

Fight the US wardrive DEFEND THE USSR

REAGAN IS ON the warpath. Who can doubt it? United States military spending is soaring upwards, Soviet offers of arms reductions are dismissed and its moratorium on nuclear testing has been cynically snubbed.

Far from limiting itself to a nuclear balance of terror with the USSR the US is determined to achieve strategic superiority and a first strike capability through the multi-billion Star Wars programme. No wonder the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union considered it a matter of the greatest urgency to get their country's economy moving faster. With the Soviet Union's lower economic base, with declining growth rates, the US could achieve the position of such superiority that it could insist on socialism being dismantled in Eastern Europe and the removal of the Soviet states' monopoly over foreign trade. Without faster growth rates comrade Gorbachev fears the Soviet Union will not be able to keep up with the increasingly massive expenditures necessary to keep in touch with each US inspired acceleration of the quantity and above all quality of weapons.

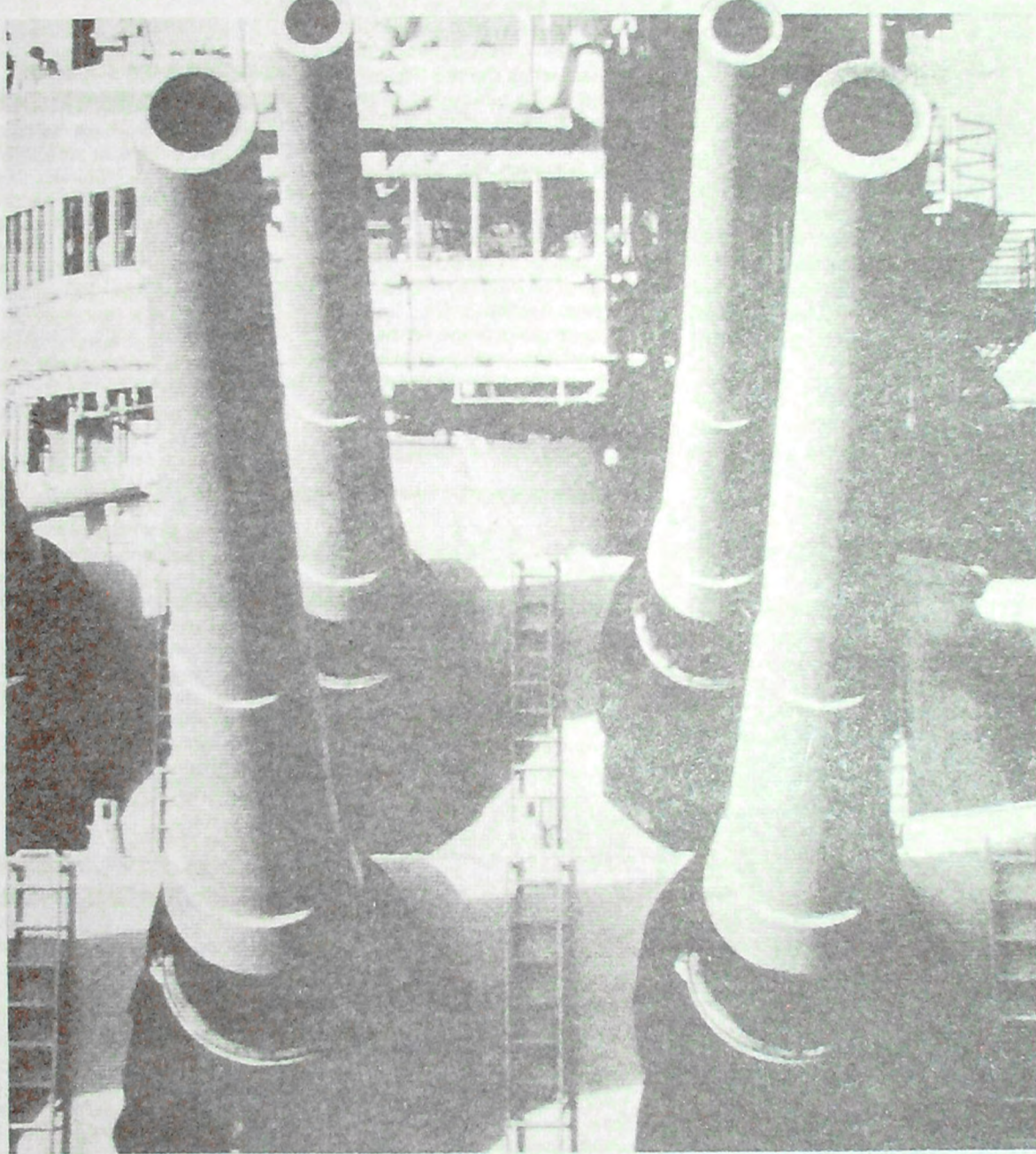
The US wardrive is of course not confined to strategic, head on, competition with the Soviet Union. All round the world the US is aiding anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary forces. In El Salvador it is financing an army of death squads, in Nicaragua US troops are getting nearer and nearer to direct involvement, in Afghanistan it is backing reactionaries determined to reintroduce feudalism and the slavery of women, and we have already seen it invade tiny Grenada and provocatively attack Libya.

