

Westland's: Neither imperialist USA nor imperialist
Europe but the working class

Taking sides

HESELTINE'S dramatic resignation might have been the swan song of a flashy politician with never to be realised Tory leadership ambitions, a calculated Machiavellian ploy to become the natural compromise prime minister of a hung parliament, or simply an act of utter frustration with Thatcher's overbearing manner in cabinet. Whatever took place underneath Heseltine's golden locks matters little to the working class. The grand self justifying delusions, dog eat dog back stabbing plots, and patently insincere rhetoric of ruling class career politicians are not our point of reference.

Does this mean that the resignation of Heseltine and the fall of Brittan, indeed the whole Westland affair, are irrelevant? No, because as a consequence of his flouting Thatcher's will and swinging through the dense foliage of cabinet responsibility Heseltine has, whatever his motivation, exposed a major strategic conundrum facing the British bourgeoisie.

Cousins

Since 1945 British governments, whether Tory or Labour, have put their imperialist eggs in the basket of a special relationship with the United States. Now, although Britain's Anglo-Saxon cousins might have been allies in two world wars the Johnny come lately USA was always pursuing its own anti-British Empire designs.

After World War I the revisionist lusts of both defeated Germany and the victorious USA were left unsatisfied. This was not the case in the aftermath of World War II. This saw the British Empire dismantled under US pressure and the world left open to those with the most dynamic capital.

Although empire tariffs worked in the 1930s, with the post-World War II balance of power there could be no question of such a stand off. The USA was so overwhelmingly powerful that only the Soviet Union could resist it. Of course Britain could have frantically attempted to curb the US by direct military means. But while this would have ended in disaster in the 1920s, in the 1950s this would have been akin to national suicide. The realities of the new world order came home with Britain's 1956 Suez debacle: this forced the British bourgeoisie to recognise its relative decline as well as the awesome power of the US military machine. So instead of futile confrontation the British plutocracy opted for the time honoured route of the good old British compromise. British had, after all, to give way or be pulverised.

Junior partners

Understandably the former was considered preferable. Instead of trying to beat the USA, Britain decided to join it as a junior partner. To make this fall from being the world's number one imperialist robber palatable the British ruling class took to arrogantly lecturing the US about the responsibilities of world leadership, imagining itself as the superior Greeks educating the ersatz Romans.

This junior partner status was what the so-called special relationship was all about. It enabled Britain to remain a leading world imperialist power if not the leading one. And as the dismantling of the old colonial empires directly led to an unprecedented world capitalist boom, Britain's continued decline was decidedly only relative and not absolute. In a sustained period of growth and increasing profit rates, decline could be managed without too much ruling class trauma, let alone the necessity of bashing the working class in Britain itself.

Now, Britain's losing the position of world capitalist hegemon to the USA illustrated in a particularly vivid fashion one of capitalism's fundamental laws: the law of uneven development. And while the once all powerful Britain has continued its inexorable decline, it has now been joined by the once all powerful USA in relative decline. So not only has Britain's worth as a junior partner for US imperialism become of less and less importance, but US decline has resulted in a rising curve of pressure building up in British ruling class circles for a change from the less and less beneficial special relationship/junior partner alliance with the USA towards integration into a full blown Western European imperialist alliance.

Emphasis

Naturally, at present this is a matter of emphasis. The ruling class in Britain might have a deserved reputation for skill but there can be no doubt that its ability to act quickly in strategic matters has long been lacking. Decisions evolve from a convoluted, almost labyrinthine consensus. So at present we can see a rather cumbersome and unsustainable transitional attempt to have one's European cake and eat it by maintaining the special relationship with the USA.

The difficulties in sustaining this defiance of the laws of capital and nature were exposed by the Westland affair. Inevitably, Heseltine bluntly denied he was in favour of abandoning the special

relationship with the US, but beneath his fulsome praise for the Atlantic alliance and the boring cant about the sin of violating the constitutional principle of collective cabinet decision making he posed the fateful choice facing British imperialism. Possibly, no, let us say most likely, Heseltine is not conscious of this. Like the rest of the blinkered bourgeoisie in Britain he doubtless lacks the intellectual courage and certainly the historical vision to do so.

This does not mean that we should ignore the goings on of bourgeois politicians. Certainly in this case they have revealed the existence of new antagonistic contradictions opening up in the world system of imperialist states. To close one's eyes to this would be the act of a pathetic dogmatist. We in the working class movement must fully grasp the likely ramifications of growing imperialist rivalries. It is in this light that we must analyse the Westland affair. For we can see in it in embryonic form what the future holds in store for us.

The emergence of a distinct pro-European trend inside British bourgeois politics is obvious. Westland and the debate over the future of BL found the Liberal Party and its SDP alter ego, as well as the Parliamentary Labour Party front bench, staunchly anti-American, along with 'Heathite' Dissidents in the Tory Party itself. The consensus is thus shifting perceptibly against the 'special relationship'.

The workers

The motive force behind this is easily understood by those who understand the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism. The contradictions between the imperialist

MURDOCH'S determination to smash SOGAT and the NGA is an attack not only on all printworkers but the entire working class. In the wake of the defeat of the miners' Great Strike every boss sees their chance to hike the rate of exploitation and weaken union organisation.

Reliance on the TUC to bring the EETPU into line is to close the stable door long after the scabbing horse has bolted. Militants should fight to get the EETPU expelled from the TUC, not to frighten Hammond but to unleash a rank and file campaign to get a new leadership of the EETPU and the TUC itself. The fight against the scab EETPU leadership must be linked to a hearts and minds battle against the scab UDM and the plans for

powers are deepening as world capitalism drifts towards a new general crisis. What this is resulting in is the slow crystallisation of three rival imperialist economic/power centres based on Japan, the US, and the EEC. Britain, whether Thatcher likes it or not, cannot operate as a fourth centre or even a two-timing ally getting the best of both the USA and the EEC. It must take sides. Whether it does so under Thatcher's leadership is a detail; after all, with the drift towards trade war, the increase in popular anti-American sentiment, and Eureka who can deny the European imperialist die has been cast.

In such conditions proletarian political independence becomes an ever more vital necessity. We communists must win our class to stand against our own ruling class in its struggle with its rivals. In this light we can see that the arguments around Westland not only reveals the unresolved European conundrum of the British ruling class but the unashamedly reactionary positions of much of the left.

While it is only to be expected that Her Majesty's loyal opposition would line up with Heseltine's European option and its implicit anti-Americanism it is ominous that a broad spectrum of the communist movement in Britain has done likewise. *7 Days* sided with Heseltine because

"West European governments have sought to encourage cooperation agreements between firms, public or private." This position echoed comrade Jon Bloomfield's article in December's *Marxism Today*, which posed the choice of "clinging to the special relationship with Washington or participating in a more independent

Western Europe." So the pro-Euro imperialist position of our Euros is clear.

What about the Communist Campaign Group 'anti-revisionists' around the *Morning Star*? Throughout the entire Westland saga the paper has been supporting the pro-European option. One reason for this is certainly the pro-European stance of Ken Gill and Tass. The *Morning Star* of January 9 dutifully pictured Gill on page one sitting in front of militaristic Tass posters proclaiming 'Keep aerospace flying' complete with warplane logo. After all, he who pays the piper calls the tune. For form's sake the *Morning Star* has come out with lots of left sounding noises against "big business" and "imperialism," the usual reformist claptrap about "preserving a high technology enterprise for the British people as a whole" through nationalisation.

Genuine communists must un-deviatingly oppose siding with one anti-Soviet imperialist grouping against another. Westland workers have no longterm interest in lining up with an EEC imperialist bloc or with the USA. What we should be arguing for is not which imperialism is preferable but what Westland workers in particular and the British working class in general need. If Westland jobs cannot be guaranteed by private capital we say occupy it and place it under workers' control; make the bourgeois state intervene: not to take it over for "the working people of Britain" but so the capitalist class can pay collectively for the Westland collapse. As to the Euros and the CCGers, for those who remember the fate of the Second International it is clear that their pro-Euro imperialist statements bode ill.

Jack Conrad

A Wapping case for action

the creation of a Solidarnosc type scab union centre being floated by Hammond. Shilly-shallying over expelling the EETPU can only encourage the general rightward drift by the trade union bureaucracy and cement its compliance with Tory anti-union legislation.

TUC declarations that the law must not be broken are declarations of defeat. All effective solidarity is now illegal. It will prove damaging to our entire class to leave News International printers fighting alone. If we are to see victory mass picketing must be organised at all Murdoch concerns, at all his points of production and distribution. Unless Murdoch is beaten all the other press barons will follow his lead. New technology must not be allowed to destroy workers' jobs

and organisation. So the fight must be spread: all of Fleet Street must be brought out. And to ensure solidarity is effective, and is not sabotaged by a rotten TUC deal or a Kinnock Labour Party stab in the back, we should take a leaf out of the miners' Great Strike and organise support committees. They must set their sights on becoming centres for organising political and industrial solidarity with the printworkers, not charity-mongering talking shops. These support committees in alliance with the rank and file militants of the print unions should see to it that they, not the TUC, Dean, or Dubbins, take the lead in organising solidarity. Unless this is done defeat is certain.



THE LENINIST

Fortnightly

AS OUR Communist Party of Great Britain plunges deeper and deeper into crisis and the demands of the class struggle become paradoxically greater and greater those with no firm grasp of Marxist theory or no revolutionary backbone fall away in despair. Literally thousands have not renewed their membership. Many more will join the ranks of card carrying non-activity or employ the convenient self-delusion that trade union work is akin to fighting for communism. All the while the Straight Leftists, those dull lovers of Labourism with pro-Soviet pretensions, seek solace by huddling together in smaller and smaller pub room cabals. There they pass round their incondite *Communist* and reassure each other that the CPSU is on their side and if they sit tight their day will come. As if this were not enough the liquidationist CCG is determined to prise away as many honest communists as it can through engineering a never get anywhere split. Unfortunately the Executive Committee seems only able to respond with the clumsy bureaucratic heavy hand of mass expulsion and a Big Brother-like banning of all unofficial publications.

Only *The Leninist* has been able to develop the strategy that can reforge our Party. This understands the necessity of fusing the inner-Party struggle with the day to day struggle of the working class. Inevitably the fight to do this demands patience, a great deal of hard work, and self sacrifice from our comrades. Because we have been able to get this we were able to produce first a high quality quarterly and then a monthly paper from April 1984. While this was a great achievement which enabled us to do sterling work during the miners' Great Strike we have never been satisfied. Given the increasing tempo of the class struggle, the acuteness of the situation in the Party, and the development of what could be called a general crisis in the world communist movement a monthly is woefully inadequate. For these reasons we have decided to fight to make *The Leninist* a fortnightly within the next couple of months.

This is a great challenge for all our supporters and readers. But they know that success will mean a great stride forward for our work and influence, a stride forward for our intervention in the class struggle, a stride forward in winning the vanguard of the working class in Britain for genuine communism, a stride forward in the fight to reforge our Communist Party, and this means a stride forward for the working class as a whole. We have therefore launched a £2,000 building fund for a fortnightly. Our supporters and readers know the worth of our monthly paper: just imagine what we shall do with a fortnightly.

The Leninist No.1 in November 1981 solemnly warned that as capitalism's ability to grant meaningful reforms dried up the Party crisis would deepen as long as it remained dominated by opportunism of any variety. No one who is intellectually honest can deny the general analysis and prognosis made by us in 1981. And over the last five years our other views have met with the confirmation of reality. It is precisely from this that our supporters have derived their strength and confidence in the future. For them the looming reality of a new general crisis of capitalism is not something to run away from. No, for them it cries out for a reformed Communist Party through which steeled and dedicated communists can give their all to the revolutionary cause. Dig deep for *The Leninist* fortnightly. You ain't seen nothing yet.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Many questions

Over the last five or six months I have been reading your material along with a few other left wing publications in the hope of finding a party or group which concurs with my own views and will develop my knowledge of left wing politics. My views are basically for the overthrow of the capitalist system and its replacement by a socialist one with the use of revolutionary force if necessary.

I am in fact only 18 and my ignorance of ideology will probably be evident throughout this letter. I don't begin to understand all the political theory that is published, but I do realise that socialism has to and will inevitably succeed in this country.

As I said I have been reading a number of publications from different groups, namely the Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Workers Organisation, and have found *The Leninist* to be the most convincing.

There are however many questions that I have thought about time and again which I can't seem to answer. These include the difference between so-called Trotskyists and communists. I had been led to believe that communists believe in centralised government whereas Trotskyists believe in workers' councils, and that this was the fundamental difference. Through reading your journal I find you choose the latter and yet call yourselves communists.

There are many groups in Britain who call themselves Trotskyist or communists but seem to share coincidental views on strategy and ideology. One example of this I find is yourselves the Leninists of the CPGB and SWP. This may sound fantastic to you and no doubt the SWP. But to me like many other everyday people there seems to be many ideological and strategic similarities...

For instance you both completely reject reformism and opportunism and preach the seizing of state power through revolution. You both believe in workers' councils rather than the parliamentary system. You both believe in the abolition of the state's servants such as the armed forces, police, and judiciary and the formation of a workers' militia. And you both of course believe in fundamental Marxism. Surely if you both share common ground on these fundamentals, would it not be feasible to unite and form a larger and stronger party and try to iron out the minor disagreements that separate you by debate and the practice of democratic centralism in times of activity? If you feel this is impossible, could you please explain your differences with the SWP so as I can understand the situation a little more.

To me there seem to be too many groups in Britain who constantly split and reform only to split again and form ever more sectarian groups. They are too busy fighting and arguing between themselves instead of trying to win everyday people, who are mostly non-political, over to socialism.

It is these people you have to convince, not each other. All these factions in Britain remind me of all the Arab factions in the Middle East, who, instead, fight with bullets not ideology; the result though is the same. Because of these differences, they fight among themselves instead of fighting together to reach their common goal.

My main question to you is what you would consider a socialist country to be like if run along Marxist-Leninist lines. You seem to imply that the parliamentary form of governing will be replaced by workers' councils which will govern local communities.

I believe myself that workers' councils are necessary for the working class to have a say in what happens in their community, as they will know best what's needed. But I also believe there has to be some kind of centralised organisation of the country. There are a number of questions I would like to ask you about workers' councils. Will these councils exist in every village, major town, or city? Will these councils govern over their individual parts of the country and be independent of each other and compete for new factories and facilities, which if so will breed competition and local nationalism? Surely there needs to be a centralised governing body made up of recallable delegates from the workers' councils to take care of the national issues affecting the country, such as defence, the armed forces, and the economy.

If you believe in workers' councils, why do you support the other so-called communist countries of the world? All these countries, apart from Yugoslavia perhaps, practice a form of bureaucratic centralised control, yet you say you unconditionally defend them. Could you also explain this?

Could you also explain why workers' councils have never lasted for any length of time in any country? The Paris Commune and the councils in Spain, Poland, and Hungary, I realise, could not exist within a state controlled country without overthrowing that state or the state crushing them. But why then, did the councils established in Russia just after the revolution just disintegrate into organs controlled by the centralised bureaucracy in Moscow? And what is to stop this happening in Britain?

I understand that Trotsky believed in workers' councils without any form of centralised government. This to me, and I think Lenin, corresponds to anarchism. If this is incorrect could you put me right on the ideology of Trotskyism and explain how it differs from anarchism.

Also, I believe Lenin did in fact not agree with workers' control, thinking that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be carried out by a group of professional revolutionaries from a strictly centralised government. Could you please explain how Lenin's views changed after meeting Trotsky?

That seems to be all the questions I can think of at the moment.

I would be very grateful if you could answer my questions. Please don't write me off as just an ignorant fool who knows nothing about politics, as I really believe in your cause and agree with the majority of your literature. Please clarify your point of view and help me understand your position. Yours comradely

Michael Ross
Luton

Jack Conrad replies:

The comrade raises many important questions. Unfortunately we can only answer some of them, and then only briefly. Trotsky was a man of great ability; he was a Marxist and an outstanding revolutionary. But it was Lenin, not Trotsky, who grasped the neces-

sity of a party of a new type, realised that it was essential to oppose all manifestations of opportunism, that instead of a bad peace with opportunism it was better to have a good quarrel. This was not a matter of sectarian bickering, but fighting for unity on a really principled basis. Only in this way was it possible to forge a party which could successfully lead the struggle for state power.

Up to 1917 Trotsky was anti-Bolshevik and played the role of a conciliator with opportunism. The fundamental difference between us and contemporary Trotskyism is not centralisation versus decentralisation, but their incorrect and deeply sectarian dismissal of the world communist movement as counterrevolutionary. Indeed, most Trotskyites now love Labourism as much as they hate communists.

The centralised organisation of the new proletarian state is of course an absolute necessity. But our aim is not just socialism, but communism. Because of this we fight for the best conditions where the state itself will wither away. This means the fullest possible extension of proletarian democracy: the highest form being soviets or workers' councils. Far from being established after the revolution they are organs of class struggle which become organs of the new state.

In the Soviet Union the material conditions for full socialism were lacking. As a result of desperate backwardness and the constant threat of imperialist invasion it was impossible for workers' democracy to flourish. Indeed the soviets degenerated along with inner-Party democracy. Despite this we recognise that the Soviet Union represents the greatest gain for the international working class: something the SWP refuses to do, slandering the USSR as "state capitalist". But who can doubt that the USSR is a mighty bulwark against imperialism, and it is for this reason we defend it unconditionally.

Of course this does not mean we are uncritical of mistakes and shortcomings. We know the Soviet Union has considerable problems. The regeneration of soviets and soviet democracy would undoubtedly provide many of the answers to these problems.

In the advanced capitalist countries making the revolution will be harder than in Russia in 1917. Yet building socialism will be far easier and less painful. For this reason they will most likely start on the road to communism with full socialism. Therefore the soviets (or whatever they will be called), far from degenerating, will bloom to their full extent. They will be the basic organs of proletarian rule, their delegates will be subject to recall, and they will be united at a national and international level to decide strategic questions: at least, this seems the most logical and expected form of organisation.

Lastly, on the question of winning non-political "everyday people". For a revolution to succeed, winning the masses is vital. But today there is no revolutionary situation, and try as you might under such conditions it is impossible to win "everyday people" to revolutionary politics. Our task at present is to ideologically win and train the vanguard, that is, the politically conscious section of the working class to sort out the contending ideological trends and to assure the victory of genuine Marxism-Leninism. If this is not done only disaster will result. After all, rather a good quarrel than a bad peace.

Militant NCP

Isn't it interesting that now Kinnock and his Walworth Road crew are putting the boot into *Militant*, the New Communist Party has kept quiet on its long time advocacy of expelling *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party. Instead of being open about its views it covertly lines up *Militant* in Liverpool for the witchhunters and cowardly refuses to defend these hapless Labour Party loyalist, Trotskyite left reformists.

