessons from their defeat, some of these groups now believe that fascism cannot win the day without total social collapse. In this respect they have, to varying degrees, tried to forge the elite to bring about a state of anarchy and disorder by

small, but sometimes fatal, individual acts of violence such as firebombing Asians' homes and steeling themselves by taking on progressive organisations to 'conquer the streets'.



Social collapse will of course not result from such actions, but that does not mean disregarding the threat from the far right. A fascist regime may not be on the agenda but the situation could develop which gives rise to a neo- or semi-fascist movement similar to Le Pen's party in France.

Such a scenario would become a distinct possibility if Thatcher was dropped after a Tory General Election setback or, to prevent this, the government was pressurised to move to the left. With Tory policies becoming increasingly unpopular, a yearning for the halcyon days of consensus politics may be expressed in a vote for the SDP/Liberal Alliance as seemed to happen in the Brecon and Radnor election. Given this, Thatcher or her replacement could move to the centre ground in order to try and preserve electoral support. But this in consequence would not only see much electoral support for the Tory Party looking elsewhere but with Britain's inexorable decline and the attendant threat to the social order the possibility could open up where sections of the ruling class could seriously consider playing the fascist card.

Geraldine Duffy

The Rambo retch

ON ONE level it is very hard to take this bloody awful film seriously. Rambo explodes onto the screen with the subtlety of an Exocet and the syntax of Goofy. As other reviewers have pointed out, he never quite says 'Me, Rambo', but you get the distinct impression that the famous phrase is dangling about his foam-flecked lips somewhere. In lieu of acting ability, Stallone imposes the awesome presence of his sweaty bosoms on us like a psycho Mae West (though without an ounce of her sharpness or charm). For, in his own words, Stallone is an "action actor" or, put another way, talentless.

Yet despite the truly *bad* nature of this film it has broken box office records in the USA and several other countries. "Rambo" gushes producer Andy Vajna "is being embraced by the world." (Rather the world than us.) The film, particularly in the USA but also in several other capitalist countries, has evidently caught a particular psychological moment in the technical and ideological build-up to World War III. As Ken Berez, a veteran seriously wounded in combat in 1969 (and now Associate Director of Fundraising with the Vietnam Veterans of America), succinctly noted:

"When you have a President of the United States saying 'Next time we're going to call in Rambo', then the word takes on a larger meaning."

The impact that Rambomania has had very little to do, therefore, with any of its dubious artistic merits and far more to do with the success of the US imperialist bourgeoisie's attempt to rally the folks back home for war. The Vietnam Veterans Association points out that "ten years ago

this film would have been laughed off the screen ..." But then, today we are ten years closer to World War III. Figures like Rambo just are not funny any more. So, while the US administration tools up to nuke the evil Soviet empire abroad, at home 'Bimbo' Stallone and toe rags like Clint Eastwood and William 'Captain Kirk' Shatner (who both funded an abortive expedition picked up on the Laotian border in 1982) jolly US public opinion into an overblown apple pie authoritarianism more receptive to the idea of radiating the world when the time comes. Such figures in effect play the role of the cultural wing of the Pentagon.

The Missing in Action (MIA) issue that the film *Rambo* is concerned with is not simply the preoccupation of the US film industry. After all, while as an individual human being Rambo may quite legitimately be described as just this side of 'mental', the same obviously cannot be said of the US State Department. Some 2,400 US troops were reported as missing in action in Vietnam and the US government has recently unveiled provocative plans to 'resolve' the MIA issue in just two years. This would involve sending literally hundreds of US citizens to Vietnam, creating the heaviest US presence since the end of the war. There are some 240 virgin crash sites to be investigated for the remains of these MIAs, so this would entail excavating 10 sites a month if the job was to be finished in two years.

Such a major operation would in turn require the establishment of a permanent technical presence in Hanoi; and all for a couple of hundred small bags of charcoaled GIs. Hardly. The MIAs have become a cause celebre of US revanchism and reaction. It is claimed that Vietnam is holding US prisoners of war, the MIAs, hostage to be exchanged for war reparations. Stallone himself thinks all this is common knowledge:

"It's no big secret. Vietnam wants reparations from us. We don't want to pay all those billions, so Vietnam is keeping these men as a kind of reminder."

If this were actually true we would say 'good'. It is not the case, however, and the US knows it. If there were large bodies of hostage MIAs in Vietnam, the US would have pinpointed them conclusively by now.



As David Munroe, a documentary filmmaker put it: "In El Salvador their surveillance is such they can tell when you're pissing." The MIA (non-)issue is, however, a convenient peg on which to hang US imperialist bloodlust against Vietnam.

US perceptions of its Vietnam defeat have shifted from the type of restive, reactionary movie of a few years ago, like *Apocalypse Now* and *The Deerhunter*, to today's *Rambo*; Rambo the loopy avenger, clambering over the top, armed to the teeth, and ready to lay waste to the world if need be. The significance of *Rambo* is not so much its awfulness as a movie or its Tom and Jerry brutality. The film must be viewed in the context of the accelerating war drive against the USSR, not simply as reactionary fantasy. The mightiest nation on earth, the imperialist USA, may be led by a 'B' movie actor, but I am afraid Gil Scott Heron gets it the wrong way round. This is no 'B' movie: this is real life.