Why is this? Some say it is because Reagan is mad. Others insist that there is some strange inner-logic of the arms industry which drives rulers and nations to suicidal excesses. Still others put it all down to male hormones and toy soldier socialisation.

In contrast Marxists have always located the source of war in class society and its contradictions. War is a continuation of politics by violent means. All wars are inseparably connected to the politics which a given state, a given class within that state, has pursued for a long period before resorting to war to achieve its ends. War is not a change of policy but a change in form.

Thus today we look to the problems of world capitalism in general and the problems of US capitalism in particular to see why the danger of war is increasing.

So why is US capitalism on the warpath? The reason can be found in the relative decline of the US and the growing economic difficulties it and capitalism throughout the world are experiencing. In short Reagan is out to reverse the decline of the



US guns: aimed at the USSR

United States. And given the present inter-imperialist juncture, and with the socialist world out of direct reach of capitalist exploitation, he is out to reverse this decline at the expense of the Soviet Union and its allies.

This is what lies behind the sending of sophisticated Stinger missiles to counterrevolutionary forces in Afghanistan and Angola. This is what lies behind the attacks on Libya and the increasing involvement of US forces in the contra war against Nicaragua. And this is what lies behind the US rejection of Gorbachev's proposal to ban all nuclear tests and Star Wars.

At its peak in the mid-1950s the US could be described as a sort of 'super'-imperialist power. It accounted for 50% of the capitalist world's industrial production. Of course the law of uneven development meant that this position could not be maintained. Numerous competitors have eroded the US 'super'-imperialist position and even dangerously penetrated the US home market. Indeed the US has

seen Japan come to rival it in many high tech areas including computers and robotics and the EEC doing its best to become a third imperialist power bloc against both the US and Japan.

Although there are all the signs of the emergence of three distinct antagonistic imperialist blocs this at the present moment in time is definitely confined to being a tendency and is not yet a hard reality. The fact is that US decline is relative.

Although declining the US 34.6% share of OECD GNP is significantly ahead of Japan's 13.7% and Federal Germany's 10.8%. It even outstrips the four leading EEC economies combined (1980 figs). In terms of military power the US undoubtedly remains a 'super'-imperialist power. In 1982-3 it spent \$215.9 billion on its military machine compared with a combined total for all other NATO powers of \$105.9 billion. Certainly when it comes to nuclear fire power the only serious rival to the US is the Soviet Union. This means that the

United States is still able to act as the hegemon of world capitalism.

So while we see the growing crystallisation of three imperialist blocs, growing antagonisms between them and the possibility of future military conflicts between them, it remains the case that the US can today exercise domination. It can thus orchestrate a united world capitalist campaign against the socialist community in an effort to create the conditions for a world redivision on the basis of rolling back communism. This, the US imperialists hope, would give their flagging economy a boost stave off inter-imperialist clashes and reassert their position as dominant world power.

This is something the lesser imperialist powers are prepared to go along with, as long as it does not cost them too much and as long as their trade interests are not seriously damaged. For the most part they reckon on getting a significant part of the spoils from a US led anti-

Soviet world redivision and therefore fall in with the anti-Soviet arms race, Star Wars and all. Britain in particular has joined the US among the world's most aggressive imperialist powers.

It, like the US, is experiencing relative decline, like the US it is a country heavily dependent on imperialism and, like the US, it is determined to reverse this decline peacefully if it can, forcefully if it must. Thus we see Britain fight Argentina over the Falklands/Malvinas, outspend all other major European NATO powers on arms and join the US in the most extreme anti-Soviet diatribes.