According to the *New Worker*: "The Labour left cannot afford to believe that defending Liverpool means defending *Militant*. If anything the opposite is true—the sooner *Militant* are exposed and rejected as not of the Left at all the stronger the Left will be." This is at a time when the right-wing crusade to ensure that the "next Labour government" will be thoroughly anti-working class, and not committed to even the mildest left reformist panacea for capitalism's ills, is taking the form of an anti-*Militant* purge. The NCP's amateur attempt to "expose" *Militant* of course fall flat. But they do expose their own phoney left credentials. Indeed, so Trotophobic are they that they obviously prefer the openly pro-imperialist wing of the Labour Party to the likes of Hatton. They don't after all call for the expulsion of Hattersley, Healey, or Shore, do they?

The NCP, as we all know, like our Straight Leftists, thinks that the place for genuine communists is in the Labour Party, or the "bourgeois party of the working class" as Lenin called it. So maybe they are trying to earn the price of Labour Party affiliation which they believe will one day come by doing Kinnock's dirty work now. Fraternally
Peter Pinder
Liverpool

Co-proprietors

Having watched and listened to Mr Brian Walden on TV (Sunday Weekend World programme) and reading his articles in the *South Wales Echo* over a long period I have come to the conclusion that he is not only a supporter of Mrs Thatcher's policies but he is also trying to sell to the working class of Wales the hypocritical American capitalist ideology of 'people's capitalism'. The aim of this fairy tale is the transformation of monopoly capitalism into a 'people's capitalism'. This is a complete delusion which is trying to weaken the anti-imperialist struggle all over the world. The main theoretical foundations of 'people's capitalism' is participation by the working class in capitalist profits through the shareholding system. The workers then become 'co-proprietors' of capitalist enterprises or, in other words, become capitalist themselves. The aim being to disarm the workers ideologically, to divide and convince them of the necessity to collaborate with the capitalist class, and renounce their struggle against capitalism, refrain from striking (because they are all capitalists now). They call it democratisation of capital. The idea being, the workers buy low price shares in their factories or offices; they think they are capitalists, but the real truth is, only about 2% of the working class own shares, they have no real say in the overall policy. The owners of the firm are those who have the block shares. The owners lose nothing having worker shareholders. The firm gains part of the workers' wages, and if the firm puts the money into reserve capital or accumulation there may not be any dividends; it is all a huge gamble.

The main reason and purpose for selling low value shares to the workers is to divide them; spread the illusion of capitalist-labour

harmony; utilising part of workers wages to help increase their profits, to weaken the trade unions and use some of them as strikebreakers. The myth of 'class harmony' is complete propaganda to bluff the working class because capitalism is a rapidly decaying system; 'people's capitalism' will not stop cutthroat competition, crisis, mass unemployment, only make it worse. There is only one cure, a change to real socialism and abolish capitalism as a system.

Brian Walden is helping to mislead the working class of the whole of Britain by concealing the real power of capitalist monopolies. America's 'people's capitalism' must be exposed for what it is: a capitalist dictatorship leading towards fascism.

Yours sincerely
Tom Hopkins
(Retired miner)
Caerphilly

Kent miners march

Readers might like to know what Kent NUM has planned for February as part of its campaign against the closure of Tilmanstone colliery. Well, on Saturday February 8 a body of marchers will set off for London, and to give them a good send off Kent NUM has arranged a rally in the morning at 11.00 in Elvington Welfare Hall. Arthur Scargill is coming along to speak. And then it's off along the road, with stops probably at Canterbury, Chatham, Gravesend, and Greenwich.

When the marchers get to London five days later, on Thursday February 13, there will be a rally in Conway Hall (Red Lion Square; the nearest tube is Holborn). This rally starts at 7.00pm, and everyone is invited to come and hear Jack Collins Kent NUM (Secretary), Malcolm Pitt (Kent NUM President), and Dennis Skinner MP.

It should give the Independent Review Body something to think about when it meets on February 18 to consider the NCB desire to destroy Tilmanstone.
Yours in comradeship
Michael Drummond
Canterbury

WRPs

While your article on the WRP split was amusing and informative, events as events will move on. Not only has the Bandaite WRP been forced to drop the *News Line* title and opt instead for *Workers' Press*, the old SLL paper, but the convulsions of the split have become even more bizarre. Healy still has not surfaced; perhaps he's dead? Who

knows? And despite vehement denunciation of Healy's style by his old comrade in arms, Banda has done a disappearing act as well: some say he's gone back home to Sri Lanka, others that he's living in Wimbledon incognito having been denounced for being an accomplice in Healy's alleged crimes.

On the "Fourth International" plane it is rumoured that the American WRP, the Workers' League, has carried out a palace coup and suspended the British parent organisation. Meanwhile the Healyites are promising to relaunch a daily at the beginning of February (one trembles to guess where the money is coming from); and in what was the Banda WRP (perhaps it is the Slaughter WRP now) civil war rages between the adult "party" and the Young Socialists.

The Healyites insist that Britain is in a revolutionary situation and that Thatcher is the same as Napoleon III, even though she is being roasted in very un-Bonapartist fashion over the Westland affair in the House of Commons. But then what's reality got to do with the Healy brand of Trotskyism?

On the other hand the Banda/Slaughter WRP is in flux. Everything is being questioned and quite rightly. Surely *The Leninist* ought to make more of an effort to talk to these comrades who now recognise that Healy took them for a ride. Most of them loathe the thought of ending up in the Labour Party and I would not question their revolutionary sincerity for one moment. Many of them would be open to the ideas of genuine Leninism. So for heaven's sake strike while the iron is hot.

Max Coats
London

Style and Tone

As a longstanding member of the Communist Party and a regular reader of *The Leninist*, I have become increasingly concerned over recent months at the style and tone that the publication is increasingly favouring. The inclusion of large numbers of articles on irrelevant issues, like the one on 'Band Aid', the inclusion on a regular basis of what is nothing more than a foolish gossip column and the reviewing of publications and books that are, to say the least, very unsound all lead me to the conclusion that the so-called Leninist faction is nothing more than yet another reformist group-let with intellectual pretensions. All this, coupled with the change in layout and showy headlines make me fear that *The Leninist*

will quickly become an up market *Marxism Today* and lose any sense of cohesion and discipline that it ever had. I would very much regret this and would you rectify this situation immediately.

Yours in comradeship,
Fred Richards
London

David Sheriff replies:

While comrade Fred says he is a regular reader of *The Leninist* he has done nothing to transform his sympathy for revolutionary politics into real commitment, so although Fred might be a "long-standing member" of our Party he also seems to be a long standing political cretin. Apparently "showy headlines", etc., lead to a decay in "cohesion and discipline"; this smacks of public school stories about masturbation leading to blindness. As to "irrelevant" articles, the only example Fred offers is our article on 'Band Aid' in number 26. This says everything about Fred's determined political stupidity. If Fred were a serious communist he would be criticising *The Leninist* for being so tardy in dealing with this question. Mass starvation in Ethiopia is not "irrelevant" comrade Fred, nor is the fact that millions in Britain were moved by the pictures they saw on their TV screens to the point where they were prepared to donate millions of pounds for famine relief.

Perhaps comrade Fred's other "irrelevant" articles are our three supplements on South Africa, our analysis of the crisis in the NUM, the growing split in our CPGB; maybe he means the interviews we carried with Paul Whetton of Notts NUM or the recently released class war prisoner Peter Gates. Who knows?

But comrade Fred's main point is that professional layout, reviews of "unsound" books (no doubt like *Swastika Night*) and pamphlets from various tendencies in our Party, and, horror of horrors, photographs equals reformism. This is plainly crass stupidity. If the comrade was to criticise the content of our articles and point to examples of this reformism "with intellectual pretensions" we might be able to enter into serious argument. But this he finds impossible simply because our politics have become ever more deeply rooted in revolutionary theory. And we must say that in our new fortnightly we have no intention of "rectifying this situation": sorry comrade Fred.

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

A letter from an American convict to President Reagan (Supporting his determination to keep the world 'free')

Dear Mister President,
I'm in here for a bit of a spell, and, well, it's given me time to think things over—Lord knows I ain't exactly sitting in clover—but I've got a conscience and when I heard your speech, it sure did reach me, like I was most overcome, it moved me some, that bit about Freedom, our willing to die, just summed it all up—I had a wet eye all the time listening. I said, "This guy knows what he's ranting about", and then I smiled, "Who knows but he's been up the river himself for a while? He understands what it means to get landed in trouble . . ."

Well, Mr. President, I want you to know we're with you, me and the boys, and I ain't no small noise here. I count some. Keep America free! That's what we say. We'll fight for our right to be free any damn day. We'll even die for it—yeah, here and now, (Al and Pete are going to the gas-block anyhow, so they're not chicken!) The sooner you quicken the War the better—let the Red bastards see that we'd rather be dead than lose our liberty. I'm in here for rape and assault, a few things beside, but I swear, Mr. President, I still can carry my pride, I'm a true, full-blooded American, I'll fight to the ditch against any god-damn-Communist-son-of-a-bitch, doesn't know what it means to be free, out of chains, enjoying sweet liberty, each one for himself, against everyone else, a true son of a . . . ah, Jesus, I wish I had a gun!

Roy Henderson
Glasgow

Money matters

While promises for a tabloid *Morning Star* seem as far off as ever, *The Leninist* will, with your comradeship, go fortnightly. While plans for a CCG monthly theoretical journal look distinctly like platform posturing, *The Leninist* will, with your active assistance, go fortnightly. While *Straight Left* remains as boring and rightwing as ever, *The Leninist* will, with you selling extra copies, go fortnightly. While the Executive Committee can only produce a turgid weekly, *The Leninist* will, with your money, go fortnightly. While *Marxism Today* becomes ever more liberal, *The Leninist* will with you getting others to contribute to our £2,000 building fund, go fortnightly. Since our last edition our £600 fighting fund stands £24 short of our target. This is a splendid effort but we must ask more from you if we are going to go fortnightly. Remember, money matters—without it revolutionary theory is sterile and revolutionary practice impossible. Thanks go in particular to comrades, TM, ZE, and HR in SE Mids, HG in the Eastern District, JE and OF in Scotland, AL, WM, JM in London, PG in Surrey, and BG in the Northern District. Readers will be pleased to know Inkululeko Publications "received from *The Leninist* the sum of £165, being a donation to *Umsebenzi* (the paper of the South African CP) with thanks". Our collections for it continue alongside our £2,000 building fund.

ANARCHY

Anarchism is back in the news, indeed it is going through something of a minor revival. A small strata of disorientated youth have been drawn to its nihilism and sheer rage as a consequence of homelessness, chronic unemployment and the failure of the left to seriously confront capitalist society and its growing decadence. So despite the fact that today's anarchism is a fringe affair compared with the movement's mass origins it is still worthwhile Marxists examining its practice and doctrine.

ANARCHISM, for a long time held by the left as an irrelevant collection of commune dwelling sects knitting their own muesli on the Yorkshire Moors and faded punks in Chelsea squats, seems to be undergoing something of a minor revival. The little charmers of *Class War* hit the headlines as the supposed instigators of the last set of riots. Those who mingled with the thronging ranks of pacifists at the last CND beano in Hyde Park will have noticed a definite smattering of the Black 'n' Reds amongst the protesting petty-bourgeois and 'Well meaning *Guardian* readers against the bomb' crowd. While the anarchist micro groups are to a large extent mere extensions of the previously mentioned muesli knitters and faded punks, others are being attracted to them.

Even amongst the industrial working class there is a sniff of anarchism. Dave Douglas, secretary of Hatton Main NUM, is a long time advocate of the teaching of Bakunin and Kropotkin, and since the Great Strike some militant workers, not least miners have taken their trade unionism with a pinch of syndicalism. Comrades attending the so-called Rank and File Conference in Sheffield on November 30 1985 noted a relatively large number of Direct Action Movement members present and the influence of various hues of syndicalism.

There are two main reasons for this growth. Anarchists in CND as it has grown have picked up sections of radical youth who, after marching round with banners, participating in mass die-ins, and getting dragged off military bases for god knows how long, become disillusioned with the leadership of Quakers and labour movement bureaucrats. The anarchists provide a libertarian, radical pole of attraction of 'Ban the Bombism'.

The other reason, which is linked is the failure of the traditional 'revolutionary' left, especially the SWP. The acid test for the left was the Great Strike. The left as a whole failed, and not a few militants came to look at it as a parasitical pain in the arse, and with some justification. Look at the performance of the main left organisations and trends in the strike: CPGB Euros, *Morning Star*, *Militant*, SWP, RCP, WRP, etc. Not much to get excited about, but plenty to be frustrated about. It is no surprise then that some workers, finding their own gut reactions served them better than all the grandiose theories of these so-called revolutionaries, should be attracted to the semi-anarchism of syndicalism which defies such gut level militancy.

The growth of the overtly anarchist *Class War* has occurred for similar reasons, built on youth impatient with the masturbatory theorising and impotence in action of so many 'lefts'.

Whilst the left is now characterised by its inability to come up with the goods, this has been a permanent feature of the anarchist movement, whether led by Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, or whoever.

To illustrate this, it is necessary to take a closer look at anarchism's history, theory and especially the conflict between the anarchists and communists, whether the field of battle was at the barricades of Kronstadt or the conference halls of the First International.

Proudhon

Although Proudhon was not a revolutionary, many aspects of his thought were adopted by revolutionary anarchists such as Bakunin. His rejection of private property, political action (in theory), and any form of state are concepts common to all anarchists.

So too, though some might deny it, are other aspects of his theories. His analysis of capitalism led him to the view that it was the state itself, not the mode of production on which the state rests, that is the source of oppression. This led him to an acceptance of commodity production as the 'norm' for human society.

This, coupled with Proudhon's romantic view of the poor peasant and glorification of manual labour, provided him with his model of a future society. "Throughout his writing, as in that of many later anarchists, runs a nostalgia for the past—and often the imaginary virtues of a simple agricultural society as it existed before it was corrupted by machines and by false values of manufacturers and financiers." (J Joll *The Anarchists* p.46) In other words, a reactionary utopia, called by Plekhanov "a society of producers of commodities." Indeed, the anarchist utopia meant reverting to primitive commodity production based on small village communes engaging in free and equal exchange: a world of market gardeners, by definition federalistic in structure. In attacking the state and private property, while accepting commodity production, Marx criticised Proudhon for tackling the symptoms and ignoring the cause. However, Proudhon's support, which was mainly in France, was based on artisans, poor peasants, and sections of a young proletariat yet to realise itself as a class. Among these people such ideas were credible.

Proudhon never developed any form of a theory of history, as did Marx, and so had to revert to that age old (bourgeois) concept of 'human nature' to cover the gaping wounds in his system. "Justice" we are told, is a "faculty of the soul". Presumably "the soul" is also the cause of capital accumulation and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Or is that Lucifer?

There were not only gaping wounds in Proudhon's theories but also yawning gulfs between those theories and practice. He supported Louis Bonapart's coup d'état as he saw it as a bulwark against monarchist restoration and supported the Confederacy in the American Civil War because of his advocacy of federalism, both incurring the polemical wrath of

Marx. He also abandoned his politically abstentionist position after the French revolution of 1848 to take a seat in the National Assembly, which produced personal disillusionment and a further retreat from any action.

It may be considered unfair to tar all anarchist with the same brush as Proudhon, but the system he developed is still part and parcel, in one form or another, of anarchist thought today.

Marx aptly summed up Proudhonism in *The Poverty of Philosophy* as "merely the petty bourgeois, continually tossed back and forth between capital and labour, political economy, and communism". Today this is as true of the anarchists who flounder in his wake.

Bakunin and the First International

It was not only for Proudhon that his theories had no value in practice, but also for the workers who adhered to his system. Proudhon's rejection of trade unionism, strikes, and violence led workers who followed him to move to a more 'practical' form of anarchism in the 1860s, and especially after the 1871 Paris Commune. Reality confronted Proudhon's disciples with the fact "that the growth of large scale industry left workers little hope of economic independence, and to defend their interests the workers would have to organize in labour unions and strike for higher wages" (Max Nomad, *The Anarchist Tradition*, cited in P Thomas, *Karl Marx and The Anarchists*).

Mikhail Bakunin was to fill the gap left by Proudhon in the movement that had developed away from him. Bakunin the revolutionary and collectivist as opposed to Proudhon the reformist and individualist was the first true anarchist theoretician. He claimed to reject all systems, complaining that Marx was "ruining the workers by making theorists of them." Bakunin's orientation, however, was not towards the industrial proletariat to which Marx pledged his allegiance, but to poor peasants and lumpen elements, who he claimed had "nothing to lose". "Popular revolution," claimed Bakunin, "is born from the merging of the revolt of the brigand with that of the peasants" (cited by P. Thomas p.292) as opposed to the combined might of the proletarian masses.

This was linked with his childish love of armed banditry: "We recognise no other activity but the work of extermination, but we admit the forms in which this activity will show itself will be extremely varied—poison, the knife, the rope" (Cited in EH Carr, *Mikhail Bakunin*, p.380.) *Class War* today tries to step into the shoes of Bakunin's "revolutionary brigands". Their Bash the Rich March in 1985 did not even so much as graze an accountant's shin. Ian Bone's treasures described themselves as "sick as a Parrot" after the event. And so they might be. November's *Freedom* describ-

ed the kids from Class War at play: "Far from 'Putting the shits up the rich Scumbags', as they watched from behind their lines of police in the comfort and total security of their own houses, it would have done more to amuse them, breaking the monotony of the umpteenth game of croquet." Impressed? No, I thought not.

Banditry proved an embarrassment to Bakunin when his acolyte Sergei Nechaev proved somewhat over-zealous in his application of these methods of 'Propaganda by Action', even against other Bakuninists with whom he had had disagreements.

Bakunin, the dilettante of action, exposed the erratic, disjointed nature of his ideas in the organisational forms given to his theories. It seems that the only unifying character of Bakunin's revolutionary groups, many of which only existed in his imagination, was their remarkable ineptitude in practice. The issue of the semi-psychopathic Nechaev is one example. Another of Bakunin's organisational anomalies was that the great anti-authoritarian demanded the complete personal submission of his followers to his authority. Aha! Libertarian authoritarianism; wonderful.

Possibly the most revealing example of Bakuninism in practice is its operation in the First International and Bakunin's struggle against Marx. Bakunin joined four years after its inception, in 1868. The major debates centred around the need for a state after the social revolution. This will be covered more fully later.

The Marx-Bakunin battle came to a head in the international situation created after the defeat of the Paris Commune. Both claimed to have had their positions vindicated by its outcome. Marx, it is fair to claim, had considerably more justification in this. Paris workers never looked to the federalism of the anarchists, but rather to the centralised democratic structures Marx had foreseen. Marx claimed that the structures thrown up by workers in the Commune were an example of the state form of the future, the dictatorship of the proletariat, opening the door to the reabsorption of state power back into society and therefore the ultimate negation of the state.

Bakunin claimed that the 'non-political' nature of the commune was its cardinal achievement. Marx answered that in reabsorbing alienated social functions into the proletarian order before the sole property (in alienated form) of a parasitical state the Commune was inherently political. He said of Bakunin: "this ass cannot even understand that any class movement, as such, is necessarily . . . a political movement."