Ian Mahoney

Attention! This is Worker's Voice

IMAGINE YOU ARE a Turkish worker, living in the environs of İstanbul, Turkey. Your average wage of 16,250 Turkish Lira (TL) per month is pathetic and inadequate to even adequately feed you and your family. Recently Turkish newspapers have estimated that 36,547 TL per month is the necessary sum to cover the basic nutritional needs of an average four person family so your income is, in a word, a joke. You are better off than some though; the minimum wage in Turkey stands at 10,000 TL.

Nevertheless, destitution and starvation constantly face you and your family. It requires back-breaking work to simply survive day to day: you take two jobs, your wife works but your young unemployed son and aged mother represent further drains on the family budget.

So, on August 31, at 8.30pm you and your family settle down to watch the day's news on the TV. You, like most Turkish workers are well aware of the rather biased nature of news coverage in your country. But tonight, however, the broadcast is going to be a little different ...

Winning the Masses

When comrades from the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) stated that they now had a "single goal: to win the masses" they were not just shooting their mouths off. For the second time this year, the CPT (*İS*) has interrupted television broadcasting in İstanbul, replacing the normal broadcast with a 'pirate' programme of its own. News of this second transmission (on August 31), unlike the first, was not blacked out by the Turkish authorities, so extensive front page reports of it have been carried in all the major bourgeois dailies, bringing it to the notice of literally millions of Turkish workers.

The 'pirate' broadcast lasted approximately nine minutes and immediately after it the panicked police sealed off every road into and out of İstanbul and began a frantic street by street search for the 'pirates'. The search yielded nothing.

CPT (*İS*) comrades also recorded some telephone calls to the police, martial law headquarters, and newspapers. For example, one caller (C) to the İstanbul police (P) got a lesson in official doublespeak:

C: Hello, is this the police?
P: Yes.
C: Can you tell me what's happening on the television?
P: Sir, a pirate broadcast came on the television ... There is nothing to worry about. We are making an evaluation according to the information we have received and are trying to determine what happened.

Which made everything as clear as mud of course. A little while later, this same caller X phoned back to offer a theory of his own:

C: I called you earlier in connection with what happened on television. Do you remember?
P: Yes, yes, sir.
C: Now my relatives have come and they say that the television studio was raided ...
P: No, no such thing took place. Who told you that?
C: Well, my relatives say they raided the studio.
P: Nothing like that happened.
C: What has happened? Have these people been caught?
P: We are trying, sir.

And with that this policeman no doubt heaved a heavy sigh, for the police were trying and failing miserably. They have caught no one either for this broadcast or the one earlier this year. The Anatolian

The collage features several newspaper clippings. At the top, a clipping from 'Tercüman' has the headline 'TKP, Tür... sızmak i...'. Below it, a clipping from 'GÜNAYDIN' has the headline 'Küstahlar!' and a sub-headline 'Yasadışı Türkiye Komünist Partisi Televizyonda haber bülteni okunurken araya girerek korsan yayın yaptı'. Another clipping from 'Tercüman' has the headline 'TKP pusuda!' and a sub-headline 'Türkiye'yi 12 Eylül öncesine getirmek için faaliyet gösteren ser örgütünün yeni stratejisini açıklıyoruz'. There are also smaller articles and photos interspersed throughout the collage.

The Turkish press storms against İşçinin Sesi

News Agency was very honest about the police's chances of apprehending the 'culprits'. A caller phoned to ask: "Can't they be caught, then?" The ANA was pretty unequivocal in its reply: "No", it said.

Such bluntness really is quite brave. The Turkish media after all does operate under extremely harsh conditions of censorship and state interference. The *Son Havadis* newspaper admitted for example that as far as what was happening in the outside world was concerned, it was rather in the dark:

C: Is this *Son Havadis*?
SH: Yes.
C: Something happened on television. They say the communists raided the studio.
SH: What did they raid?
C: I was watching television. They began to make communist propaganda. Haven't you heard?
SH: Yes.
C: What happened? Did they really raid the television studio?
SH: How should I know? We don't hear anything at the newspaper (...)

C: Will it be reported tomorrow?
SH: Of course. Whatever happens in Turkey, the newspapers write about it ...

Here we have the guiding ethics of Turkish bourgeois journalism: "How should we know what's happening, we are only journalists? But don't worry, read all about the things we don't know anything about tomorrow."

This strange attitude reflects the fragile position of journalism under the authoritarian Turkish regime. The spokespeople for the various Turkish newspapers were cagey precisely because they were unsure whether this major news item would be subject to a news black out, not because they are especially 'dumb' journalists. The fact that repression continues in Turkey, but now in a

more unstable and fragile form, was illustrated quite neatly by the conversation between a caller to *Cumhuriyet*, another major daily, and a rather confused spokesperson: C: OK, why don't you say anything about it? Last time nothing was written in the newspaper, or on radio or television.