With this in mind it is essential to understand that although directed against the Soviet Union the imperialist wardrive is a product of capitalism and its contradictions, not the mere existence of two social systems on the planet. Those who dismiss it as nothing more than some mental aberration, (the origin of which can be found between the ears of one Ronald Reagan) those who limit themselves to calls for sanity or the rejection of 'male values' not only stand on erroneous theoretical positions, but inevitably, despite their good intentions, divert attention away from the real struggle for peace. Objectively such theories play into the hands of the very system that generates the threat of war today simply because they not only fail to locate the true source of war but advocate tinkering with the imperialist system, not its overthrow.

The truth is that war can only be ended by ending class society. In concrete terms today this means overthrowing imperialism and its replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what distinguishes Leninists, genuine communists, from others who oppose the imperialist wardrive. We see the need to respond to the wardrive not with pacifistic disarmament slogans but with propaganda and preparation for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. For us, completing the job started by our Russian comrades in October 1917 is the only way to banish war and guarantee peace.

The nature of imperialism has not and cannot change. Indeed the power of modern weapons, far from giving us the luxury of a protracted struggle once a war has begun, as Lenin advocated, demands that the imperialist beast is put down as soon as possible. This revolutionary struggle is unquestionably the best possible service we can do for the Soviet Union and the socialist community. The best way to defend these gains of the international proletariat is to organically link the struggle for peace with the struggle for socialism and add to the power and number of socialist states by making revolution.

Jack Conrad



THE LENINIST

Wedding bells

ANDREW Windsor and Sarah Ferguson are to marry at Westminster Abbey on July 23. "So what" many class conscious workers will say "those parasitic bastards are nothing but an anachronism in modern society". Certainly the monarchy's origins are in the mists of time. Rising out of the chaos of the dark ages it reached the end of its socially progressive life and the height of its power, with the absolutist Tudor dynasty.

Far from these rulers being a succession of quaint fairy tale princes and princesses, the royal family tree has its roots in the butchery, humiliation and ruthless robbery of our peasant ancestors. Its branches drip with the blood of the common people and every twig is replete with mass murderers, power hungry interlopers and sadistical torturers.

But Britain has known a republic. Aiming to ensure the unrestricted growth of capitalism the bourgeoisie made revolution against aristocracy and monarch in the Civil War of 1642-8. Militant puritanism gave it revolutionary confidence and this was used to impart a sense of divine purpose to the plebeian troops of their New Model Army. The triumph of the bourgeois revolution was symbolised by Charles Stuart losing both crown and head in 1649.

Far from celebrating the Great Revolution with a national holiday, glorifying Oliver Cromwell in novels and promoting the triumphs of the Commonwealth through monuments and paintings, the bourgeoisie has done everything to fete the 1660 restoration. Why is this? Why is the bourgeoisie so modest? Why does it ensure that schools in England teach a kings and queens history that begins with William of Normandy and smoothly ends with Elizabeth Windsor? And why has the bourgeoisie coopted the monarchy along with other essentially feudal institutions?

Well comrades, we are the reason. The bourgeoisie has disguised, shrouded and where it can buried all evidence that it came into the world as a revolutionary class because it brought into existence its own grave-diggers; the proletariat. Now that the bourgeoisie has become a reactionary class it fears the same fate as befell Charles Stuart.

To avoid this it has created not only a bourgeois layer in the working class (the trade union and labour bureaucracy) but a bourgeois monarchy. It has paid university historians, popular writers, and all sorts of whorish intellectuals to falsify its revolutionary past in order to stave off the day of its own reckoning. Thus it is quite willing to plan a national commemoration of the 1688 so-called Glorious Revolution which brought in William of Orange. For this was a political revolution in which the masses were more or less passive. But the bourgeoisie does everything to forget its genuine revolutionary deeds, its regicide, its republic so as to avoid giving the hoi polloi similar ideas.

And who can doubt that the modern monarchy has played a useful stabilising role for the bourgeoisie. The "royal family" is daily reported on TV and in the press to divert attention from serious questions like unemployment, war and economic decline. It is carefully projected as the family of the one nation, part of the establishment but above day-to-day politics.

Nonetheless in the event of a hung parliament the monarch could be wheeled onto the political stage as prime minister maker and breaker. And when in the future Britain experiences a revolutionary situation the monarchy will undoubtedly be used as a rallying point for reaction.