Unlike Bakunin, Marx held that the Commune's lack of correct theoretical clarity was its downfall, not its salvation. The 'non-political' (sic) fetishism can be seen today in the posers of Direct Action and their crude attempts to exclude political organisations from the already mentioned Rank and File conference. They, of course, are not 'political'. This, not a new tactic to anarchists, is an attempt (by authoritarian means, mark you!) to ensure the anarchists centre stage, and in doing so emasculate the movement.

In the period of international reaction following the defeat of the Commune ominous storm clouds gathered over the International, and debate between different trends escalated to fever pitch. After voting extra powers to the General Council to attack a mutual opponent, Bakunin found those powers used against his trend in the International. As a counter the Bakuninists sought to

transform the GC into "a simple correspondence and statistical bureau"; in effect, in a period of worldwide reaction the Bakuninists sought to destroy the coordination and coherence given it by the GC as necessary to defend the International. The organisational methods used by the GC against the Bakuninists may be questionable, but the Bakuninists' cure was worse than the disease: it was suicidal, given the circumstances. At the following congress in 1872, with Bakunin absent, he was expelled: the liquidation of the International following on its heels. Under the shadow of the Commune's defeat the clash of Marx and Bakunin provided the 'critical mass' to explode the International.

Bakunin's coup de grace of cock ups came in 1873 in Spain. The previous year's schism had enabled the Bakuninists to take the vast majority of the Spanish section with their Social Democratic Alliance.

Briefly, the situation was that the Spanish king had abdicated, and a radical bourgeois republic had been proclaimed. The actions of Bakunin's Alliance were as we shall see, confused, farcical, and in the end tragic. Rightly the anarchists agitated for the proletariat to make its mark on the revolution. However, in dealing with reality their strategy had to be somewhat 'modified'. The first thing to go was political abstentionism. Under pressure from the workers the Alliance participated in governmental elections. Because of the nature of all their previous work they participated without an electoral programme. 'Vote for the Alliance, we will do nothing.' Predictably, they walked into a defeat of no small proportion.

The general strike was, hoped the Alliance, the tactic that would regain their lost 'street credibility' with Spanish workers: "In the Bakuninist programme, a general strike is the lever for unleashing social revolution. One fine morning, the workers of one country, even of the whole world, stop work and, in four weeks at the maximum, oblige the ruling class to surrender, or to attack the workers, thereby giving the latter the right to defend themselves, and use this opportunity to tear down the whole of the old society." (Engels, *The Bakuninists at Work*)

Rosa Luxemburg struck to the heart of the confusion of the anarchists on this question when she wrote that "in reality the mass strike does not produce the revolution, but the revolution produces the mass strike." The anarchists have an inverted picture of workers' struggles.

We shall return to Engels for a description of the Alliance's work in Spain. In Barcelona an unprepared proletariat was ordered to take strike action: "In other words, the workers of Barcelona . . . were invited to confront the armed power of the government, not with arms in their hands, but with a general strike, with a means that only affects individual bourgeois, but not their collective representative-state power." Revolts, due to the anarchists' sham 'libertarianism' and their federalism, occurred in a disjointed, sporadic fashion, allowing the bourgeoisie to pick them off one by one: "when it came to action the ultra-revolutionary cries of the Bakuninists gave way to evasion uprising doomed to defeat in advance, or adherence to a bourgeois party." (Engels)

The monarchy was restored the following year and the anarchists were forced underground, as was the rest of the workers' movement.

In 1876 Mikhail Bakunin died, possibly from embarrassment.

The state

The state, its character before the social revolution and its necessity after, has always been the key difference, in the great divide between communists and anarchists. Communists have always held that humanity's enslavement rests fundamentally on the economic formations within which humanity develops its laws and institutions; that is, civil society. The state in bourgeois society functions as the executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole. In short, the political super-structure of society stems from its economic base, the mode of production. The anarchists, on the other hand, invert this and take the source of oppression as being political, in reality driving a wedge between politics and economics, if they consider economics at all. This is often stated by the anarchists, but never is the attempt made to prove it. To prove this, a theory of history is necessary, which the anarchists have always lacked. To illustrate the nature of political and civil existence, it is germane to look at their last transformation, the bourgeois revolutions. Before then the political position of the individual was united with his or her economic position, the social groups of the feudal hierarchy defined the individual's economic and political position.

After the bourgeois revolution, however, the relationship of classes changed and a new form of exploitation smashed the feudal under the banner of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity'; all men now formally stood as equals (citizens) before the state, as eventually did women. Therefore man has already been formally liberated politically; the nature of the proletariat is in essence economic, which the bourgeois state at once rests on and serves to maintain. Political power depends on, but is not united with, the mode of production.

Errico Malatesta, an anarchist leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, gives us an excellent example of the anarchists' muddleheadedness on this question: "Governments oppress mankind in two ways, either directly, by brute force, that is physical violence, or indirectly, by depriving them of the means of subsistence and thus reducing them to helplessness at discretion. Political power originated in the first method; economic privilege in the second." (Malatesta *Anarchy* Freedom press, 1942 p.7) This passage begs many questions. Why does the ruling class oppress to start with? Maybe just sheer vindictiveness against their fellow man. What is the basis for this political power? Surely it has a basis of economic advantage. If it has, what is the nature of this advantage, and what exactly is the state's relationship to it? Malatesta builds a Chinese wall between politics and economics, which he is unable to cross, or even see. Abandoning any pretence at economic analysis, Malatesta puts the nature of oppression down to "the ferocious and anti-social instincts inherited from (Man's) bestial ancestry, again obtaining the upper hand" (*Ibid.* p.15) If this were true the chimpanzee would live under a most unbearably oppressive class system. But no, like Proudhon before him, Malatesta resorted to 'human nature' to plaster over the cracks in his system. This is the last refuge of ideological rogues, scoundrels, and bankrupts.

But what of the need for a workers' state after smashing the bourgeois state? Bakunin insisted that "it is necessary to abolish completely . . . everything that might be called political power, for so long as political power

exists there will be rulers and ruled, masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited." (quoted in Thomas, p.295) How the anarchists shy away from the authoritarianism of those dreadful communists! Engels in reply stated that the anarchists "demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority. Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is, it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will on the other part by means of rifles, bayonets, and cannon—authoritarian means if such there be at all."

Bakunin's Alliance proclaimed "equality of classes" as a key programmatic aim. This is sheer liberalism. Presumably after seizing power the proletariat are to show their mettle as 'egalitarians' by warmly embracing the Rockefellers and Krupps, and redistributing all arms, giving an equal share into the bloodstained hands of the bourgeoisie. After all, 'equality' in word and deed, comrade anarchists.

Engels, we feel, was a teensy bit less utopian: "(The Anarchists) say that the proletarian revolution has to begin by abolishing the political organisation of the state . . . But to destroy that at such a moment would be to destroy the only organisation by which the victorious working class can exert its newly conquered power, keep down its capitalist enemies and carry out that economic revolution of society." (Engels, *On the Occasion of Karl Marx's Death.*)

In ancient society the state evolved with the differentiation of labour and the emergence of classes. It therefore follows that the state will disintegrate alongside the reason for its existence (social classes) and the expansion of production which will make this possible. Merely proclaiming "equality of classes" contributes not one iota to this.

The party

The structure and role of the revolutionary organisation is another not unimportant cause of disension between our two camps, a question of federalism versus democratic centralism, from at least the First International onwards. *Virus*, a more coherent 'libertarian communist' paper than most of the turgid anarchist rags, talks of "the crisis of the revolutionary left" being a reflection of the crisis of capitalism (No.5). Okay, that is a valid assertion. Why? The answer is (according to *Virus* the left's duplication of "ruling class values in their authoritarianism, their high degree of centralism, their worship of hierarchy and sheep like submission of the rank and file to the 'omnipotent' and 'all wise' leaderships." To this of course they oppose their federalism. The results of this have already been dealt with in the context of Spain in 1873. The fruits of anarchist 'anti-authoritarianism' were again seen in Spain in the 1936-39 Civil War. One classic example is the defence of Madrid in November 1936 by the Republicans. The anarchist militia leader Durruti's forces "refused to go into action against Franco's guns; and although Durruti angrily demanded a change to redeem his disgrace, it was the communist dominated International Brigades . . . that most of the merit of saving Madrid was due . . . everywhere the specifically anarchist character of the columns organised by the CNT and FAI diminished as the necessities of war demanded greater discipline and more central control." (Joll pp.242,243.)

The most significant trial of anarchism against communism was of course the Russian revolution, and it was the anarchists that were found wanting. "Russia, in particular, appeared to have become the experimental field of anarchism . . . but the anarchists simply do not exist as a serious political tendency in the Russian revolution." (Rosa Luxemburg *The Mass Strike.*)

Often the role of the anarchists was that of mere bystanders, and seldom more than that of a supporting role to the Bolsheviks. Kropotkin, the most important Russian anarchist of that period, came out of World War I, in which he supported the Tsar against the Kaiser, to find himself relegated to commenting from the sidelines as events overtook him and his followers. The major contribution of the anarchists was to call for the exclusion of all political organisations from the soviets and, ridiculous though it may seem, to oppose the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", as they were opposed to power. Even in Kronstadt the anarchists played a largely irrelevant part.

The one jewel in the rather tarnished crown of the Russian anarchists was Nestor Makhno, who had a great deal of success in the Ukraine fighting the Whites in the Civil War, as a sort of anarchist Robin Hood. He often worked with the Bolsheviks until all insurgent units were absorbed into the Red Army between the autumn of 1920 and the summer of 1921. Makhno then went into exile.

Generally, though, the anarchists confined themselves to complaining of the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution. So did Lenin, the difference being that Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought this; the anarchists only fought the Bolsheviks, in attacks such as the bombing of the headquarters of Moscow CP in September 1919. It was not towards the anarchists that the world bourgeois looked fearfully in the early years of the revolution.

The anarchists' organisation proved impotent even to protect themselves, as their 'libertarianism' would not even allow them to rout out counterrevolutionary infiltrators in their own ranks, let alone make a revolution. As always, the anarchist organisations were not able to understand, adapt to, and therefore change the conditions in which they operated. Again, all they could do was to whine that the bourgeois or the Bolsheviks 'weren't playing fair'. They ought to be told that the class struggle does not abide by the Marquis of Queensbury Rules.

Conclusion

Historically, anarchism has proved a dismal, and indeed dangerous, failure. Today's anarchists hold even less promise of success. Compare 1980s anarchists, from the soporific *Freedom* to the scatty *Class War*, with the assassinations, bank raids, mass following, and militias of Durruti, Makhno, and the colourful (if slightly unhinged) Nechaev.

Those who today claim to follow in the footsteps of these illustrious figures of the past are often more at home waving a little black flag on a CND demonstration rather than toting a rifle on the barricades at Barcelona; now it is Crass records and vegiburgers, and not the bombs and bullets so dear to Bakunin.

Time and time again, revolutionary communism has proved itself over anarchism. Looking at today's motley crew claiming Bakunin's crown, this time round will be no different.

Alan Merrick

Dumping the AES

In February's *Marxism Today* comrade Sam Aaronovitch called for the 'left' to dump the AES, the ending of opposition to the EEC and incomes policies. Our next theoretical supplement will analyse the whole debate around the AES; in the mean time we look at the opening shots against the AES.

A NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Six years into Thatcher's Britain and the country's most serious economic crisis the need for an alternative approach to the economy has never been greater. While disenchantment with many aspects of Tory policy is growing, for millions of people the slogan 'There is no alternative' still strikes a chord. The left, labour and progressive movements urgently need to develop a coherent, consistent and credible alternative strategy which flows from the aspirations of the people, of the union movement, women's movement, ethnic minorities, youth and the environmental movement. It needs to be a radical, transforming programme around which alliances can be constructed, and people mobilised in struggle. It needs to embrace both immediate counter-crisis policies and longer-term strategies for the renewal of Britain's economy.

Communists and other socialists believe that the big problems Britain faces can only be finally resolved by putting an end to capitalism and establishing socialism. But this does not mean that unemployment cannot be substantially reduced and the social services and living standards improved while capitalism still exists. The kind of strategy which we envisage can mobilise much wider forces than the ranks of socialists or the labour movement. It will, however, challenge capitalist values and the building of socialism, as well as providing the opportunity for involvement in struggle. It must address the demand for employment which is potentially one of the most powerful issues for building a political majority in action against the Thatcher Government. Failure so far to fully realise this potential raises

This discussion has been initiated by the Communist Party but it is a public discussion open to all who want to be involved in developing a new economic strategy. For this reason as well as discussing it in internal journals and meetings we will be projecting the discussion outwards. *Marxism Today* will be increasing its coverage of economic issues, and 7 Days will be commissioning articles to cover the themes of the discussion. In 1986, the Communist Party will be initiating public discussion forums in every major city with a broad panel of speakers, which will be widely advertised as they are arranged.

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION LAUNCHED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Right Economics

OUR Party's leadership has decided to initiate a debate on economic policy, with the intention of replacing the Alternative Economic Strategy (AES) with something more practical and, of course, more up-to-date. The terms of this debate, to be conducted in *Marxism Today*, 7 Days and through public meetings and seminars, are to be set by the leadership, but we cannot allow the opportunity to pass without making a clear and revolutionary theoretical intervention. This is all the more necessary since we know in advance what the response of the Chaterites will be: these defenders of the purity of Marxism-Leninism, who find it convenient to pose as the true defenders of the *British Road to Socialism* in general, will step forward as the true defenders of the AES as a reformist solution to the crisis that British imperialism finds itself in, and not at all on the contradictions and crisis of reformism itself. The leadership wants to push the Party's economic strategy to the right, the Chaterites will want to defend the status quo; we want neither—we want, and the working class needs, a revolutionary alternative.

The spectacle which is beginning to unfold before our eyes is revealing in many ways. In the first place, the big guns who will be in the forefront of the assault on the AES will include those who were responsible for the creation of the AES in the first place. Secondly, as with the AES, what will emerge will be not so much the economic strategy of the Communist Party as that of 'the left'. The debate will give the Euros the chance to play their favourite role, that of think-tank and ginger group for the Labour Party, and to display their intellectual prowess in front of their friends and admirers in the bourgeois press. Thirdly, the opening shots have been fired by someone

outside the Party, by Robn Murray, director of industry at the GLC, thus conforming to the Euros' habit of using outsiders as a cover for their attacks on the Party orthodoxy. But above all it will be revealing in what it leaves out, in the questions which *won't* be asked. And of this, Murray's article gives us a good many examples (*Marxism Today* November 1985).

But before delving into Murray's article itself, let us clarify what exactly the AES is. The AES developed out of an initiative, largely centred on the Conference of Socialist Economists, involving Party and non-Party intellectuals, that aimed to compose an economic strategy which could attack the economic problems Britain began to face most severely in the 1970s. In short, it was a response to the developing crisis of capitalism, a response which hoped to offer an alternative, both to what had formed the basis of Labour's economic policy in the past, and to what was being offered by the right, namely monetarism. Whereas monetarism aimed to solve the crisis at the expense of the workers, the AES was to show that British capitalism could be transformed at the expense of capital. The term 'AES' is in a sense a misnomer; there was never one AES, but rather a whole series of them, differing according to the extent of nationalisation that was to accompany the strategy, the level of import controls deemed to be necessary, and the speed with which the economy was to be reflationed. In the debates around the AES, the left AES was that associated with the Conference of Socialist Economists in general, and the CP theoreticians in particular, and the right agreed on the following: that the crisis of British capitalism was more severe than that of the other major capitalist powers, that these prob-

lems could be tackled within the context of a left Labour government, that the 'openness' of the British economy (that is, the high level of foreign trade as a proportion of national income) and its relative decline necessitated a programme of import controls alongside any reflation of the economy, and that if these policies hurt the interests of capital, so much the worse for capital. The AES was a manifesto for a 'real' reformism. What they also shared was a failure to confront the true nature of British capitalism: imperialism. Either imperialism was simply not mentioned, or, 'at best', treated as a set of 'policies' that are outdated, as in the case of comrade Aaronovitch of our own Party. As we shall see, this refusal to confront British capitalism as British imperialism characterises Murray's opening foray.

The AES, then, was reformism, but at least it was a reformism that attempted to reform. "The central fact of the present era of capitalism," argues Murray, "is that Fordist production (mass production of standardised goods, using specially designed machinery, production lines, and a skilled workforce) began to run out of steam in the 1960s. Its earlier spread had been the basis for the post war boom, but as markets became saturated, profit rates fell. Expansions of credit and government-financed demand slowed down but did not reverse this process." The truly curious fact about Murray's argument is that he, too, identifies the source of the problem at the level of the market. Whereas a Marxist analysis of the crisis would start from the conditions of accumulation, would look for the causes of the decline in profitability in the rising organic composition of capital that this Fordism entailed, Murray stops at the superficial level of 'saturated markets'. If government policies of demand expansion fail-

ed to halt the decline of the rate of profit, that is, if government policies which expanded markets were unable to solve the crisis, then 'saturated markets' could not have been the source of the crisis in the first place. And let it not be overlooked that government policy from the late 1960s also included the direct boost to post-tax profits of reducing the effective level of corporation tax to the point where payment of it became largely optional. If, despite these policies, profit levels kept falling, if these stimuli to accumulation failed to solve the problems, but instead developed them further, then the source of the crisis is this accumulation itself. Over-accumulation of capital cannot be solved through stimulating accumulation, but requires the destruction and devaluation of capital. These are the ABCs of Marxism, and we must not be content with an analysis left at this level of abstraction; but they cannot be ignored either.

The AES, then, was reformism, and was as such ridden with contradictions. On the one hand it acknowledged the crisis of capitalism and correctly comprehended the class basis of the solutions on offer from the right. But on the other it failed to address the reality of the state, confused the state with the government, and looked forward in a utopian fashion to capital idly standing by while a Labour government attacked its interests. It pointed to what could be done given the technological level, argued for production for use rather than production for profit, but believed that the transition from the latter to the former was largely a matter of composing the correct policies for a Labour government to pursue. As such it gave expression to the contradiction between the forces and the relations of production, exposed the nature of production for profit, but ultimately remained trapped within that very same contradiction: rather than seeing the necessity to smash the capitalist state, that guarantor and essential component of capitalist relations of production, it sought to wield this loyal weapon of capitalist class oppression against capital itself. And instead of locating the source of the crisis of capitalism in the nature of production under capitalism as the production of capital, and more specifically in the overproduction of capital, it saw the solution to the crisis in yet *more* production. Eyes firmly focussed on the symptoms of the crisis, the advocates of the AES were unable to see the crisis as a crisis of production.

When the Euros attack the AES, then, it must be acknowledged that they have plenty to aim at. And it must further be recognised that certain of the criticisms will be valid. This goes equally for their fellow-travellers such as Murray. In his article in *Marxism Today* Murray correctly argues that the AES offers a Keynesian solution to the crisis, and that this 'solution' cannot work simply because it doesn't even address the source of the problem. The AES aims at controlling markets, he argues, whereas the origin of the crisis is in production. In particular, he correctly identifies the crisis with a crisis of Fordism, that is, of an era of capitalism dominated by large-scale production, relatively high levels of consumption for large sectors of the working class, and high levels of employment, at least as far as the imperialist metropolises are concerned. But that is as far as it goes—as his analysis develops, so his errors accumulate.