Cum: Martial Law prohibits it.
C: Even now? When democracy has come?
Cum: What?
C: Democracy has come hasn't it?
Cum: Has democracy come?
C: Hasn't it? How should I know?

It is a funny sort of democracy when you cannot tell the difference between it and martial law. But let us give the last word in this section to the beleaguered Turkish police force. Evidently they began to get a little tired of having to admit that CPT (*İS*) was running little rings around them to every caller who phoned in during the course of the night. They obviously decided as this trying night wore on to become a little more pugnacious:

C: But this happened last year as well. Can't they be caught?
P: Actually, I'm beginning to be suspicious of you. I don't know why you're phoning.

C: Why are you suspicious? Doesn't a citizen have a right to ask?
P: Of course, of course. What I mean is that we have to be suspicious of everyone. It could have been you ...

So there you have it. The CPT (*İS*) has made a pirate broadcast in İstanbul denouncing hunger and repression. According to this police spokesman, they have some 40 million Turkish suspects.

Türk-İş

This event comes hard on the heels of another major propaganda coup. Early in September, the right wing

daily *Tercüman* carried a 'shock/horror' expose of the call of the CPT (*İS*) for workers to stay in or join the official Türk-İş trade union centre and to spread the traditions of militant trade union struggle throughout its 'yellow' structure.

The background to this goes back to February 1967. After a bitter internal struggle sparked off by the refusal of the leaders of the CIA-backed, American style union federation Türk-İş to give even verbal support to strikers in the coal and glass making industries, a number of unions suspended in the course of this fight came together to form the new trade union federation: Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK). At first this trade union centre was close politically to the Turkish Workers' Party. But then from 1976 onwards, however, as the revolutionary situation in Turkey became more profound, the politics of the Communist Party began to hold sway in the movement's ranks.

Immediately following the fascist military coup in September 1980 DİSK was outlawed, 78 top DİSK officials were arrested, some being put on trial for their lives. Türk-İş became the only legal trade union centre and its general secretary sat in the generals' government.

The working class in Turkey suffered bloodily in the next few dark years of fascism. But fired by dire economic hardship the masses began to move again, a new mood of restlessness and revolt undermined the monolith that was Turkish fascism and through a process of disintegration it broke up. Inevitably this turmoil reflected itself in the ranks of Türk-İş and it has even been forced by mass rank and file pressure to countenance strike action. As a report to the 11th Annual Third World Conference in

April of this year noted: - "... strikes are once again becoming common ... there are stirrings in the factories and workplaces throughout Turkey."

Comrades from the CPT (*İS*) have called for DİSK activists to stay and fight in the yellow Türk-İş confederation to accelerate these stirrings and revolts and thus turn the Türk-İş organisation on its head.

Not to do so, to go off in an effort to revive DİSK, would be to create a division between advanced, more class conscious workers and their less developed brothers and sisters, and this certainly is against the best traditions of the old DİSK, the CPT (*İS*) agrees. The backward workers need leadership from the more class conscious section of the working class; for this vanguard to become now, when things are really beginning to move, isolated from the broad mass of workers as some opportunists are advising it does in order to raise DİSK from the grave would be simply criminal. The CPT (*İS*) recognises that to win the masses you must first work where the masses are.

The conservative *Tercüman* newspaper was so alarmed at the prospect of Leninists and experienced DİSK cadres working in the already bubbling Türk-İş structure that it devoted its front page lead for three consecutive days to, first an *exposure* of this position, and then reassurances from Türk-İş bureaucrats that they could 'handle the communists', and then declarations from various politicians that there was 'nothing to worry about'.

The *Tercüman* article not only had the effect of illustrating just how uneasy the Turkish ruling class has become and how much they fear the communists, it also had the effect of course, of 'exposing' to millions of Turkish workers the powerful ideas of the CPT (*İS*). So a vote of thanks to *Tercüman* is definitely in order.

"They are aiming at us"

Significantly, the Turkish media and people now regard the *İşçinin Sesi* (*Worker's Voice*) movement as the Communist Party. The Mensheviks of the 'official' party continue to exist, but not as a Communist Party in the genuine ideological and organisational sense. The growing success and impact of Leninist comrades will thus, no doubt, see further major ruptures in the ranks of the 'official' party. The replacement of the present General Secretary is already rumoured as are suggestions of a new liquidation.

The CPT (*İS*) is worrying more than the Mensheviks, though. Evren, the Turkish President, is reported by several newspapers to be carrying the transcript of the 'pirate' broadcast around with him to show to people, he has been so badly shaken up by the event. "They are aiming at us but we are working for the good of the country," he whines. "I have no expectations myself. In three years I will be 70 years old".

The Communist Party of Turkey (*İS*) has set about its task of winning the masses with imagination, creativity, and boldness. The CPT (*İS*), both in the rigour of its ideology and the discipline and impact of its public actions, sets us a standard to aspire to. Its promises of further action are firm and convincing:

"We will pour again in to the squares with our banners, slogans, and marches. And this time we will win!" it declares. No wonder the bloody butcher Evren is worried.

Alec Long