So we communists will not join Neil Kinnock and other Labourite toads in offering congratulations and we will not shrug the royal shindig off with a column inch about traffic disruption on July 23 as the *Morning Star* will. We will actively combat the orgy of gaudy patriotism, religious cant and Ruritanian pomp. Indeed when our revolution comes we will as well as finishing the bourgeoisie, at last finish the job the bourgeoisie started in 1642.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Good work

As a Marxist and a member of the CPGB, I state with pride the central role I feel *The Leninist* has played over the past year of gloom, as a beacon of light and a pillar of strength to those like myself who wish to see our Party returned and rebuilt to the status of its past glory. *The Leninist* has through its theoretical supplements provided an unquestionable lead to those who wish to see the growth of our Party and the defence of the ultimate victory of our class. *The Leninist* has over the past year proved to be consistent and uncompromising in its support for the rights and just demands of the international proletariat and in defence of those in our class in Britain, who, like the miners have become victims of the heightening class war and the growing contradictions of our present irrational society.

I have been reading *The Leninist* for about a year and I would like to take five copies a month/fortnight to start with. On the 'Party front' things are beginning to pick up. The branch has had serious problems in recent months and the balance of class forces on the local committee has moved away from the Euros and into an unholy alliance between the CCG and the Straight Leftists. This may appear to be little better than the position a year ago but it has had tangible benefits.

There is a growing interest in the ideas of *The Leninist* in the area and we have reformed our links with local miners, recruiting one to the Party. Keep up the good work.

Yours for peace and socialism

Glen Warren
Northern District

Factionalism

The issue of factionalism is of course on every comrade's mind (or should be), and I confess to some unease about the need for anonymity in matters connected with *The Leninist*. When matters in the Party seem to have come to the point where we may be at risk of abandoning the political debate in favour of tailism and liquidationism, I have to choose between the awkward (and in this matter more administrative) manifestations of Party discipline, and the inner still small voice of comradely criticism; I have to follow my conscience. If I am proved wrong, then I have to face the consequences.

I would be delighted to meet some Leninist comrades on an informal basis, and perhaps to learn how I could improve my effectiveness as a loyal member of the CPGB.

Perhaps you will let me know if any discussions are due to take place, and I will do my best to attend.

Yours in comradeship
Colin Lee
East Midlands

Let's get serious

If you wish *The Leninist* to be taken seriously then you really must treat your readership to something better than sixth form-undergraduate style humour. Political issues deserve political argument and analysis, rather than the childish personal treatment to which we are becoming accustomed. Your journal then has a better chance of being read, as opposed to being destined to the waste paper bin.

Yours fraternally
Bronwen Malik
Swansea

David Sherrif replies:

Does comrades Malik object to humour? If this is the case we would refer her to the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Perhaps she would dismiss Marx's critique of Proudon as "sixth form-undergraduate style humour" because it employed mockery; was Engels' poking fun at Bukanin "childish" or did Lenin's attack on Kautsky deserve being assigned to "the waste paper bin" simply as a consequence of its "personal treatment" of an opponent? The fact is we suspect that what she is objecting to is our successful exposure of the CCG and its leadership's lack of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. In this we have obviously used all principled weapons in the armoury of communist polemic available to us, centrally a detailed, rounded and all-sided theoretical and historical examination of their positions. To further our exposure we have also, on occasion, used humour. We make no apology for this.

Gorbachev's report I

After reading Gorbachev's report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU, it is definite that the Marxist-Leninist have the real answers to the present and future global problems facing us all. The problem of peace and disarmament is the key to the present and future of mankind. Only one way exists to achieve this, namely, by proceeding with the reduction of international tensions initiated by the Soviet Union, terminate the arms race, renounce war as a means of solving international problems. The right to live a peaceful life is the essential basis of all human rights. Today, protecting that particular right is the most urgent need of our existence. A war today would be a war of nuclear missiles, whose enormous destructive power exceeds by millions of times the aggregate power of all the wars in the earth's history; hundreds of millions of people would die.

Yours sincerely
Tom Hopkins (retired miner)
Caerphilly

Gorbachev's report II

Socialism and communism are based on criticism and self-criticism. The Soviet Union has achieved socialism. All Gorbachev's criticisms are stepping stones towards communism, when the living standards of the Soviet people will be an example to the rest of the world. The principle of communism means: from each according to his ability to each according to his needs. In fact even now — in spite of the West's nuclear threat — the Soviet people's living standards are more secure than that of the people living under the capitalist system. Read Gorbachev's report.