The essence of Murray's argument is that, just as this new technology opens up new horizons for capital, it equally presents new

possibilities for the restructuring of the economy in the interests of workers. 'The Left' must seize this opportunity, and develop a positive strategy for the restructuring of capitalism. The new technology, as with all developments of societies' productive forces, represents increased ability to meet social needs; 'Japanisation' is harnessing these advances to benefit British capital at the expense of other capitals and against the working class. The specific point about this 'new production' for Murray is above all that its competitive superiority lies in its greater efficiency and not in cheaper labour-power. Thus Murray regards current government policies, which he sums up as a cheap labour policy, as being as inadequate a solution to the crisis as the AES. And here the real nature of the new alternative which Murray is offering us emerges: we are to believe that this new technology, in the midst of this developing crisis of capitalism, opens up the possibility of combining increased competitiveness and an improvement in the conditions of the working class. We have the opportunity, or so we are told, of combining production for need, increased workers' control over production, and even solving ecological problems with the continued existence of imperialism. And to the extent that the interests of British capital get in our way, then (you've guessed it) so much the worse for British capital. And how is this to be brought about? Murray tells us: "a National Enterprise Board—committed to a strategy of alternative production—is needed." The major lesson that Murray has learnt from his time at the GLC would appear to be that the Greater London Enterprise Board represents in embryonic form the solution to our problems as far as economic strategy is concerned. Note: an *enterprise* board. Here we do not even have the old reformist illusions in using the state to overturn capitalism; Murray wants us to use power to foster socialist entrepreneurs. A people's capitalism, perhaps.

But it would not even be that: people's capitalism in Britain would mean people's imperialism. Despite his reference to "a quite new stage of capitalist production", Murray does not use the term imperialism once in his article. And this is no oversight; it stems directly from his analysis that he must ignore imperialism. How else could he whine about 'multinationals' and argue for increased purchases from 'progressive regimes' in the 'Third World' except than by denying imperialism?

But there is worse yet to come. As Murray correctly argues, "There are implications for political as well as economic strategy in all this." A problem with Keynesian policies, he tells us, is that they "concentrate the mind on the need to take state power." And the problem with all this, he continues, is that "for many people it all seems abstract and far away from their immediate abilities to act for themselves." Now apart from the fact that Keynesianism argues the need to get into office and not at all to seize state power, the need for the working class to smash the state power of the bourgeoisie and to substitute for this itself the dictatorship of the proletariat is not in the least diminished by being, for many people, "far away from their immediate abilities to act for themselves." On the contrary, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the precondition for the working class to begin to tackle the problems of economic reconstruction in its own interests.

Brian Curran

THE LENINIST SUPPLEMENT

Why is Turkey so important?



1977 May Day demonstration in Istanbul: the largest in the capitalist world. When the workers rise again it will be for power.

Why not anywhere?

SOMETIMES we are taken to task by our sympathisers for emphasising the whole question of Turkey too much. 'Why Turkey?' they sometimes ask. 'Why not South America? Why not North Korea? Why not anywhere...?' However, in *The Leninist* we have not 'picked up' Turkey in an arbitrary manner or in the same neo-godbuilding way that some groups emphasise Albania or North Korea. No, we put a great deal of effort into publicising the developments in the revolutionary movements and social life precisely because we are committed promoting the world revolution.

The life-blood of communists *must* be proletarian internationalism. Our understanding of this communist principle differs considerably, however, from most others in our world movement. Far from proletarian internationalism demanding that we 'in principle' tail one or other section of the world proletariat, whether they have state power or not, it demands instead the development and propagation of the highest levels of theory on all major tactical and strategic questions faced by the world's working class, whatever country they may operate in. In our view, the experience of the comrades from Turkey today provides that 'highest' experience and offers all Marxists key lessons.

Medium-level

In many ways, Turkey's development as a capitalist country paralleled the history of the Russian state's. Both could be described as medium-level developed capitalist countries, and like Russia's old ruling class the Turkish bourgeoisie is forced into attempts to expand imperialistically outwards in order to avoid social turmoil at home. But at the end of the day neither the Russian nor the Turkish working class could be pacified by reforms or by the charade of bourgeois democracy: the ruling classes simply could not afford it. This relative 'poverty' of the bourgeoisie of both modern day Turkey and old imperial Russia ruled out the possibility of creating an effective labour aristocracy as the main vehicle for dominating the mass of the working class with pro-bourgeois

ideas. And it was this inability to bourgeoisify the workers' movement that meant that chronic crisis plagued these states. The question of *revolution* or *counterrevolution* was posed in a totally unambiguous way.

Now, in Turkey throughout the 1970s, a revolutionary situation had paralysed the country and presented the task of revolution to the working class and its vanguard point blank. The Communist Party of Turkey was in those days a party that we would classify as being left-centrist, that is on the left wing of the mainstream of the world communist movement. It recognised the existence of the revolutionary situation and argued for the violent overthrow of the old bourgeois order. And yet, with the decisive hour of the battle approaching, the leadership of the party retreated, denied the revolutionary situation and sold the revolution short.

It was in the course of the struggle against this sellout that the comrades who went on to form the Communist Party of Turkey (*Isçin Sesi*) consolidated the lessons from their intense experience of a revolutionary upheaval close up and were thus forced out of the 'official' CPT by the right moving centrists.

We have described the emergence and the growing maturity of the *Isçin Sesi* movement as the "renaissance of Bolshevism in the world movement." (For a full analysis of the history of the developments in the revolutionary movement of Turkey see the article by William Hughes in *The Leninist* No.6) It is important to note that, as in the Russian experience before it, for genuine Bolshevism to appear took not simply the elaboration of theoretical positions in some vacuum, but development through a profoundly intense revolutionary crisis that baptised the vanguard in fire and burned out mercilessly old illusions.

Paradox

It seems a strange paradox that those in the workers' movement who yap on the most about dialectics are precisely the ones whose political practice and theory are the most profoundly *undialectical*.

Take for example the whole question of the Russian revolution. For various centrist groups the socialist state that this revolution ushered in is an unchanging, static, and fossilised entity. They transform Marxist dialectics into a distorted form of Hegelian dialectics, but instead of the Prussian state, as in Hegel's system, they substitute the Soviet state as the embodiment of all social and human progress.

Now, the Russian revolution has obviously been the highest achievement of our class internationally so far. It resolved in a striking way many of the practical and theoretical problems that had beset the workers' movement simply by proving that Bolshevism *worked*. It cut the Gordian knot of 'official' Marxism, Second International style, and allowed the advanced elements of the international working class to climb on to a higher level which united the highest level of theory with revolutionary practice. The revolution itself, however, given its isolation in a desperately poor (in many spheres, not least agriculture), practically pre-capitalist country, introduced inexorably into the world its *own* peculiar contradictions and problems.

The success of the revolution in Turkey will, given the country's social and economic weight, open the way to further revolutions and thus resolve many of the problems that the experience of building socialism in Russia introduced. We believe that many of these political problems of conservatism, of theoretical atrophy, and of the abandonment in practice of the fight for world revolution expressed themselves in the Turkish experience. After all, the leadership of the CPT was a 'mainstream', 'pro-Soviet' one with, in essence, the same type of politics that have dominated our movement since at least the late 1920s. When these politics were put to the test in a country which, although not as advanced as say Britain or the US, certainly could not be called 'under-developed' in the same way as say Cuba or China were, they abjectly failed to make revolution.

In the struggle against the backtracking of the centrist leadership, the comrades who went on to form the CPT (*IS*)

were forced by reality itself to shed many of the illusions of the past. In doing so, they have equipped all of us in the world communist movement with the politics to successfully complete the next stage of the world revolution.

Highest

The experience of the comrades from Turkey is the richest and therefore the highest available to the world movement to learn from. We must do this not in a dogmatic or rigid way, but in a truly Marxist dialectical fashion. If we can 'stand on the shoulders' of the CPT (*IS*) we believe we can make the struggle for the reforging of a Leninist Communist Party in Britain and the fight for our revolution that much easier. Turkey's 'intermediate' position between the backward countries of the 'Third World' and the advanced ones of the 'West' ensured both the intensity of its crisis and also that the lessons thrown up by it are in broad terms applicable for communists all over the world. We would urge all comrades to study the Turkish experience. It will equip us to change the world.

Alec Long

Picket against Özal

Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister of Turkey is visiting Britain on 17th, 18th and 19th February to seek further support for his regime from the Thatcher government. In protest the CDDRT is calling a picket of the Turkish Embassy — be there.

Tuesday 18th
February 1 — 2 pm
Turkish Embassy
Belgrave Square
London WC1

I LEARNED a great deal about Turkey simply by watching its TV. Although I do not subscribe to the view of Australian reactionary Clive James, that you can always learn more about a country's culture and psychology by studying its TV adverts than you can by going to its museums, a few hours spent in front of the box was definitely worthwhile. Slotted in between dubbed versions of 'The Dirty Dozen' and 'Woody Woodpecker,' the indigenous programmes undoubtedly did offer the non-Turkish viewer an insight into what makes the country tick.

Interestingly, for example, one evening at peak viewing time TRT, Turkey's one channel, state-run TV service, screened a verbatim reading of a speech Kemal Ataturk apparently made during the Turkish war of national liberation of 1919-23. In it Ataturk rallied the forces of the nation against the occupation of Istanbul by various imperialist powers, including Britain and the USA. Of course most Turks must know the history of Kemal Ataturk and of that formative period of the Turkish state backwards: I actually saw in the exercise book of a Turkish school student (who grabbed the chance of my visit to have his English homework checked before handing it in) laudatory passages describing heroic incidents from the life and times of Ataturk which had been set as a translation exercise. This is hardly surprising really when you remember that drumming the reactionary ideology of Ataturkism into young minds is, according to the Minister of National Education, "the cornerstone" of what education is all about.

Everywhere you turn in Turkey, from posters, friezes, statues, and stamps the grim and slightly mean looking visage of Ataturk balefully follows your every move. His is an omnipresent, sensesurround image like a rather more serious 'Snoopy', and the reasons for his constant evocation are, of course, very solid and practical as far as the Turkish bourgeoisie is concerned. In weak capitalist countries the ruling class may frequently strive to 'personify' the nation in the form of an individual or family and thus give society the sense of continuity and stability that the conflicts within it are constantly undermining; one thinks here of the Gandhi dynasty in India or even today's bourgeois revolutionary opposition to the Iranian mullah regime, the Mojahedeen, who iconise their leader Massoud Rajavi.

The Turkish bourgeoisie was a class born already old and moribund onto the historical stage and its thoroughly counterrevolutionary ideology, that of Ataturkism, fully reflects its anti-democratic and expansionist nature. Even after the squeezing of the Turkish bourgeoisie exclusively into the boundaries of Anatolia following the defeats of World War I, the old barbaric conquering and raiding traditions of the Ottoman empire were continued against the internal colony of Kurdistan. The Kemalist administration instigated wholesale bloody massacres of the Kurdish people in 1919, 1925, 1929, and 1937-38 and this vicious repression is continued today by Ataturk's ideological and class epigones. The denial of democratic and human rights to the Kurdish people in Turkey can only be maintained by constant martial law strictures over the "Turkish mountain people" (as the ruling class euphemistically calls the Kurds) and by a never-ending series of military operations in the Kurdish areas.

Just how crude and ugly is the propaganda used to justify this national oppression was brought home to me vividly one night when TRT put out a 'confession' by a militant of the PKK (a Kurdish left nationalist party). This harried and badly scared young man was paraded in front of the harsh lights of the TV cameras to admit his "mistake", as he coyly put it, of fighting for Kurdish freedom. "In prison," he informed his audience, "I had time to think about it" (in the lulls between torture sessions no doubt) and he decided to apologise to the government for his "silly" ideas. To illustrate his sincerity, he had even paid all his money (some 175,000 Turkish lira) to the Army Benevolent Fund. "If I'd had more" he assured us with a wild-eyed stare "I

would have given it."

Even to my Western ears this public recantation sounded stiff and badly over-rehearsed. This unhappy young man, who had previously been a freedom fighter and a hero to his fellow Kurds, had now been broken by torture to such an extent that he had publicly disavowed his own people. The human scum that is the Turkish bourgeoisie had left this young Kurd with nothing, no nation, no family, no self-respect, and it had even seen to it that his sham and degradation was screened nationwide. Quite how it expects to discredit the Kurdish people's struggle with such trite and see-through melodrama is, I admit, quite beyond me.

It is a funny sensation in many ways to sit watching Turkish TV. On this most modern means of mass communication you often get the paradox of programmes whose content brings home the fact that Turkey is still only a medium level developed capitalist country, not an advanced one in the same way as, say, Britain or France. Thus, you will see medical programmes devoted to dire warnings of the disabling consequences for the children of blood relation marriages. You realise implicitly from such programmes just how backward and patriarchal social relations must still be in the village areas away from the main towns. Similarly, and a programme which tickled my fancy in particular, was the broadcast of dervish ceremonies. On the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923 Ataturk banned the public 'break-dancing' displays of this odd Muslim sect apart from, for some reason, the month of December. I was lucky enough however, to visit the country during this one open dervish season, and so there they were on TRT, filmed with soft-focus special effects and with an after-spin commentary and analysis from a panel of experts: wonderful stuff.

Out and About

Tearing myself away from the TV was easy. But if I had been in Turkey and missed another pirate TV broadcast by the Communist Party of Turkey (*Iscinin Sesi*) comrades would have made my life simply not worth living when I came home to London. The magic of Istanbul's bustling streets, however, cannot be resisted for long. While I was there in fact street lights in the city were being replaced, as the old apparently did not even emit enough light to get the adrenalin of the average moth flowing. In the meantime, while the new lights were presumably on order, Turkish workers have been left by their farsighted rulers to scramble about in the dark in many busy streets. Crossing the road, therefore, an exercise which can be a dice with death even in brilliant sunshine, given Turkish car drivers' 'free-form' style of road sense, at night became akin to playing hop-scotch in a minefield. I saw several people miss death or serious injury by a whisker and one actually hit by a speeding bus and sent sprawling with a sickening dull thud against some iron railings. Although obviously badly shaken and in need of medical attention, he refused the entreaties of those who helped him to his feet to wait

for an ambulance, and even became angry and embarrassed by the attention paid to his injuries by myself and other people.

At first I was puzzled by this injured man's antagonistic attitude, but then a Turkish friend explained that his stubborn refusal to have his cuts and bruises treated was not the result of some sort of silly macho 'look-at-me-I-can-bounce-off-cars' pose, as I thought at first. No, what explained it was that special something money can never buy and what Turkish workers are so rich in: poverty. The man simply could not afford to go to hospital; it was as simple and as outrageous as that.

It was probably this event that gave my delicate British sensibilities the cold water shock they needed to fully appreciate the grimness of life for workers in Turkey. You notice the many soldiers and police on the streets with their snub-nosed machine guns, of course, and how down-at-heel many people seem to be, their coats patched with ill-matching thread and their clothes generally salvaged and made serviceable. You cannot help but notice the beggars on the streets, and naturally being a good comrade, avidly reading my copy of *The Leninist* every month, I knew all the statistics about how the minimum average weekly wage level in Turkey (which many hundreds of thousands of workers actually fall below) is only enough to buy eleven loaves of bread. But it was this injured worker, angry with himself for being hurt and with us for trying to help him (and instead just humiliating him) that I think gave me my first genuine insight into some of the realities of life for the working class in Turkey.

Generous

Their relative poverty, however, does not stop Turkish working people being wonderfully, embarrassingly generous. These workers were the least able to give and at the same time the most willing to give I have ever met in my life. Young people in Turkey in particular are vivacious, life-loving, enthusiastic, and totally charming. As evidenced by their driving, they refuse to countenance the word 'impossible'. You really can never fully appreciate, dear reader, what a precious and fragile gift life is until you have let a young Turk take you on a 'white knuckle' drive through the streets of Istanbul. In one incident I was in a car that had to be physically lifted free by passers-by after my young Turkish friend at the wheel had tried to confound the laws of physics and will his car through a space in a back street through which I would not have put money on him being able to push a bike. A lot of this energy at the moment seems to be dissipated in idle dreams and get-rich-quick plans, but when it comes again to be put at the service of the Party and the revolution, it will be unstoppable.

In December 1985 one of our comrades went to Turkey to see first hand what was going on there. Far from this report being a tourist's travelogue it contains the insights and impressions of a communist who fully appreciates that Turkey is of great importance to the world revolution.

The young working people in Turkey that I met were all acutely conscious of the country's relative underdevelopment: as one friend put it, referring to the time zones, "Time is the only thing we are ahead of you in" They are saddened and angered by their country's backwardness and the Byzantine bureaucracy that strangles social life; they all had a desire for progress and development such as I have never come across before in the young. What holds Turkey back, what frustrates the ambitions of its youth and their hopes for technical and cultural progress are the productive relations of the country. The bourgeoisie in Turkey are the vandals of culture and progress.

Hisarustu

The Hisarustu gecekodu (or shanty town) on the outskirts of Istanbul is in the process of being torn down in order to make way for the building of the prestigious second Bosphorous bridge. Walking through its muddy streets and watching the pitiful spectacle of families tearing out salvageable door and window frames from their homes and piling their belongings onto rickety old removal trucks it is hard not to imagine that you are watching refugees from some 'Third World' conflict. The ruling class of Turkey can only in this way impoverish and displace the working class in the name of what it chooses to call 'progress'.

By this summer, some 450 of these houses are to be destroyed. The work is already well in hand: I passed two comic little bill collectors complaining bitterly in the middle of one of the gecekodu's streets to anyone who would take time to listen that they had just brought a demand to a house which had already been torn down. Despite the sordid injustice of it all, the people of Hisarustu are resigned to losing their homes. I spoke to one woman who described how when the scheme was first announced there were some half-hearted protests and a few petitions circulated all of which met with a poor response. This was one of the better gecekodus she explained. Its 'sister' shanty town on the Eastern Anatolian side, which was also to be razed in order to build this wretched bridge, was far worse. Viewed from a distance this gecekodu was recognisable by the distinctive grey of its main building material: breeze block. The woman simply had no idea what she and her family were going to do.

We put some of the problems of these people to a landlord we encountered supervising the tearing down of one home. He claimed, rather grumpily, that the government was providing the displacing gecekodu people with the money to purchase cooperative houses. The dubious joys of bringing up a family in the rabbit hutches that pass for

PASSAGE TO TURKEY

'cooperative houses' in Turkey are for most of these people, however, a little irrelevant anyway. These 'houses', which are around 5.5-7.0 metres square in most cases, cost on average some 4 million TL (£5000). The government in its magnanimity provides 2 million TL, and the workers are expected to make up the other half. This is way beyond the means of most working class families and so they either have to look for another shanty town or else move back to the dire poverty of the villages. When pressed, this landlord became decidedly more grumpy and sloped off home: a luxury that many of his erstwhile tenants might have quite enjoyed, I thought.

The kiraathane or tea house at the top of the Hisarustu gecekondu was deafeningly full of unemployed workers from the shanty town and students from the nearby Istanbul University, a potentially explosive revolutionary mixture. Such cafes play the same role in working class social life in Turkey as pubs do for British workers, with the refreshing difference that there you are able to talk without the destabilising effects of booze. And my god, do workers in Turkey know how to talk! Turks talk like they have fan belts instead of vocal chords. The spoken word for these sociable people appears to have a powerful role of cohesion and workers are forever to be seen in cafes talking, talking, talking. A friend told me that "For every one theatre in Istanbul, there are a thousand cafes." Just think of all those words.

At the moment, from what I could glean from the conversations around me in the cafes and on the buses, workers are griping quite a lot about economic problems and the difficulty of making any sort of decent living, but are not as yet talking politics in any concrete way. This type of low level economic consciousness would be encouraged by the influence of the Mensheviks of the official Communist Party of Turkey and by their sidekick organisation, the Workers' Party of Turkey. These opportunists correspond almost exactly in terms of perspective to the original Mensheviks of the Russian Party. They too would fight to limit workers' struggles to low level economic battles that produce nothing higher than trade union consciousness. The fight for political liberty and basic democratic rights in Turkey they are content to leave to the 'liberal' sections of the bourgeoisie. The parallel is reinforced when one realises that just like the Russian bourgeoisie that of Turkey is utterly feckless, cowardly, brutal, and equally incapable of playing any sort of progressive social role. For the moment the working class appears to be content to drown its sorrows in tea

and backgammon and to grumble more than fight. The fact that the gecekondu through which I had just walked, still had discernable revolutionary slogans daubed on many walls, from the heady days before the 1980 fascist coup, illustrated that things had not always been that way. The working class of Turkey once was the most combatative, the most internationalist, and the most revolutionary in the capitalist world. Today the class is still cowed by the three years of fascist rule after 1980 and by the continued authoritarian regime that followed fascism's disintegration. Its grumbles and moans however are the rumbles of a new mass revolutionary wave, a wave that will sweep away both the terrified Turkish bourgeoisie and the finger-in-the-dyke Menshevik misleaders of the class.

Contrasts

Of course, the crushingly mediocre Turkish bourgeoisie, a class without one truly significant social achievement to its name, milks Turkey's splendid imperial past for all its worth. You cannot really visit Istanbul and not see some of its breathtaking sights, such as the airy Topkapi Palace; St Sophia, one of the most outstanding architectural achievements of all time with beautiful Byzantine mosaics; or the Blue mosque, an Ottoman monument with wonderful blue tile decorations. But at the same time you also cannot help resenting some of the seedy commercialism and the exorbitant entrance prices that are connected with treasures rightfully the property and cultural heritage of the working class.

The contrasts between the poverty and enforced backwardness of the masses and the wealth of a tiny few that existed in the Sultan's time still exists today. The development of Turkey into a medium level developed capitalist country has compounded the tensions and the contradictions in the society to the point where today it is as much a white elephant far as social progress is concerned as the Ottoman empire that preceded it. As in any society it is the position of women that is in many ways one of the most useful indices in judging development. The working women of Turkey, one could say, bear the heaviest burdens for the country's backwardness.

Kemal Ataturk's bourgeois revolution from above replaced the old theocratic legitimacy based on the 'Shariat' or

Islamic law with a new secular ideology.

Women as the most oppressed social category under the old order did benefit from the innovations and the egalitarian legal position it formally guaranteed for them. Judicial reforms were hardly enough however: women's liberation is intimately linked to the material and cultural level that a society has achieved and as I have already described, Turkey remained a poor and relatively backward state. In the agricultural sector, women comprise a mere 10% of the workforce and their wages are on average 30% lower than their male counterparts. This marginalisation in relation to the labour process reinforces the importance of the familial unit for working women in Turkey. Only 1% of urban women and 1-2% in the relatively more developed west of the country never marry, the divorce rate is extremely low, and marriages are made early. According to the Turkish Fertility Study, over 90% of women aged 25-29 are married and the mean age of marriage for women over 30 was at 17.6 years. The working women of Turkey when you see them on the streets appear tired and worn. There are no adequate figures on the distribution of women's working time, although a rough estimate by some sociologists puts their average working week at something like 100 hours, twice the 48 hour maximum stipulated by labour legislation. You can frequently be caught behind a knot of women toiling slowly through some Istanbul street, and if you forget their lives it is easy to become impatient with them. Unsurprisingly, their tempers can be short too. Arguments between one woman and another or between some woman customer and a snotty stallholder explode easily and, given these people's extravagant and expansive manner, can be quite entertaining. Others are not. I saw one woman, a beast of burden under shopping and harassed by her children, burst into tears and begin to abuse practically anyone within earshot. Thus their grossly inferior position in relation to the labour process plus the inherited cultural values of Islam combine to suffocate women in a world of crass physical brutality, seemingly never-ending toil, and the constant drip, drip of the tacky macho with which many male workers harass their class sisters. In the Metro Istanbul newspaper I was amused to see our very own chauvinist and metaphor for male insensitivity, Andy Capp, metamorphosed into 'Gungormez Dursun' (roughly translated as 'No Hope Dursun'). I have little doubt that many working women empathise quite closely with the world-weary wife of the strip, Flo, with her hard and colourless life, and with the cruelty she receives at the hands of 'her man'. As in Britain, many men in Turkey regard women in the same light as Andy Capp: either as pack animals or as crude sex objects.

For example, I am no prude, but some of the pictures in the mass circulation Turkish dailies did on occasion turn my stomach somewhat. The representations of women in the paper *Tan* for instance, a publication that makes the *Daily Mirror* read like Dostoyevsky, are not simply the 19-year-old-Tracey-from-Billerica-is-not-

just-a-pretty-face-she-also-has-a-degree-in-Astrophysics saucy snaps we are used to from our super, soaraway *Sun*. Many Turkish newspapers sometimes feature full colour pictures of women in especially exposed, distasteful, and semi-pornographic poses. These frozen chicken snaps of, how shall I put it, 'experienced' looking women are very characteristic of the attitude to women of an underdeveloped capitalist country relatively recently freed from the stultifying and very sexually repressive patriarchal relations of feudalism.

The women of Turkey suffer largely in silence. Their hope for a voice is the Party. During the '70s, the Party mobilised 50,000 women for political action, as in a rally against fascism organised under the auspices of the IKD (Progressive Women's Organisation). When the class as a whole begins to move again working women will assume their rightful place in the forefront of the movement: alongside their class brothers.

Tetchy

The mood of the working class and working people in Turkey seemed to me tetchy. A small bookstall holder in the Sahafira area for example, became very touchy when I questioned him about some of the titles on his shop front. How long had he been selling Marx's and Engel's works? "Since the end of the junta" he answered tightly. Had there been any trouble about him stocking these books? "Why should there be?" he snapped, "I only stock the economic ones!"

Now, perhaps you can call Engel's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, one of the works I saw displayed, economic in some ways. But to try to pass it off as being an innocuous little economics textbook really does not wash, does it? What is significant, however, is that the stallholder was now openly selling such work. A new more open period is coming in Turkey and with it new tasks for the CPT (IS).

Workers are in an equally 'touchy' mood. The disrespect for the country's leaders is growing daily. Talk of Turgut Ozal, the Prime Minister, is likely to result in groans and dark mutterings about 'the Panda'. This nickname for Ozal, a despicable slob, is an apt one. The panda, my least favourite animal, is a useless, moribund creature whose one food diet can often give it severe dietary problems. Evolution has passed the panda by and left it looking a rather silly animal not long destined for this world. Yes, indeed, a very apt nickname I think...

The workers of Turkey seem, as I have said, still cowed by the recent bloody oppression of their revolutionary movements. Yet the bitter lessons of their experiences are not far from the surface, literally in some ways. Young revolutionaries in Turkey told me how when the fascist coup triumphed in 1980 they hurriedly buried their revolutionary paraphernalia: guns, badges, books, flags, and so on. All over Turkey there are these small troves of revolutionary and communist treasures ready to be reclaimed from the earth when the time comes. They are very shallow 'graves', my friends assured me.

In the intervening period between the last revolutionary wave of the 70s and the coming one, a new generation will have grown to political consciousness. Turkey has one of the world's highest percentages of youth in its population and these young people are probably my abiding memory of the country. While I was wandering through the Topkapi Palace I was suddenly surrounded by a large group of school children swarming around me with their characteristic energy and zest. Their teacher called them to order to explain some feature of the Palace's architecture, and as they listened to him attentively it stuck me that these sons and daughters of the working class would, alongside with their parents, be forging in the not too distant future a key new link in the chain of the world revolution.

Today, though, they were content to just stand in the monument of a splendid past, on the threshold of an infinitely more glorious future, watching, waiting, and gathering strength.

Martin Evans

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Communist Party of Turkey
(İşçinin Sesi)

Prepare for war

1985 WAS truly a great year for the comrades from the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*). This was a year when they set about their declared aim "to win the masses" with characteristic energy and imagination. As our Communist Party degenerates into crisis the work of comrades in our Party undergoes a commensurate degeneration and decline. It is extremely useful therefore to look at how a genuine Leninist Party operates in the real world to give us both inspiration and also a model to aspire to.

Of course, without a correct analysis of the character of the present stage through which Turkey is passing, political organisations can make themselves appear "farical" as Emine Engin of the CPT (*İS*) has pointed out. The comrades from Turkey have correctly pointed out that fascism in Turkey has disintegrated and that an unstable transitional period has replaced it. In this period the chances for mass legal work amongst the people are increasing day by day, as is their anger and mood of rebellion. In these circumstances, to carry on with the styles of work and forms of organisation that the Party was forced into after the victory of fascism would be quite criminal. As comrade Yurukoglu put it in a meeting to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Party:

"There is a single message in this speech for our Party organisations... go on to a preparation for war footing."

Pirates

The two pirate TV broadcasts that CPT (*İS*) made during 1985 caused quite a stir (see *The Leninist* No.24 for a report). The second on August 30 in particular was much more widely heard and, unlike the first on January 31, reports of it were not censored from the Turkish media. Thus the message of the communists was brought to the attention of literally millions of workers in Turkey and the badly rattled Turkish ruling class and their police force left with large quantities of sticky egg on their faces. Evren, the general who actually headed the fascist coup even took to wandering around looking rather glassy eyed and presumably shell-shocked handing over transcripts of the communist pirates' broadcast to other establishment figures and asking, "Why are they calling me a fascist? I'm just an old man with the interests of the nation at heart." If the CPT (*İS*) had achieved nothing else these past twelve months, by putting the wind up the bloody fascist butcher Evren in this way, and thus hopefully taking 10 years off his miserable life, it would have been a damn good year's work.

Evren however has no monopoly on funk in the Turkish ruling class. The rightwing daily *Tercuman* is desperately doing everything in its power to split the Turk-Is trade union centre. Although at the moment Turk-Is is a reactionary bosses' trade union organisation, if workers' unity is achieved in its ranks it will represent a powerful potential threat to the disintegrating fascist regime. Thus, recently the CPT (*İS*) called on militants from

the old mass revolutionary DISK trade union organisation (which was repressed by the fascist takeover) to spread the fighting traditions of DISK in Turk-Is. *Tercuman* carried a 'shock/horror' story of this position of the Party, hoping of course to provoke a split in Turk-Is and to thus cripple its militant potential. In the process, however, they again, despite themselves, brought to the attention of many millions of the workers in Turkey the positions and propaganda of the CPT (*İS*). The Turkish bourgeois media has really been most 'accommodating' to the Party during this past year.

Interestingly, while the bourgeois press viciously attacks the CPT (*İS*), the Mensheviks of the 'official' party are busy haggling with rightwing parties for promises of future legality. In Turkey there has always been a ban on the Communist Party and anyone who tries to "propagate the domination of one class over another" (Article 141 and 142 of the Penal Code), but there is now talk of legalising a 'European-style Communist Party' coming from some quarters. Evidently the Mensheviks consider themselves sufficiently 'European-style' to be in the good graces of the Turkish bourgeoisie.

Most importantly of all in 1985, after a lapse of more than half a century, the long-awaited Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Turkey was convened by the *İşçinin Sesi* movement. The ideological battle against the Mensheviks had been largely won, they had been exposed and reduced to the level of slander and gutter journalism in order to try and combat *İşçinin Sesi*: now it was time to take on the mantle and also the tasks of the Party as a whole. The Mensheviks convened a bogus 'congress' last year. However, simply by looking at the slogans that came out of the two congresses we can easily judge which represents the authentic voice of communism in Turkey. The Mensheviks came forward with the empty call: "A democratic Turkey, a stronger CPT". So from this slogan who will lead Turkey to democracy? Clearly it will not be the CPT, but the bourgeoisie who *only then* will create the conditions for a stronger CPT. As Yurukoglu concludes:

"It is clear that the Menshevik congress made the CPT an extension of bourgeois democracy."

On the other hand, the CPT (*İS*) Congress met under the slogan "Revolution for democracy" and "For revolution Turkey needs a strong Communist Party!" This banner embodies the idea that although there are multifarious parties in Turkey today there is no other organisation that has any solution to Turkey's continuing political and economic crisis. Only the Communist Party can bring democracy to the working people of Turkey.

Sniff

If we look at the work of the Party over this past year, we get a 'sniff' of how a genuine Leninist organisation operates.

For example, the CPT (*İS*) from its origins has understood that in order to be able to pursue a truly independent

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Workers Voice (*İşçinin Sesi*): the most influential revolutionary paper in Turkey

working class line you must have independent finances, a lesson that the British left perhaps should take to heart. To achieve this independence, instead of protocol, high sounding titles, and international "solidarity" bun-fights the Party offers its members, it says, "blood, tears, toil, and sweat" (and lots of it!). The 1985 money-raising campaign was the first *İşçinin Sesi* organised as the Party and consequently this time it was dubbed with the indicative title of 'Self-Sacrifice Campaign'.

The 1985 ten week long 'Self-Sacrifice Campaign' must be added to the growing list of successes of the CPT (*İS*). Significantly, the numbers taking part in the campaign expanded quite markedly. For instance, the number of comrades giving regularly to meet an overall pledge was 21% greater than in 1984. Similarly, those sympathisers and supporters giving one or more donations to the campaign was ten times greater.

Although the 1985 campaign was a new one in many ways the comrades raised their pledges in the traditional hard ways by taking second jobs; by selling possessions and publications; by canvassing factories, restaurants, homes, and streets for donations; and, of course, by tightening their belts considerably. At the end of the ten weeks, by their discipline and creativity the comrades from the CPT (*İS*), a new and illegal Party, had raised well over £100,000.

Of course, the Mensheviks of the 'official' party and some elements of our own Party, because their unprincipled 'wally' politics preclude any notion of self-sacrifice or discipline, spread vile slander and gossip about the prodigious sums that CPT (*İS*) cadre and supporters are able to raise. Because their politics are corrupt and often up for the highest bidder they simply cannot conceive of the levels of work, discipline, and devotion to the Party that a Leninist leadership can demand and get.

Good Use

One particularly nasty innuendo that the Mensheviks have spread around (even it seems as far as publications outside of and hostile to the workers' movement such as *Private Eye*) is that large sums of the Party's money, after being raised by the hard slog of its members, is diverted to provide a luxurious life-style for CPT (*İS*) leaders. The refutation of this slander is to simply look at the levels of work that the Party has maintained.

Quite apart from the spectacular propaganda coups such as the two pirate broadcasts, the Party has throughout the difficult years of fascism worked patiently and painstakingly to carry out political work in the country and abroad. Following the crushing fascist coup, relations were maintained with some 76% of Party members in prison. Preserving relations on any sort of low level would have been quite an impressive achievement in and of itself, but the organisation was such that centre was able to smuggle into fascism's prisons 286 pages of articles by Lenin, some 2,054 pages of *İşçinin Sesi*, and 30 other publications of various

sorts. (Note that these figures are for the publications coming from centre alone; they do not include the figures for the Party's regional organisations in Turkey itself.) All of this required sending on average one courier a month into Turkey.

This small glimpse into part of the work of the Party illustrates just how empty the lies of the Mensheviks of the 'official' party actually are: the CPT (*İS*) simply could not maintain such high levels of quality political work unless there was a large pool of finance available and this finance was made available for revolutionary practice. Indeed, given the Mensheviks' habit of freely sponging off the peoples and Communist Parties of the socialist countries it seems very much a case of diverting attention from their comfortable, lazy, and above all safe life-style.

Pulse

The party has set itself an ambitious aim: to "win the masses" of Turkey for revolution. Thus, to take advantage of the expanding legal opportunities the pulse of the Party both in Europe and inside Turkey itself begins to beat faster.

- *Distribution* of the Party paper, *İşçinin Sesi* (*Worker's Voice* in English), is being stepped up. Recently, the Party commissioned a survey in its ranks to get a detailed breakdown of paper sales. The Paris organisation came out on top with an average of 12 papers per comrade sold of each issue. The Central Committee has therefore now set as a target for all members and supporters a minimum of 14 papers each.

- *Two Party presses*, operating underground in Turkey, are now each printing 5,000 editions of the central organ.

- *Also in Turkey* a division of labour has been established which will systematise and increase the circulation of the paper. Groups of comrades are now organised into two complementary groups, an Intelligence unit and a Distribution unit. The Intelligence group is charged with responsibility for discovering in which cafes, buses, shopping areas, and so on militant workers are to be found and at what times. Also, and crucially, they must study those large factories that are not yet covered by Party propaganda. In this way they generally draw what could be called a 'geopolitical' map for the Distribution group. The second group, organised separately and not knowing the other Party unit, will be then sent into action. As its name implies, it is responsible for actually getting the Party's propaganda into the hands of workers, using obviously 'technical' means of distribution, not open selling. After a distribution operation, the Intelligence unit again returns to the scene to gauge the all-important response of workers.

In general, then, the Party is going onto the offensive and beginning to reach out to the working people of Turkey in a mass way. The Leninists of the CPT (*İS*) have a hard task to make the revolution in Turkey; but then they are now building the sort of Party to do it.

Alec Long



Fighting fascism and racism Union Jack jackboot

SUPPORT FOR the fascist National Front has crashed in recent years. In the mid-1970s the NF boasted of being the fastest growing party in Britain and it certainly claimed a membership of around 20,000. Electoral performance was equally impressive. 1974 saw its vote rise from 76,865 to 113,843 in the two general elections of that year. In local elections it even managed to become the 'third party' in a number of areas, and in 1977 the NF notched up over 100,000 votes in elections to the GLC. The NF obviously thought its time had come and fielded 303 candidates in the 1979 general election.