Yours
Ronald Cook
Leeds

Socialist pacifism

An open debate on just how much the Soviet Union can assist other countries in their revolution would help to clarify quite a complicated subject. 'Socialist pacifism' within separate capitalist nations is of course a grave contradiction and is in no way the same as the struggle to obtain peaceful co-existence between opposing social systems. 'Socialist pacifism' implies the capitulation of revolutionaries to the dictates of capitalism. 'Peaceful co-existence' means purely and

simply that socialist and capitalist countries do not go to war with each other. The ideological struggle continues where each country strives to prove its superiority by peaceful means. 'Socialist pacifism' would mean the abnegation of the class struggle in capitalist countries, the abandonment of that struggle by means of armed conflict; in brief, tying the hands of the worker and leaving him to the mercy of the armed bourgeoisie. This amounts to class collaboration and betrayal and no communist or socialist could support it.

My contention is that the USSR, although supporting 'peaceful co-existence', has not encouraged 'socialist pacifism'. This would be a denial of the revolution and the right of the working class of all lands to make their own revolution. Take, for example, the Spanish Civil War! The aid given by the USSR in men and materials for the fight against fascism was very substantial. If you go by the slanders of Orwell and the Anarchists, you will reach a different conclusion. Of course Orwell has long since exposed his support for reaction, and the Anarchists menace every progressive movement, even in this country. (*The Leninist's* article on anarchism was excellent).

In the instance of Cuba, as Castro has testified, the USSR has given tremendous assistance, even to the extent of providing defensive rockets against a likely invasion or nuclear blackmail by US imperialism. Kennedy was forced to give pledges of no invasion of Cuba. Could the Soviet Union have demanded also that America remove its rockets that were stationed within 90 miles of socialist countries, including Cuba? Perhaps she could, if she, like America, gambled with peace. This was not capitulation. It was tactics in a longer term strategy. Cuba has not been invaded and the struggle in Latin and Central America, which Cuba can assist greatly, has intensified. No wonder Reagan and the US imperialists are panic stricken. Diplomacy, of course, is no ultimate answer, but it can create a dialogue at times, even between enemies, and the hope that humanity and common sense will prevail even among diehards.

How can the USSR help the British and American working class to achieve socialism? In the main, I think, by exposing the capitalist scoundrels who promote nuclear and germ warfare, mass exploitation, and poverty. They can also assist by exposing the pseudo 'communists' and 'socialists' like the Euros of Italy, Britain, France etc. and the counterrevolutionaries in Poland's fake 'Solidarity'. These are all the collaborators and betrayers, not the Soviet Union.

There is another way the Soviet Union could help greatly — that is by ridding its own territory of bureaucrats and favoured office bearers, by bridging the gap between incomes, by creating a diversity and better quality of consumer goods, shops and services and by heading more rapidly towards communism and thus provide a socialist inspiration for the entire world. It has at long last reached a stage where it no longer fears a scathing self-criticism and this is not a period when such admissions appear to add to the lies and the slanders of its sniggering enemies. One would imagine that British and American capitalism was providing its millions with jobs and higher wages. The Soviet Union I am sure will correct its mistakes and by 2000 AD will be miles in advance of the capitalist nations. That is something Wall Street fears more than Russian rockets. A

genuine socialist system well on the way towards communism will be the greatest contribution to the revolution in every land. I hope, of course, that we have achieved socialism in Britain by that time ourselves.

Robert Buchanan
Glasgow

Stalin

If you have facts which show that Stalin was active in the Comintern after 1929, I would be interested to hear them. I think facts show the opposite. In regard to Stalin's description of peaceful roaders as "out of their mind" and "outright opportunists", do you honestly believe that Stalin endorsed the BRS? I don't think comrade Pollitt was entirely honest in regard to this. It is certainly true that Stalin was active in the Cominform (after leading the struggle to ensure that the old opportunist Comintern leaders did not come to the forefront). I must also point out that Comintern was dissolved by the ECCI (not by the CPSU or "by Stalin").

I'm not an "Enverist" but, like comrade R. Yurukoglu, I believe that the Party of Albania's views should not be ignored and also that Stalin had many good points.

I think our disagreements on the 'Stalin question' are part of a more serious disagreement. I don't believe in openly attacking the socialist countries. This is siding with imperialism. Lenin always called for unconditional support of the Soviet government. The attacks which *The Leninist* launches against the socialist camp serve no constructive purpose. Such attacks should be restricted to private correspondence etc with the vanguard parties of the socialist countries. Whilst denouncing revisionism, it is not necessary to attack the CPSU. I think your policy is a form of neo-Trotskyism.

Once more I express my support for *The Leninist's* positions on the day-to-day struggles of the working class and the fight for socialism. I also feel that *The Leninist* has done a great deal to expose many of the revisionist trends. However, your historical analysis and attacks on the socialist camp are likely to cause ideological degeneration. I hope you will re-examine your positions in regard to these points. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours in comradeship
Al Donaldson
Glasgow

Jack Conrad replies:

Who except comrade Donaldson would ask for facts to prove that Stalin was active in the Comintern? It is like asking for proof that Jesus was active in religion. While Stalin never made Comintern his foremost political concern, the CPSU was its central element, and there can be no doubt whatsoever about its, and therefore his, leadership of Comintern.

Not seeing the key question for communists being that of world revolution, but the power of the USSR, Stalin's impact on Comintern tended to be indirect, via automatic transmission from Soviet Party or Soviet foreign policy. (And those foreign communists who did not toe the line soon found themselves dead or out on their ears). So although Stalin never had a high regard for Comintern, he did treat it as an extension of the state power of the USSR, thus the world communist movement's reflex-like adoption of every single twist and turn of Soviet Party and state positions. Thus, although it was dissolved by the decision of its own Executive Committee, there can be no

dispute that this was done in order to placate the Soviet Union's imperialist allies in World War II and not for the dubious reasons about its constituent parties' maturity etc. given at the time.

As to Stalin and the *British Road to Socialism* the main ideas advanced by the programme, particularly that of the possibility of peaceful transition, were discussed in detail in conversations which Harry Pollitt had with Stalin, who fully approved of the CPGB's approach. Following the adoption of the BRS by the Executive Committee of the CPGB in January 1951, it was published in full in *Pravda*, obviously with Stalin's approval. These are well known facts. And surely, if Stalin disapproved of the BRS and the batch of similar documents coming from 'Western' parties, he would have made his views available. Of course the truth is that this revisionism suited Stalin's short-term foreign policy considerations.

The comrade is quite right to believe that our differences with him "are part of a more serious disagreement." He thinks that communists stating their views openly — fraternal criticism — is "siding with imperialism" and "a form of neo-Trotskyism"; we think it is our proletarian internationalist duty. We do not "attack" the socialist countries but openly express views when we think our comrades are making mistakes.

The idea that we should confine ourselves to private correspondence is laughable. This is the method of diplomatic internationalism and the Second International, not of Lenin,

who never hid the differences he had with other comrades. (And did not Stalin and other mainstream communists openly denounce Yugoslavia, and Tito — even calling him a fascist — or is Yugoslavia not a socialist country, comrade Donaldson? What of the polemic between the CPSU and the Chinese communists, the criticisms by Soviet comrades of socialist Albania's leaders and vice versa? Was all this serving imperialism?) Has the comrade never heard of Lenin's *Left-wing communism — an infantile disorder*? Has he never read Lenin's open criticisms of his comrades in Britain, Italy, Germany etc. let alone those in Russia? How can "private correspondence" educate the vanguard? How can the diplomatic internationalist revisionism comrade Donaldson espouses help the cause of world revolution?

In his last letter (see *The Leninist* No.28) comrade Donaldson branded the USSR as "revisionist"; now he says we can denounce revisionism but we must not "attack the CPSU". This is as hypocritical as it is absurd. The Marxist method is, by definition, concrete. Marxism has nothing to do with abstract "denouncing" of revisionism. It concerns itself with the real world and real problems. Our criticisms of the ruling parties in the socialist countries are designed to strengthen them and the cause of world revolution. So we do not ignore the views of the ruling party in Albania, but we do think they do, and Stalin did, put forward non-Marxist positions on a whole series of questions. (In this we are in agreement with our comrades from Turkey). This in no way contradicts our unconditional defence of the socialist

countries against imperialism and counterrevolution; indeed our criticism is an integral and necessary facet of this defence. But then comrade Donaldson seems incapable of differentiating between fraternal criticism and pro-imperialist attacks; for him they are the same. As to this "leading to degeneration", for the comrade's information *The Leninist* No.1 contained fraternal criticism of our comrades in Poland. But then what are facts to one who is determined not to see?