Thatcher had other ideas and decided to pull the racist rug from under the NF feet. By cynically letting drop phrases about people feeling that their culture was being "swamped" by outsiders and promising tighter immigration controls Thatcher was able to capture the loyalty of xenophobic voters who had been turning to the non-establishment NF. Although the NF won 191,719 votes this only averaged a poor 633 votes for each candidate and they all lost their deposits. Confirmation of the 'Thatcher factor' in undermining the fascists came in the next general election in 1983 when the combined NF and British National Party vote was 27,065: an ignominious average of 366 votes for their 110 candidates.

Union Jack flags

The NF which had set its sights on councillors, MPs, and even overtaking the Liberal Party imploded, NF leader Tyndall who had consistently argued for an electoralist strategy and winning the middle class vote decamped to found the unsuccessful British National Party. The remaining aspiring furthers were soon at each other's throats. Martin Webster the NF's headline hitting National Activities Organiser grabbed the Party press and HQ only to find

himself ousted with the help of the courts by a Strasserite coup. The Oxbridge educated graduates Anderson and Griffin posed as a plebeian young guard determined to purge the NF of "bum boys and perverts". But far from this reviving the NF's fortunes membership has plummeted to a paper figure of 1,000. So even when the fascist groups combined their strength for a united march to the Cenotaph on November 10 last year they could only cobble together 800 behind their various Union Jack flags and red, white, and blue banners.

The new regime has played footsy with European fascist terrorists. In particular, *Searchlight* has pointed to Alberto Fiore of the so-called Armed Revolutionary Nuclei who is wanted by the Italian police and is working with the new NF leadership. Under the influence of such overseas links the NF has taken to packing off small groups of disorientated East End youth by minibus for paramilitary training, utilising the expertise of characters who say they are ex-SAS men. The grandly named Instant Response Group roams the Hampshire countryside supposedly to learn survival techniques and guerilla warfare but the overbearing manner of the instructors, and the cold and wet has dampened many a weekend shindig.

New regime

As well as going in for poorly attended camps in deepest Hampshire the new NF regime has sought to regain former glory by embracing popular causes ranging from opposition to US nuclear missiles, animal rights, and the miners' strike. Not surprisingly, NF intervention in such campaigns is not welcomed. So subterfuge is adopted. NF members fooled a few by setting up their own 'solidarity' campaign for the miners during the Great Strike and they infiltrated animal rights groups so as to give the campaign against Halal meat an overtly racist edge.

Of course, this popularism has not meant the NF abandoning its mystical ideology of blood and soil nor its pathological hatred of Jews, blacks, reds, and the Irish liberation movement; indeed, the NF has made it a point of strategy as well as honour to 'win the streets from the reds'.

While attempts to do this have pathetically failed, NF boot boys being easily seen off by the more militant sections of the left like Red Action and the RCP, attacks on isolated blacks have been substituted for set piece confrontations. This is an act of weakness and desperation and although it must be admitted that the majority of racist attacks are not directly their work, nonetheless the arson, physical attacks, and even murder by NF and other fascist thugs cannot be denied.

Left's response

Unfortunately the left's response to the NF's Strasserite turn and the increase in racist attacks has been far from adequate. The GLC sponsored Anti-Fascist Action has attempted to replace the now defunct ANL. Like the SWP-led 'bishops to brickies' ANL, the leaders of AFA paint fascism as non-British and unpatriotic; apparently the "NF's attempts to pass themselves off as respectable patriots is an act of sickening hypocrisy." In the same mould most Labourites and many in our Communist Party (including the Straight Leftists) see the short term solution to curbing the NF in exposing the fascists' phoney patriotism, Community Relations Councils, and making the police 'more responsive' through the reformist panacea of police 'accountability'. The long term solution is inevitably considered to be the return of the 'next Labour government'. This is not just pathetic, it is treacherous.

There is a division of labour between the fascists and the unorganised racists and the state. The fascist mad dog can always be promoted as a last resort in the

event of revolutionary upsurge; in the meantime its attacks and the beating of the racist drum helps keep the working class divided. Certainly as British capitalism continues its relative decline and a new general crisis looms it would be criminal to play down the fascist threat simply because the NF has declined over the last few years. Fascism will always remain a last resort for a crisis ridden capitalism.

So at the same time as frowning upon the fascist groups the bourgeoisie knows that it can unleash these scum if all else fails. Even now, despite protestations in favour of the 'multi-racial society' in parliament, the establishment and its popular media do everything to fuel chauvinism and racial division. As to the police, the state's scum in blue terrorise the black community with all the force of bourgeois law. Fake anti-drugs drives, the new stop and search powers, and straightforward intimidation and insult are the lot of black youth in 'front line' areas like Handsworth, Brixton, and Tottenham.

The Labour Party

As to the election of the 'next Labour government' it is worth recalling who it was who introduced the racist immigration laws in the first place. It was of course the Labour Party in the 1970s and the reason is simple. The Labour Party is 100% committed to the British capitalist state. Faced with this objective fact not surprisingly left Labourites and their friends do not attack the inherent racism of that state. Instead they portray state racism as merely a policy of this or that government which could be discarded with ease once a Labour Prime Minister was in Number Ten. In other words the opportunists seek to tackle the symptoms not the cause. And they do this all in the name of Britain's national interests and traditions.

Ironically the fascists argue along similar lines, although dressing it in the language of blood and soil. John Tyndall stated this clearly in 1977: he declared that "when it was a case of fighting Hitler, Labour politicians didn't hesitate to stir up people's feelings of patriotism. We see things now in the same terms: we are threatened with invasion, with destruction, and we have to stimulate the will to resist." So, like the reformists, the British fascists argue against the evils of finance capital as opposed to industrial capital and call for import controls; like the reformists, the British fascists support immigration laws; like the reformists, the British fascists decry various governments for their wrong policies; and like the left reformists this is done in the name of 'saving Britain'.

For the utopian and chauvinistic British reformists the chauvinistic British fascist groups are of course alien to Britain, they are German or Italian in inspiration. They are not, in other words, patriotic Brits like them. In truth it is capitalism which fosters racism and it breeds fascism in the colours of the nation. There is therefore nothing alien from the racist capitalist system in Britain about the NF. It marches with Union Jacks and placards calling for making Britain GREAT again. Because of all this, genuine communists understand full well that to kill fascism one must not only be against the NF and racist gangs, the present government, and all immigration controls but the chauvinistic ideology of reformism and the capitalist system itself.

Hilary Fitzgerald & Alan Merrick

&
and...

An intriguing slant on the origins of the killer disease AIDS was recently given by Dr. John Searle in the black newspaper *The Voice* (January 11). According to the good doctor, the whole nasty business could just be a "Soviet plot" hatched midst the hissing cauldrons and demonic vats of the Kremlin's biological warfare department.

The circulation figures of our Party's paper *7 Days* make very gloomy reading indeed. Just 1,681 copies of our central organ are distributed in London, and over 600 of those are accounted for by subscriptions. Predictably, important branches in London are leading a boycott of our paper; the Straight Leftist influenced branches of Camden Hospital and Gospel Oak for example take none and another branch which leans the same way politically, Victoria, sells just ten copies every week. Another branch in London manages to out-do even Victoria's 'proud' record and takes one copy!

Interviewed on a BBC Radio 4 news programme, Ken Gill, a prominent supporter of the *Morning Star*, explained that shareholders in the Westland helicopter firm should support the European bid for the company as the opposing bid was from an American firm "which by definition is interested in monopoly."

Mr. Gill's interesting development of Marxism-Leninism, that the tendency towards monopoly in capitalism is in fact a genetic phenomenon (presumably "by definition" the European firms competing for Westland are not interested in monopoly), needs to be widely publicised. After all, we have to give those small family crofters in British Aerospace every chance against the big bad wolves of American imperialism... don't we, Ken?

"For all I might agree with a lot of what the SWP say, they don't stand a dog's chance of ever getting into power. I think they should bring some of their fundamentally good ideas into the Labour Party and get people to rally and make sure the Party acts on those principles of socialism."

The speaker of these profound words: Tony Benn, looking to mop up yet another radical left group; or Hatton and his Militant chums, finally responding to the SWP's unrequited courtship of them? No, in fact the speaker is none other than that 'principled socialist' Paul Weller, erstwhile leader of the group *The Jam* and now along with others in the hopelessly misnamed pop musicians' collective *Red Wedge*, a recruiting sergeant for scabby Neil Kinnock. Who is going to be more embarrassed at Paul's simple words—Neil Kinnock or Tony Cliff? Still, if 'hep-cat' Neil Kinnock will enlist the efforts of political illiterates like Billy Bragg or Weller to get himself into No10 he must expect these *jaux pas* occasionally.

In looking at the new draft of the CPSU's Third Programme we are acting in the belief that it is the right and duty of every communist to criticise mistakes and shortcomings in an open and comradely manner.

This is especially important in the case of the CPSU because it is the most influential party in our world movement and leads the Soviet Union; a mighty bastion of socialism and therefore a tremendous gain and responsibility for all the world's workers.

The Gorbachev edition



THE Communist Party of the Soviet Union is holding its 27th Congress at the end of February. This is an historic event for six main reasons:

1. CPSU congresses are now only held once every five years.
2. It is the first congress to be presided over by Mikhail Gorbachev.
3. The next congresses of the ruling parties in Eastern Europe will certainly take their cue from it, not least in the need for a less aged leadership; comrades Erich Honecker, Janos Kadar, Todor Zhivkov, and Gustav Husak are thus all likely to step down in the near future.
4. The congress will hear a detailed report on the economic growth and social progress of the last five years, as well as the problems encountered in this field.
5. As well as reviewing the world political/military balance and dealing with the usual proposals for the next Five Year Plan the congress will consider proposals concerning the economy for the period ending in 2000.
6. A new draft of the Party's Third Programme will be finalised. This programme will of course act as a bench mark, a vital point of reference for not only communists in the USSR but also those in the rest of the socialist community and the world communist movement as a whole.

The 27th Congress is therefore of immense practical and theoretical importance for all communists and necessitates the most serious study and comment, as is our proletarian internationalist right and duty. The USSR is the world's revolutionary centre and the CPSU is the most influential Party in our world movement. A new CPSU programme is in particular of fundamental importance to Marxists who recognise the reality of living socialism and the absolute need to unite day to day practice with longterm, theoretically verified aims. The programme after all acts as the Pole Star for immediate struggles and demands and represents the crystallisation of collective experience and theoretical understanding. So the deliberations and decisions of the CPSU's congress command even more attention than usual.

Centrists

Naturally the obsequious British centrists are praising everything with enthusiasm. The *Morning Star's* Kate Clark dutifully reports from Moscow about preparing for "growth and progress". She even writes about overcoming "damaging tendencies, such as Party careerism, hypocrisy, bureaucracy, and formalism", presumably a reference to the negative features of the Brezhnev years (not that Kate Clark and her ilk would have ever dared to write

about such "damaging tendencies" while Brezhnev lived). Brian Topping is even more sycophantic. He marvels at the draft's "tremendous scope", extols its "considerable depth" and, as if he has read but not understood the new draft, he spares no CPSU blushes by eulogising them for being "infused with the confidence of a people who are now building a communist society": all this in one short paragraph in the Straight Leftists' *Communist*, which he edits.

As if this adulation of the CPSU were not enough, *7 Day's* Denis Ogden and the doyen of Eurocommunism Monty Johnstone have been heard to express approval of the Gorbachev 'style', though as one would guess this has been done in less gushing terms. And much to the surprise of the centrists even the Executive Committee of our Party has positively noted recent developments within the CPSU.

Why this meeting of opportunist minds? In part no doubt it is because of Gorbachev himself. His 'youthful' sweep compared with the one foot in the grave leadership of the previous decade, his 'style', and ability to communicate in a relaxed and confident manner. This and the 'fireside' summit with Reagan, and even his handsome and fashionably turned out wife, has led to a honeymoon period with a broad spectrum of the bourgeois media. Could this explain the sympathetic noises coming from self-declared Eurocommunists?

As to the centrists, we must be brutally unflattering. Whatever the CPSU said, they would greet it as akin to the word of god. Of course despite the apparent chalk and cheese contradiction between the likes of the true believer Brian Topping and the agnostic Monty Johnstone it must be remembered that both Euros and centrists had the same 1930s origins. Because of this it is important to note that Monty Johnstone himself lauded the living Stalin like a god and wrote in *Challenge* nine days after his death that "the working people of the whole world have suffered an irreparable loss." So while comrade Johnstone might now tut-tut at the CPSU's 22nd Congress in 1961 for passing unanimously the silly targets of the Third Programme, it is legitimate to ask him where his 1961 critique is to be found.

The wretched god building centrists, whether they be Straight Leftists, NCPers, or pro-*Morning Star* CCGers will, as we have said, effusively agree with the CPSU whatever it does, whatever it says. Because of this, except to illustrate abysmal theoretical poverty and artless parasitism, there is little point in subjecting their puerile writings to detailed examination. They have no political in-



The Mikhail style ...

dependence, no genuine political theory, they are in fact political talkers in tongues.

Euros

While the babbling centrists attempt to give themselves a future by brainlessly repeating and thus grossly distorting statements and theories from the Soviet Union and the CPSU this is not the case with the Eurocommunists. Their theory and practice is firmly rooted in bourgeois society. Their criticisms are therefore, despite protestations to the contrary, not aimed at overcoming real problems in the USSR itself, but are the result of a desire to integrate into the liberal wing of bourgeois society.

This should not be taken to imply that an individual like comrade Johnstone is nothing but a cynical hypocrite. We are not in this article questioning his sincerity. No, what we are saying is that objectively Eurocommunism is an expression of bourgeois society in the communist movement. That does not mean that everything the Euros say about the Soviet Union or the other socialist countries is a fabrication: far from it. But it is essential to grasp the simple fact that they are not motivated by proletarian internationalism. Indeed for the Eurocommunists it is natural that the proletarians of the world are locked into hermetically sealed national tombs.

So when they bemoan the purges of the 1930s, today's continued lack of full socialist democracy, and the interventions in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan they are indicating to the bourgeoisie that they can be trusted, that far from being agents of Moscow they are true Brits. Naturally, not every political question demands a clear stand with bourgeois opinion, especially at a particular juncture in time when the leader of the CPSU is being greeted with approbation by sections of the bourgeois media. Thus Eurocommunist comment concerning 'non-emotive' issues like the CPSU's new edition of its Third Programme can be mildly interesting but this inevitably tends towards the academic rather than the scientific, but partisan, approach of Marxist-Leninists.

Far from the concern of the supporters of *Marxism Today* being with the proletarian internationalist task of making the USSR an ever more powerful bastion for the world revolution, advice is given to the Soviet comrades on how to become acceptable to the average *Guardian* reader. Doubting the CPSU will respond to this Euro recipe for disaster, comrade Johnstone writes off the Soviet Union in *Marxism Today* as being no longer the "main revolutionary force in the world". In its place he offers the laughable alternative of feminism, "which is clearly distinguished from the monolithic

Soviet model." (March 1985)

Economy

Gorbachev will probably not, as comrade Johnstone suspects, embrace feminism. Unlike Johnstone, he must get to grips with the real world rather than galloping off into the light-minded realm of petty bourgeois fads. Faced with an increasingly hostile world, not least the US-led anti-Soviet war-drive with its new, exotic technology, conventional arms race, and the World War III winning Strategic Defence Initiative Gorbachev is determined to get the Soviet Union and its economy into shape. The new draft of the Third Programme reflects this in no uncertain terms. So although the decision to revamp the 1961 Third Programme was taken under Brezhnev there can be little doubt that the new draft bears the businesslike stamp of comrade Mikhail Gorbachev.

Instead of Khrushchov's mad-cap promises, Gorbachev is more concerned with the Soviet economy's lack of dynamism and the need to get existing plant and machinery working efficiently (draft p.40). In fact, according to Vadim Kortunov of the Soviet news agency APN "the central idea" of the new draft "is for faster social and economic development" (*Soviet Weekly* January 11 1986). So instead of offering the Soviet people pie in the sky



... and the Raisa charm

communism Gorbachev wants to get the wheels of the Soviet economy moving faster and more efficiently so that it can reach "the world's highest level in productivity of social labour" (p.35), this clearly not being the case today.

He is aware that failure on this score can only make the USA more bellicose and confident. Gorbachev might also be haunted by the fear that unless the Soviet economy can be galvanised the relative costs of defence spending will become not only ever more burdensome but ultimately it could lead to economic dislocation and even a Polish type crisis. Undoubtedly because the USSR has been suffering from steadily declining growth rates, atrophy in the leading ranks of the CPSU, corruption in Party and state institutions, and a disorientated working class Gorbachev must shake things up quickly. He must replace sloganising with hard graft and introduce new production and management techniques if the USSR is to defend itself against the growing threat from the USA and NATO. In this way Gorbachev hopes to avoid the day when an X-ray laser beam totting Pax Americana rolls back communism in Eastern Europe through 'democratic' counterrevolutions and reduces the USSR to a workers' state with a neo-colonial twist to it.

Retreat

Fear of US aggression would seem to be the reason why the new draft of the Third Programme has ditched the fanciful target dates when the USSR will overtake the USA and achieve communism. The same fate has been suffered by the 1961 solemn proclamation from the Party that the "present generation of Soviet people shall live in communism". In place of the now truly embarrassing programme declarations that the USSR will overtake the USA in 1970, and in the main build a communist society by 1980, are much vaguer and therefore safer longterm general aims concerning relative productivity and communism.

This is a retreat. Fortunately it is a retreat from utopian idealism and on this basis we welcome the new draft. The aim of communism should never have been treated in the bombastic, loud mouth-

ed fashion Krushchov did. That Gorbachev seems to be insisting that defending the USSR should be the main content of the Party programme undoubtedly meets the needs of the immediate period ahead.

Despite Gorbachev's down to earth manner and his concern with honesty it must be said that the failure of Soviet reality to live up to the programmatically enshrined medium term and longterm targets of the existing Third Programme is still not admitted, warts and all, by Soviet commentators. This is illustrated by the already quoted comrade Vadim Kortunov of APN. He informs the readers of *Soviet Weekly* that: "The programme has been freed of details more appropriate to specific economic plans"; this is while not admitting what these "details" are. And in the usual slight of hand method employed by Soviet journalists attempting to avoid dealing with "details" like catching up with the US and reaching communism he writes of "accumulated experience" allowing "more precise long-term aims" and "a far reaching understanding of the ways and means of achieving communism and the timescales involved." In fact in place of a much needed critique of the Third Programme the Soviet comrades like Vadim Kortunov give us the well worn platitudes of 'official optimism'.

As to the new draft itself. It must be said that it is little more than the old text 'freed' of its more far out crankiness and utopian, never realised targets. This is a disappointment. While we prefer short term realism to daft posturing, in our view the 1961 Third Programme needs replacing by an entirely new document. Hypothetically this is possible. The assembled delegates at the forthcoming congress could refer the draft back so that a new programme can be drafted; though it must be admitted that on past performances this is highly improbable.