Scotland

Thanks for the latest edition of *The Leninist*. I enclose a contribution towards your costs. I also enclose a copy of issue one of the new *Vanguard* which came off the press yesterday. As you can see it leaves some room for improvement, but we are well pleased with it as a start.

I think that we should "disdain to conceal our aims", and I have not hidden from you or other communists that, in addition to being a Marxist-Leninist, I am a supporter of the broad strategic conceptions put forward by MacLean. On the occasions that I have met comrades from your organisation I have argued with them about the national question in Scotland and Ireland. I have written a fairly lengthy pamphlet arguing why your positions on the national question in both Scotland and Northern Ireland are completely at variance with the strategic requirements of independent working class politics.

Whilst your mundane tailism behind Irish bourgeois nationalism does no real harm in a predominantly English-based organisation (you would not long be able to sustain it if you actually tried organising in Belfast), it is more debilitating politically here. When that is combined with a paper that seems completely unaware of the national question in Scotland, this becomes more serious.

You had earlier promised to give a full reply to my pamphlet/article on the National question. So far you have not. I can understand that from a London perspective it does not seem a pressing priority. This is probably inevitable, and confirms the judgement of MacLean that a Scottish Communist Party should be established.

With this conclusion in mind, and having found far more revolutionary enthusiasm in the members of the SRSP than I have ever encountered among the local members of the CPGB, I resigned from the CP and applied to the SRSP for membership. The best laid plans ... No sooner had I burned my boats with the CP than the SRSP split. The purely republican element expelled the Marxists — in the usual messy way that such things happen. Apparently the flag wavers and band-followers (whose politics are based upon a slavish imitation of Irish Nationalism) got worried about the ideological work done by com-

rade Lygate and the John MacLean Society. Marxism-Leninism and working class agitation did not sit too well with their politics.

As things now stand, the Marxist wing of the SRSP, myself and some JMS comrades have formed a Socialist Propaganda group. You will be sent copies of our publications as they come out. In the meantime I will continue to subscribe to *The Leninist*, and distribute copies to comrades I am in contact with. Its coverage of all British and international issues continues to maintain the usual high standard that your early issues established. Fraternal greetings
W.P. Cockshott
Glasgow


Free Aydan Bulutgil

The murderous regime which came to power in Turkey as a result of the 12th September 1980 coup began an immediate, brutal assault against all democratic organisations and progressive individuals in the country. Both the fascist military junta and the anti-democratic "civilian" regime which followed it set out to break and annihilate morally and physically thousands of people whom they considered dangerous to their rule through torture and imprisonment. Aydan Bulutgil, who was imprisoned in 1981 on the allegation that he was one of the leaders of the pre-1980 official Communist Party of Turkey, is one of these thousands. Aydan Bulutgil was so heavily tortured that he has been crippled. In addition he has been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment by a regime that never shows mercy to its enemies.

The barbarity of what the Ankara regime has done to Aydan Bulutgil is typical of what they have inflicted on thousands of democrats and progressives. Especially in the first years after the 1980 coup, thousands of workers, progressives and democrats were killed under torture in the dungeons of the regime or left mentally and physically crippled. Aydan Bulutgil was a student at Birmingham University in the 1970s, one of the founding members of the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain, and active in fighting for trade union rights for Turkish migrant workers. He must not be allowed to rot away in the prisons of the Ozal regime. We demand he be released and allowed to come abroad for urgent medical treatment. If international public opinion can force the regime to free Aydan Bulutgil a precedent can be set for many other victims of the Turkish regime now languishing in its dungeons.

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



What God could bless America? - Mammon!

The Lord looked down from heaven
Upon the USA
And even he who once made hell
Recoiled in dark dismay.

He saw the frightened cities
Where muggers stalked the night;
He heard the poor and desolate
Descry their hideous plight.

He saw the Wall Street bankers
And all their bloated greed,
Billions spent on war and hate,
Ignoring human need.

He heard the hawks of Washington
Discard a 'Peace' disguise,
And clamouring for a war crusade,
Bombard the world with lies.