Our hope that the delegates refer the draft back is not because the programme's aim of "the planned and all-round perfection of socialism, for Soviet society's further advance to communism" (1985 draft p.7) is irrelevant. No, far from it. No, our objection to it is that the underlying theoretical and political assumptions are lack-

ing in vigour to the point of departing from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. Indeed, because of lack of vigour the Third Programme's very aims are endangered simply because only orthodox Marxism can provide a truly scientific guide to action; and who can doubt that this is what is required to reach communism. Why do we say lack of vigour? We will illustrate a few instances.

Vigour

The whole question of Stalin and the crimes perpetrated under his leadership are somewhat smugly passed over in one paragraph. This concludes that after his death "socialist democracy was further developed and the Soviet legal system consolidated." (p.14) Clearly this is inadequate, not least when one considers the complete lack of socialist democracy during this period. And although the draft looks to the day when "communist public self-government" becomes a reality and emphasises the "strategic line of development of the political system of Soviet society consists in advancing Soviet democracy" (p.63), it must be admitted that there exists a gap between theory and practice. Lack of socialist democracy is increasingly coming into contradiction with Soviet socio-economic development. Indeed we would argue that the full extension of socialist democracy is a crying need in all spheres of Soviet life, not least in the CPSU itself.

The struggle for the genuine liberation of women is inseparably bound up with the struggle for communism. Significantly, the fight for full and genuine equality is all but ignored. That the draft more or less limits the woman question to "improving the demographic processes" and the "further improvement of the status of mothers" (pp 57, 58) just shows how deep the problem is. Silence, it is said, can speak volumes. Certainly, if as Marx once remarked the development of a society could be judged by the lot of women, Soviet socialism is still in many respects backward.

The draft has an erroneous and unscientific attitude towards the precise nature of the period we are living in. We are told that there has taken place a fundamental change in the alignment of

forces in the international arena in favour of the peoples fighting for social progress, democracy, national freedom and peace." (p.19) This is true if we mean that the world is going in a socialist direction, but not if we mean that the balance is already in socialism's favour. The draft seems to imply it as meaning balance. Unfortunately this is not yet the case. Imperialism is still the dominant force on the planet. Yes, it is declining: yes, it has passed its peak; but in terms of the world economy, share of industrial production, and trade with the imperialist states the balance remains with imperialism. As a result this remains the epoch of imperialist wars and proletarian revolution, an epoch of transition between capitalism and communism, though not yet the epoch of communism. In that sense the existence of the socialist countries can still only be seen as partial victories over imperialism.

As to the notion that the "general crisis of capitalism is deepening" (p.19), this shows a complete failure to stand by the Marxist theory of capitalist crisis. Capitalism might be heading towards a new general crisis (indeed, the massive and unprecedented extension of the credit system, the debt crisis, the steady decline in the rate of profit, the disparities in international trade with over-exporting and over-importing, the roller-coasting of raw material prices, and the quick buck speculative stock exchange killings all show this to be the case). But this is not the general crisis itself.

Another important failing of the draft is in its wishful thinking contention that the dictatorship of the proletariat "has evolved into a political organisation of all working people, while the proletarian state has become a state of the whole people." (p.64) This absurd and false picture of the supposed homogeneous, almost classless, certainly non-contradictory character of Soviet society is reflected in the Party's understanding of itself. The draft declares that as a result of socialism "all sections of the working people" have shifted to "the positions of the working class" and thus the CPSU has become "the party of all the people" (p.105) These misguided statements about the lack of class contradictions flatly contradict the Marxist positions on the class nature of the state and the continued existence of classes and class contradictions until communism. Throwing out the Marxist position on the class nature of the Party and the state must lead to a denial of the proletariat continuing its class struggle under socialism, not least through their Communist Party. The idealist self-deception on the state and the Party in the draft can only blunt the necessity for a proletarian class struggle to overcome the vestiges of capitalism found in socialism, not least the existence of the state itself, the law of value, and a bureaucracy.

Second

We will in future editions of *The Leninist* carry a number of supplements outlining in full our views of the Third Programme (in its post 27th Congress edition). In the meantime it might be useful to deal with a few more of the central tenets of the Third Programme and compare them with the Second Programme which it replaced.

It might be objected that this is not to compare like with like. But it should be recalled that the Second Programme drafted by Lenin took many of the theoretical positions of the First, including sections drafted by Plekhanov;

and we will only compare what is general and pertinent to the period we are now living in and not what is specific to the tasks of another stage.

The Second Programme was adopted in 1919 at the Party's 8th Congress. The programme was designed to orientate the communists in Russia through the stormy waters of the early stages of socialist construction and place their struggle in the context of the world socialist revolution. While much of its content is concerned with exigencies of carrying out the immediate tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat the world view of Marxism-Leninism underpins everything.

The new draft of the Third Programme declares that the "most acute problem facing mankind today is that of war and peace." (p.29) and considers "general and complete disarmament under strict and comprehensive international control to be a historic task" (p.98). Apparently disarmament and ending the threat of war can only be achieved by "curbing" the forces of "imperialism and its policy", this being possible through "peaceful coexistence" and the people "uniting their efforts" (pp.29,30). This pacifistic approach is flatly contradicted by the Second Programme.

The Second Programme declares that the Communist Party in Russia "emphatically rejects the hope of disarmament under capitalism as the reactionary philistine illusion of petty-bourgeois democrats, even though they call themselves socialists and social democrats, and in opposition to this and all similar slogans which actually play into the hands of the bourgeoisie, it advances the slogan of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie, the slogan of completely and ruthlessly suppressing the resistance of the exploiters, the slogan of fighting until victory over the bourgeoisie of the whole world is achieved in civil wars at home and in international revolutionary wars." (V I Lenin CW Vol.29 p.130)

The Second Programme commits communists in Russia to "employing in every way the torch of world socialist revolution lit in Russia... and to carry the revolution into the most advanced countries and in general into all countries" (*Ibid* pp.105,106). In sad contrast to this one sure way of preventing world war and defending the socialist states the draft nowhere even mentions world revolution, or for that matter any other formulae that could reasonably be interpreted to mean the same thing when it comes to the key questions dealt with by the draft. This is no slip: it is the abandonment of a fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism.

In conclusion, let us say that because of the great gain to the international working class that the Soviet Union represents, because it is the world's revolutionary centre and the CPSU is the most influential Party in our world movement, defects in its programme can only but have a detrimental effect on the world revolution. Likewise overcoming these defects can only but have a positive effect on the world revolution. Our criticisms are therefore sincerely and soberly directed at overcoming these defects in order to advance the cause of the world revolution. We hope that our Soviet comrades who recognise that "departure from the fundamental propositions of the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin weakens the potentialities of the communist movement" (p.102) will read our views in the proletarian internationalist spirit that they are delivered.

Jack Conrad

Soldier, soldier

Tony Parker *Soldier, soldier* Heinemann, London 1985, pp.244, £9.95.

THE ARMY is one institution rarely dealt with by the left in Britain. On one level this is understandable: there is really not much they can do about it. If squaddies turn out to machine-gun the local Saturday morning *Socialist Worker* sellers, the said paper sellers had just better hope that the aforementioned squaddies have severe eye defects and a very unsteady gun hand. But it does not rest there. Since all the left, from the Labourite paper tigers of *Militant* down to the doddering eccentrics of the RCP(ML), claim to be the organisation that will lead the British revolution, it stands to reason that the paths of these 'revolutionaries' and the Army will cross if this is to be so. Some left groups already claim to be the party. Why then, as Lenin's Comintern stipulated, do they not organise within the Army? Gerry 'the Godfather' Healy's WRP at least knows its 'Twenty-one conditions' well enough to claim it does.

Whilst we will not send our comrades off to their local recruitment office to be kitted out in khaki, we recognise that this task must one day be tackled, and the principles underlying it understood now.

Tony Parker's book is a comprehensive set of interviews with soldiers of a wide range of ranks, working under a wide range of conditions, and although the book was never written for this purpose gives an indication of the possibilities of applying principles developed by the early Comintern today.

The officers, with a general background of, respectively, the playing fields of Eton (maybe), the hallowed halls of Sandhurst (invariably), and a tin tort in West Belfast (unfortunately), do not come over as all that progressive. All stirring stuff straight out of a Biggles book.

There is, however, a smattering of middle class radicalism in the officers' mess. One major confesses to having "strong mental reservations about being in Ireland any longer" (p.101). Another comments "We all know there's no solution to this fucking problem and the best thing we can do is go away". There seems to be something about Infantry majors; another confided, "I'm sure if I'd been born in a Catholic area of Londonderry (sic) I could well be in the IRA... I respect the dedication of the IRA." (p.173) Now, I am not trying to paint these guys red, or even a pale pink, just illustrate the antagonism between their sentiments and their position. Such a strand is anyway very tenuous amongst the officers. You cannot expect many denizens of Hampstead or Finchley to identify with a young freedom-fighter on the Falls Road who is trying to put a bullet in him.

On to the 'poor bloody Infantryman'. It is instructive to glance at how you become a squaddie. One ex-recruiting officer spilled the beans. Would-be soldiers were given a basic intelligence test and graded from one to five. The 'fours' and 'fives' were "too thick even to be a soldier" and most of the 'ones' were rejected as "they were the sort who were possibly going to question and argue too much and could perhaps gee up the others into giving trouble." (p.153) So to be intelligent is to be branded a 'Red'.

So the 'twos' and 'threes' are let in; but why do they join? It is hardly a Rambo-like lust for blood. More like the lesser of a number of evils: to escape unemployment, poverty, lousy housing, etc. For example: "...I was working in a chicken factory. It was absolutely fucking terrible; I just felt I As one Private rather whimsically put it, "I don't really want to be a soldier and have to kill people, I'd sooner make some rich woman happy with my cock and live

like that." (p.27) Any takers for the Privates' privates?

The whole supposed 'above politics' nature of the Army is of course strongly pushed. Unavoidably many swallow it. "I don't spend much time thinking about these sorts of things, that's for the higher-ups and the politicians to sort out." (p.123) Ours is not to reason why...

Their attitude to the Irish War is a mixture of 'feeling like real soldiers' and a strong desire to be elsewhere. Again a certain respect for the Provos.

Another place where a strong desire to be elsewhere is present is Belize in Latin America, named by the troops as "the arsehole of the Empire". Shocked by the poverty one soldier commented: "I don't know why there isn't a revolution". (p.131) Might it just be the presence of a British colonial army?

British troops have unfortunately shown their willingness to kill in the service of British capitalism overseas, but what about 'back home'? The book does not deal with the low-level use of troops during the miners' strike, but records some of the thoughts of soldiers who spent time squelching around in the mud on Greenham Common, which gives an indication of their attitude to being used against civilians in Britain generally. "A few soldiers... said 'Sir, we don't agree with this at all'... could have meant trouble, but fortunately it never came to it." (p.190) said a lieutenant. Mind you, with a few 'troublemakers' in the ranks, who knows?

An army is of course necessary for the capitalists, but it also trains large numbers of the 'great unwashed' to fight. In times of heightened class struggle the Army may misfire, so to speak. This ricochet effect has been seen in Britain in the 1919 Soldiers Strikes and the Invergordon Mutiny. We do not claim that new Invergordons are just around the corner, but neither do we ignore the fact that in re-forging the Party, it must be one that can stimulate and take advantage of such situations, and more.

The Bolsheviks provided a model example of communists successfully spitting the army, but Chile provides an example of the tragic consequences of the Communist Party's failure to carry out this task. The Eurocommunists, the Communist Campaign Group, *Straight Left*, and many other left groups outside our Party in reality look to Chile '73 not Russia '17 for their method. We look to the Bolsheviks. No contest.

Alan Merrick

Which road?

Irish Republican Support Group *Resistance* No.2 London 1985, pp.15, £0.50p.

BACK in October 1985 we reviewed the first publication to come from the Irish Republican Support Group (CPGB). Our review welcomed the healthy positions in *Ireland: A principled communist position*, vis-a-vis the liberation movement in Ireland. At the same time we maintained that its stated aim of taking "the arguments in support of the liberation movement into the heart of the Party" rested on "where it stands in the inner-Party battle". In other words, we said "Will it be for the Party or against it?"

In November's edition of *The Leninist* we published a letter from comrade Chester T. Allright, a leading writer in *Resistance*, the new IRSG (CPGB) journal. "Whilst appreciating the integrity" of our "Leninist politics" comrade Allright nonetheless questioned the review in effect because we insisted that clarity on the inner-Party struggle was essential.

The IRSG (CPGB) has now published *Resistance* No.2. Admittedly, its articles on the Easter 1916 Rising, the PTA, and the Catholic Church are posi-

tive. Despite this its editorial shows that our comradely warning about the danger of *Resistance* not standing on a clear Party platform in respect of the Communist Party itself has not been heeded.

In the unattributed editorial we find the *Morning Star*, which has always opposed the IRA's armed struggle, given



fawning "constructive" advice. In contrast to this *7 Days* and the Communist Party are rudely and casually dismissed "going nowhere fast". It is not our intention to defend the theory or practice of Eurocommunism, but we will defend our Party against liquidationism, especially if this is dressed up in calls for solidarity with Ireland. For communists, commitment to their Party is no academic matter. There can be no principled unity around solidarity with Ireland's liberation struggle without a principled position on the Party.

It is all very well for comrade Allright to protest, as he did in his letter to *The Leninist*, that those around the IRSG(CPGB) "all have different views on the correct methods of inner-Party struggle." If this is the case, as we know it is, why publish an editorial which attacks the Communist Party as a whole (not just its leadership)? Why publish an editorial which boot-lickingly praises the *Morning Star* for merely carrying a mundane interview by Roger Trask with comrade Jimmy Stewart of the CPI? After all, *Marxism Today* has published articles on Ireland and even an interview with Danny Morrison. Did the Stewart interview in any way whatsoever represent a shift from the *Morning Star's* thoroughly opportunist history of attacking the liberation struggle in Ireland? If we are to be honest it must be admitted that the answer is no. So why the praise when it is so undeserved?

The *Morning Star* and the Communist Campaign Group that backs it are moving away from Communist Party politics. This is a fact. Far from moving to the left this heterogeneous grouping is already visibly decaying under the weight of its own apathy. It is, moreover, because of its adherence to reformism, committed to a road which ends in the mire of Labourism. Those that support a principled communist position on Ireland cannot be oblivious to this.

If the comrades around the IRSG(CPGB) are serious about their perspective of taking "the arguments in support of the liberation movement into the heart of the Party" then they must oppose those who are cynically engineering a split from our Party. If the IRSG(CPGB) takes the CPGB in its handle seriously (as indeed it should) it must take a firm and undeviating stand in defending the Party.

It might be objected that our Party leadership has an awful record on Ireland. This is true. But then so has the *Morning Star*. It would be foolish, to say the least, for communists to believe in any strategy for revolution based on Tony Chater's thoroughly reformist *Morning Star*. Marxism-Leninism tells us that our task

must be to reforge the Communist Party, not desert it.

In re-forging our Party winning it to a principled position on Ireland will undoubtedly be a central question. Because of this we must not allow the fight for solidarity with Ireland to provide a cover for those who wish to side with those actively working for a split from our Party or even as an excuse to cop out by taking a supposedly neutral stance on the inner-Party struggle. The IRSG(CPGB) is at a crossroads. It must now definitely and finally choose whether it is for the Party or against it.

Jack Conrad

The IRSG(CPGB) can be contacted through Box 13, Community Press, 2A St Pauls Road, London N1.

Marxist regimes?

Bogdan Szajkowski *The establishment of Marxist regimes* Butterworth Scientific, London 1982, 173pp, £12.00

NO, this is not a blueprint for a successful proletarian revolution in Britain, or anywhere else. But it is an attempt by a bourgeois scholar to present his understanding of the present era, the era of revolutions.

Szajkowski chronicles 53 revolutions or transfers of power which have established "Marxist regimes" lasting from 36 hours (Bratislava 1918) to over 68 years (USSR to date). Apart from revolutions that established current socialist countries (17), he includes the much more problematical "Marxist regimes" of Chile (1932), Congo, Somalia, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.

Whilst it could be said that revolutions in our era "should be viewed as a series of related events that take their source in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917" (p.138), not all revolutions produce the

Of course, a large number of the revolutions have not always proceeded uninterruptedly to socialist tasks.

Of course, a large number of the revolutions described have occurred in nations now constituting part of the USSR, such as in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Tannu Tuva. However, the author's strict chronological method leaves some holes. For example, while we can read of the revolutions in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1918 and 1919 (pp.21-23) and their subsequent collapse following Finnish, German, and Polish intervention, Szajkowski omits mention of how they entered the USSR subsequently. And yet, quite correctly, the important Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 is covered at almost the same length as the present Hungarian People's Republic (from 1949).

A lack of appreciation of the concept of a revolutionary situation being a prerequisite of revolution and a consequent ignoring of the material conditions making it up are evident in this catalogue approach. So, the first socialist revolution outside the boundaries of the former Russian Empire, centred on Bremen in January 1919, is not connected to nor placed in conjunction with the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic of April 1919. Both were the product of the revolutionary situation in postwar Germany. Later manifestations of Germany's revolutionary situation are not mentioned.

Creditably, Soviet assistance to revolutionaries in Asia is given due standing. Proclamation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Gilan in northern Iran was made possible in May 1920 by the support given to the nationalist Jangali forces by the Red Army. Twenty-five years in November 1945 the Azeri (Turkic-speaking) rebellion in northwest Iran was aided in a similar manner. Further east the second revolution in the

world which led to the establishment of a present socialist state, in Mongolia, received 24,000 Soviet cavalryment and instructors for its small partisan army fighting Chinese militarism. Similarly, the Eastern Turkistan Republic in northwest Sinkiang "received Soviet backing and support throughout its existence" (p.44) from its establishment in November 1944 until incorporation in the People's Republic of China in October 1949.

Comintern's crucial intervention in helping to establish the Communist Party of China and in nurturing its early development are sketched, as are the CPC's cooperation with and antagonism to the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang of Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai-shek. As with the author's treatment of other regimes, we are given few details of how mass support was engendered, apart from mention of soviets established in several areas of China from 1929-31 and groups set up in each village to "attack the landowners" (p.75) during and after the anti-Japanese struggle.

At the end of the Second World War and while the world was still to emerge from the general crisis of capitalism, most of eastern Europe joined the world socialist system. But the establishment of socialism was achieved in a variety of ways. In Albania, whose Communist Party was not formed until late 1939 (with Yugoslav help), the National Liberation Movement and its Army, led by the Party, cleared out the Italian fascist army by November 1944. Largest of the resistance organisations in Yugoslavia was the Partisan army organised around its Communist Party; it set up National Liberation Committees in the liberated areas (as did the CP of Albania) and moved to a national conference of the anti-fascist movement by late 1942, which a year later laid the foundations for the new state; Partisans and Soviet troops liberated Belgrade in October 1944.

Bulgaria's Workers' Party was, throughout, the strongest opposition to its fascist regime: the Party's partisan units formed the bulwark of the People's Liberation Army and through the Fatherland Front engineered a successful uprising in September 1944 as the Red Army crossed from Romania. Previously, following the palace coup in Romania as the Red Army came into Moldavia in August 1944, government ministers were arrested by units of the Communist Party of Romania, which led an immediate armed insurrection. Unfortunately, Czechoslovakia before 1945 is ignored by the author. As for Poland, before the Red Army crossed the pre-war frontier in January 1944 the Polish Workers' Party (set up in 1942) had formed the National Council for the Homeland, which included the Socialist Party and trade unions, in order to govern the liberated areas; illuminating Bierut's *On the Party* is quoted on p.69: "The presence of the Soviet army paralysed our class enemies." A four-party coalition was formed in Hungary only after liberation; similarly, of course, in the Soviet-liberated area of Germany bloc committees were subsequently formed in all cities and villages.

Vietnam illustrates a national liberation struggle proceeding uninterruptedly to socialism—and in heroic fashion. Struggles in adjacent Laos and Kampuchea also were led through national liberation to socialist tasks by their communist parties. Cuba, however, became a socialist country through guerilla war without a communist party's leadership; the Communist Party of Cuba dates its formation from October 1965, nearly seven years after the revolution. This certainly "demonstrated a novel way of conducting and winning" a struggle without a vanguard party, but perhaps says more about the imperialist pressures on post-revolutionary Cuba in deciding its direction (and contrasts with other initially anti-imperialist revolutions).

Successful or not, the revolutions here examined by Szajkowski are part of working class heritage; his work's flaws do not prevent us using its scholarship to enrich our experience.

Peter Butler

Damning facts

Roger Omond, *The Apartheid Handbook*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth. pp.229 £3.95.

WE all know apartheid is an unjust non-viable system whose days are numbered. And we are all accustomed to condemning it, but sometimes without knowing in detail exactly how it is operated. *The Apartheid Handbook*, it says, is "designed to fill the gaps left by much conventional reporting with hard information on how South African society actually works from day to day." Omond does this very well, explaining the perverted rationale of apartheid, detailing the rules by which it is enforced in different spheres of life, and giving specific examples of how these are enforced.

The eleven page introduction gives a brief outline of the history of the South African state from the arrival of the first Dutch settlers in the 1650s to the opening of the new three chamber parliament in January 1985. It is followed by a note clarifying the confusing system of racial terminology used by the South African government and also by the people themselves. For example:

"Black, despite its appropriation as the official term for Africans, is used by the majority of the South African population as a generic term for all those on the receiving end of apartheid, whether officially categorized as 'black', 'Coloured', or 'Indian.'" And: "The word 'African' is officially taboo because it translates into Afrikaans as 'Afrikaner,'" their term for the Afrikaans-speaking whites.

The rest of the book is divided into thirty-eight unnumbered chapters on different aspects of life in South Africa: Race Classification, Group Areas, National Government, Transport, Health, Education, Employment, Defence, Police, Banning Orders, Guerilla Attacks, and so on. Each chapter consists of between five and thirty questions, such as: "Can race classification be challenged?" (p.23) ... "Are the wishes of local authorities respected in the implementation of the group area laws?" (p.33) Generally brief but adequate answers are given to most questions.

It is a book which invites browsing, jumping from one question to another randomly. In this way a complete picture of life in the apartheid state is built up piece by piece in the reader's mind. Roger Omond does not attempt to analyse in any detail the reasons why South Africa has developed in the way it has. There is very little about South Africa's interaction with the rest of the world. Also, he does not go into how apartheid might change or be destroyed. Instead, he gives a picture of South Africa at a particular moment in its inharmonious evolution: the first half of 1985.

Implicit in the book is the idea that although most of the 542 questions and answers involve apartheid, either how it operates or the fate of those who oppose it, this is not because Omond concentrates deliberately on apartheid. Rather, he examines many aspects of life in South Africa and reveals how apartheid distorts them all, affecting the lives of all South Africans.

The publisher's note says: "Although headlines about South Africa change daily, the system of apartheid remains essentially intact." In fact, the revolutionary situation in South Africa provokes constant change. In a desperate bid to stave off the revolution, which will result in *The Apartheid Handbook* becoming of historical interest only, the racist government reacts to the increasing strength and influence of the opponents of apartheid by a mixture of concessions designed to divide and weaken the resistance and increasing repression intended to smash it. Both cause changes in the apartheid system, which will no doubt undergo even more drastic convulsions in

its doomed efforts to adjust before its final destruction.

The Apartheid Handbook, published in August 1985, is as nearly up to date as it is possible for a book to be in such a rapidly changing situation. Many chapters contain examples of the recent changes in the law.

The concessions include the claimed movement away from 'unnecessary' race discriminatory measures. The chapters on Social Segregation, Beach Apartheid, and Sport, for example, reveal the patchy manner in which this is being carried out. The chapter on Employment details the way the government is being forced by shortages of skilled labour to lift some employment restrictions. Sex Across the Colour Line examines the ramifications of the abolition of the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts. The National Government chapter explains how the three houses of Parliament (elections for which were boycotted by over four-fifths of the potential Coloured and Indian voters in 1984) are supposed to operate. Also mentioned are some of the government's hints and promises designed to placate Black opposition, such as "That Africans would have a say in the second tier of administration" and "That citizens of the 'independent' homelands might be allowed to retain their South African nationality" (p.102).

The increased repressions include the appalling police violence which we used to see nightly on TV until the South African government banned reporters from the affected areas. The chapter on Police gives instances of police brutality, such as youths being "tied to windscreens of police vehicles to prevent people from stoning them". The appendix on the State of Emergency lists some of the offences now punishable by up to ten years imprisonment, such as "Destroying or defacing any notice on the regulations" and "Advising or inciting people to stay away from work or to dislocate industry." It then gives details of how detainees, for example, are "forbidden to sing and whistle", are not allowed to study or read books other than the Bible or "another holy book", and are liable to punishment by solitary confinement or deprivation of meals.

Such details, given meticulously in a neutral, non-judgemental style which allows the facts to speak for themselves and so shows the injustice of apartheid all the more effectively, are what makes *The Apartheid Handbook* so valuable to anyone who wants to know exactly what people experience under apartheid, as well as to those with the job of convincing others how evil apartheid really is, and how we must do everything in our power to help destroy it.

Mary Goodwin

music

Alan Bush

Review of Alan Bush at the time of his 85th birthday

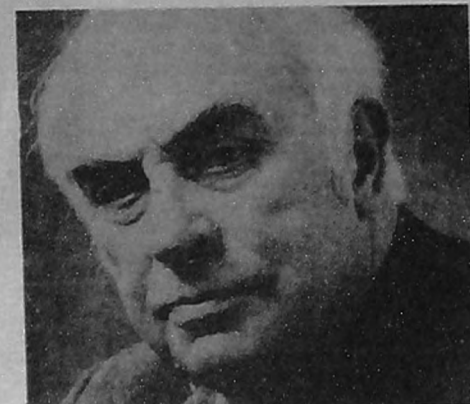
WHO IS Britain's leading composer? If you pose this question to any cultured Eastern European the answer is almost certain to be: Alan Bush. And yet in Britain Bush's music is neglected to the point where few are aware of his importance and many have not even heard of him.

Why is this? Bush himself often says that the British musical establishment always prefers the dead to the living. This is perhaps true, but his lack of recognition is at least in equal part due to his commitment to and espousal of communism.

For the deeply conservative Lords, Ladies and gentlemen who run the concert halls and opera houses the eclectic, pacifistic socialism of Tippett could be looked upon as an amusing eccentric-

city. Orthodox communism on the other hand was unforgivable. Because of this Bush has found his work rarely if ever performed in Britain.

Bush has deep roots in the history of



Alan Bush: a communist composer

music as well as the world of politics. As a tender youth he was presented by his teacher to Elgar, the grand old man of English music. And some years later when a young man he listened to, argued with, and even swam with the great communist poet and playwright Brecht and his musical collaborator Eisler.

His *Dialectic* for string quartet was completed in 1929. This early masterpiece undoubtedly influenced his great friend Tippett as well as Britten. While some suggested that with *Dialectic* Bush was set on a course towards Schonberg he never embraced atonality. Indeed in his later works he took up the English national style.

Wat Tyler, his first opera, developed the English musical tradition personified by Vaughan Williams and Frederick Delius. Commissioned for the Festival of Britain, it combined traditional melody and use of folk tunes with an unmistakably progressive political statement. For, having declared his membership of the Communist Party in 1938, Bush was determined to produce work which liberated, not pacified, which clarified, not confused. This necessitated an interplay between traditional musical forms with the radical world view of communism. This is what lay at the heart of Bush's turning to the task of developing the English national style.

No wonder his works receive regular performances in Moscow, Leipzig, and Prague. In the socialist countries Bush is well known, and not just in musical circles. He is thought of as the leading exponent of English music and a dedicated partisan of the working class. He justly deserves both reputations.

Having just celebrated his 85th birthday on December 22 1985, Alan Bush should be recognised as one of Britain's great composers. Bush, who has both influenced and been influenced by Tippett, surely stands with him as Britain's leading contemporary composer. In some respects he is similar to Elgar in the winter of his life: the grand old man of English music; except that Bush's achievements are not celebrated as they should be.

Far from using age as an excuse to retire from life he still takes part in political activity as a loyal Party member, not least in the Workers' Music Association of which he is president. He also continues to actively compose. His new and characteristically individual Piano Quintet received its first London performance at his birthday concert in January, where he actually played a number of old as well as new pieces.

And we were delighted that he agreed to set the words of R. Yurukoglu's *Iscinin Sesi March* to music. Its premiere at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the paper a couple of years ago was greeted with thunderous applause. With a beaming smile and his usual modesty Bush expressed his great pleasure at being asked to write music for lines which included the inspiring words "communism" and "Marxism-Leninism". That's the sort of composer Bush is. A composer linked to the past who points to the future.

At 85 Bush looks back on a career he can rightly be proud of. He has served the cause of music and the cause of socialism and done both splendidly.

Jack Conrad

Ireland: Thatcher's Vietnam

BRITAIN'S DEFEAT WILL BE OUR VICTORY



BRITAIN'S rule in the Six Counties is in deep crisis and that crisis is getting deeper. In the late 1960s a mass democratic struggle for elementary civil rights shattered any legitimacy the Northern Ireland statelet ever had. Since then the British Goliath has tried to bring the rebellious Irish David to heel. And yet despite all its might, British imperialism has not been able to destroy the Irish liberation movement.

Rising like the proverbial phoenix from the setback it suffered in its 1950s border campaign and the debilitating reformism of its then President MacGiolla (now the leader of the rump Workers' Party) the IRA/Sinn Fein has heroically taken on the British giant. Indeed, the IRA, despite having been declared defeated time and time again by British ministers and army tops, has taken dramatic steps forward in terms of prestige, organisational ability, and fighting power. Internment, no jury courts, SAS assassination squads, supergrasses, and battalions of British troops have abysmally failed to end the armed struggle against imperialism. As to Sinn Fein, it has grown at a staggering rate both north and south of the border, giving establishment politicians in London, Belfast, and Dublin countless sleepless nights worrying about Ireland becoming 'another Cuba'.

Although the hotel bar based, and therefore usually inebriated, pro-imperialist propagandists of the British TV and press have long sought to portray the IRA and the republican movement in general as nothing more and nothing less than a mafia-like organisation, the truth cannot be hidden. The IRA could only operate and survive with extensive popular sympathy.

All the lying propaganda, the carefully manufactured peace campaigns, the banks of sophisticated computers, the spy at night equipment, the new tech torture techniques, and the wretched blackmailed or paid informers British imperialism has pitted against the IRA have all proved ultimately ineffective. Of course, the reason is simple.

The Catholic masses no longer accept British rule and have increasingly turned to explicitly revolutionary solutions to redress their grievances.

The refusal of the Catholic masses to be ruled in the old way is obviously only one side of the coin. The other is Britain's inability to rule in the old way. These two dialectically linked facets of life in the Six Counties along with a dramatic sweeping of the masses (both Protestant and Catholic) into political action testifies to the objective reality of a profound revolutionary situation.

British troops were, as we all know, rushed to the Six Counties in August 1969. They were sent to suppress the revolutionary upsurge which followed the failure of the peaceful mass agitation for Catholic civil rights. The Unionist Stormont regime had lost control of Catholic areas in Derry and Belfast to the forces of revolutionary republicanism. Britain's Labour government feared that the continued existence of the Northern Ireland statelet hung in the balance. They certainly thought that the Unionist Party, through which Britain had ruled the Six Counties for nearly half a century was endangering British interests because of its intransigence and was at least in part responsible for large numbers of Catholics turning to the IRA.

Far from direct British intervention suppressing the revolutionary situation it only proved that Britain could no long-

er rule in the old way. Indeed, despite all the power of British imperialism the revolutionary whirlpool has become ever more powerful and violent, dragging all the British schemes of 'normalisation' to destruction. Britain could not prevent the shattering of the once monolithic Unionist Party, the fall of the power-sharing executive, or the rise of Sinn Fein, let alone the ability of the IRA to deliver ever more powerful blows against the forces of imperialism.

It is because Britain has found its attempts to suppress the revolutionary situation constantly frustrated that the Thatcher government decided to play the Dublin card and to bring its Twenty-six Counties openly into the fray. The resulting counterrevolutionary, anti-republican Accord saw Britain grant Dublin seats on essentially symbolic and toothless consultative commissions while Dublin has recognised, as Tom King the Northern Ireland Secretary bluntly declared, "for all practical purposes and in perpetuity that there will never be a united Ireland."

As well as this Dublin agreed to take full part in anti-IRA operations; in effect backing Britain's efforts to keep its domination of the whole of Ireland through maintaining its direct colonial rule over the north. Britain has as a result been able to tidy up cross border military operations, give the kiss of life to the flagging SDLP, and cover the international odium of its colonial occupation and terror in the Six Counties with a cloak of respectability provided by Fitzgerald's signature to the Accord. Naturally Fitzgerald has dressed up his abject servility to British imperialism as a brave attempt to achieve peaceful Irish re-unification. But treacherous facts are treacherous

facts. Dublin's day-to-day openly counterrevolutionary acts shows that King told the truth about the Accord.

There have been costs. Britain might have been able to get the Fine Gael/Irish Labour Party coalition government in Dublin to jump through its Accord hoop, but the Protestants in the Six Counties have proved more difficult. Despite the master/dog relationship, the Loyalist dog has snapped at the British imperialist hand that feeds it. The Loyalist politicians, from both the Paisley and the official wings of Unionism, were infuriated at being left out in the cold when the Accord was negotiated and are deeply perturbed about not having a place in the new structures. Playing on the pitiful xenophobia of the Protestant working and middle classes, mass discontent has been whipped up in an effort to crudely pressurise the British authorities into not giving Dublin any role whatsoever.

Thus, as in the days of the so-called Ulster Workers' Council strike, Britain faces the prospect of a sustained and damaging Loyalist campaign against the form of British rule. The referendum style by-elections, the Protestant demonstrations, and violent outbursts against the Accord are of course not revolutionary. They do after all reflect the near pathological fear of a bigoted pro-imperialist labour aristocracy about anything which might jeopardise their privileges relative to the Catholics, no matter how measly they may be in real terms. Nonetheless, who can deny that Protestant fear and discontent is a result of Britain's crisis in the Six Counties.

Thatcher was reportedly truly shocked by the accusations of betraying the union between Britain and Northern Ireland hurled at

her by frothing Unionists and their motley band of far-right Tory supporters. The victor over the enemy without and the enemy within believed, so it is said, that her Iron Lady image would preclude such charges and prevent Unionist fears of a 'sell out' arising in the first place.

For those with eyes which do not refuse to see it is obvious that the Accord is an attack on the republican movement and is designed to perpetuate what is called the 'Protestant veto' (ie. British rule). The Loyalist dog may snarl 'no surrender' and bark on about 'withdrawing consent', but its protests against the Accord are for British imperialism more of a nuisance than anything else.

Thatcher is unlikely to make a U-turn on the Accord because of Loyalist actions. She now has her eyes firmly set on crushing the IRA and perhaps she has even a thought or two as to how bourgeois historians of the future will see her. Can she crown her 'brilliant' career with the solving of the 'Irish problem' once and for all? Can she succeed where Gladstone, Lloyd George, and lesser imperialist politicians like Wilson, Heath, and Callaghan failed? Thatcher is certainly psychologically predisposed to dream about pulling off a hat-trick and adding victory in Ireland to victory over Argentina and the miners: this would certainly earn a prominent place for her in the bloody annals of British imperialism.

Of course Ireland could prove the Achilles heel of the now accident prone Thatcher. Her dreams of victory could turn into a 'nightmare' for British imperialism in the cold light of day. The last 15 years of revolutionary crisis and armed struggle, the very fact that Thatcher has found it necessary to negotiate with Dublin in the first

place, and even the granting of symbolic concessions show that the Irish question is a chronic running sore on the body politic of British imperialism.

The Accord might have set back the rise of Sinn Fein but the SDLP will quickly expose its pro-imperialism; Reagan might be promising economic aid to anchor Ireland into the US led anti-Soviet wardrive but the crisis is organic. It stems from a conjunction of Ireland's unresolved national question and Britain's steep decline relative to an increasingly crisis ridden world capitalist system. Already we can see that while temporarily saving the SDLP from oblivion by playing the Dublin card Thatcher may have unintentionally caused revolutionary sparks to fly from the seething north to the tinder dry conditions of the south.

The Fitzgerald government is already decidedly unpopular. Opinion polls show it trailing 19 percentage points behind Haughey's opposition Fianna Fail. Being seen to do Britain's dirty work can only further erode his government's poor standing. Fueling Fitzgerald's troubles are the grave economic problems gripping the Twenty-six Counties' neo-colonial economy. Unemployment now stands at around 18% and the foreign debt has soared to the point where it is estimated to owe £1,300 for every working person in the country. And things are getting worse, not better.

The social order in the Twenty-six Counties is unquestionably fragile. Its dependent political and economic position has been laid bare by the Accord. Perhaps becoming directly involved in the inferno that is Six Counties politics could produce exactly opposite results from the counter-revolutionary ones Thatcher and Fitzgerald have been working for.

Ireland could even become Britain's Vietnam. If this were to happen age old barriers against social progress would have been broken down not only in Ireland itself but in Britain. Because of this we must do all in our power to assist the cause of Ireland.

So far, solidarity with Ireland in Britain has been more than a disgrace. It has been cynically boycotted by a whole range of organisations and trends in the workers' movement which claim to be revolutionary, an unmistakable consequence of Ireland's great importance to British imperialism. And while some groups have stood aside from the Irish question, others have objectively sided with British imperialism; such positions can only be considered criminal.

Our class has already paid dear for such infamy. The methods and tools of terror used against the brave Irish have sickeningly come home. The black youth of Handsworth, Tottenham, and Brixton and the miners have all learnt what it feels to be Irish. And of course the Prevention of Terrorism Act has inevitably and predictably been extended to intimidate all friends of Ireland and to police liberation movements other than those fighting in Ireland.

A defeat for British imperialism in Ireland would therefore clearly be a victory for the British working class.

Jack Conrad

- Britain's defeat will be our victory
- Victory to Ireland
- Make Ireland Thatcher's Vietnam
- Troops out now