And looking down upon the Bay,
He saw the dying flame,
As Liberty blew out her torch
And hung her head in shame.

And then a ghastly mushroom cloud
Enveloped night and morn,
And humans cursed in agony
The hour that they were born.

He heard a frenzied choir sing
With 'patriotic' glee
"God bless America",
The land of the Free!

The Lord, in anger, shook his head
Such wickedness to see —
Them asking for his hand to bless
Such vile obscenity.

Roy Henderson
Glasgow

We can do it!

Since we announced our £2,000 appeal to launch *The Leninist* as a fortnightly, we have been flooded with donations large and small. Besides our members, supporters from the most diverse backgrounds have given to our appeal. Miners, printworkers, old age pensioners, actors, and unemployed workers have joined the fight to launch a principled Marxist-Leninist fortnightly. Last month we said that we should up our target by £1,000 — such was the enthusiasm generated by the idea of a fortnightly. Our confidence in our readers and supporters has been well rewarded. We now have £2,073 in our fund. That means we have every chance of breaking the £3,000 barrier by the time our fortnightly hits the streets. Come on comrades, we can do it; let's pull out all the stops in time for our big day.

LAST MONTHLY ON TO THE FORTNIGHTLY

At a time when the CCG can only talk of launching a monthly journal in summer, when the Morning Star's Management Committee remain very quiet about their promise of a tabloid, and 7 Days faces serious difficulties The Leninist goes fortnightly.

WHEN WE FIRST published *The Leninist* many a 'broad labour movement' sage casually dismissed it with a 'there won't be a number two', even before deigning to cast a world-weary reformist eye over it. After six editions of a quarterly had been produced and we launched *The Leninist* as a monthly paper, the same voices could be heard muttering that it would not keep coming out at that frequency for long — though this time more out of hope than conviction.

Well we are pleased to announce to our friends that their prediction has this time proved correct, at least formally. This is the last monthly issue of *The Leninist*.

Fortunately though, this is not as a result of some collapse in the morale of our comrades or a catastrophic split, as some have been inventing for the benefit of their ever-decreasing circles. Our problems exist. But these are of growth, not of organisational degeneration and adapting to Kinnockite Labourism practised by most left organisations in Britain today. Proof of this will be seen later this month when we bring out the first fortnightly edition of our uncompromisingly communist, internationalist and revolutionary *The Leninist* in time to mark May Day: an outstanding achievement for a group which only emerged into the light of day in November 1981 with four founding comrades and a quarterly theoretical journal.

This was possible only after a long period of ideological gestation in the womb of centrism and a suckling-like assimilation of experiences from other countries, in particular Turkey.

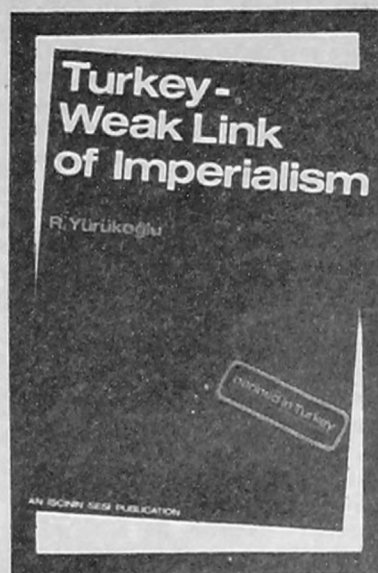
Origins

Some have for their own dishonest reasons, done everything to place our origins as an ideological tendency outside the communist movement. This is a desperate attempt to justify labelling us 'infiltrators' or 'outsiders', and therefore for these knaves, wrong. Unfortunately for them, our origins are not only in the communist movement but from the heart of it.

Our founding comrades can trace their political roots back to the grouping of which Straight Leftism now stands as a ruined, slothful and marginalised reminder. Having experienced the constricting, and ultimately self-defeating, spider's web of factional intrigue, pub room plotting, and the ideological poverty of CPGB mainstream centrism to the full, not surprisingly these comrades found themselves seeking an alternative. Like many others they thought the New Communist Party offered this.

Although they objected to the secretive, hasty, and amateurish manner in which the NCP was launched, they wrongly considered that, having been established, and having taken with it hundreds of the best CPGB militants, their place was in it.

The NCP was to prove a diversionary political project, destined to degenerate into an external mirror image of the



Weak Link: seminal

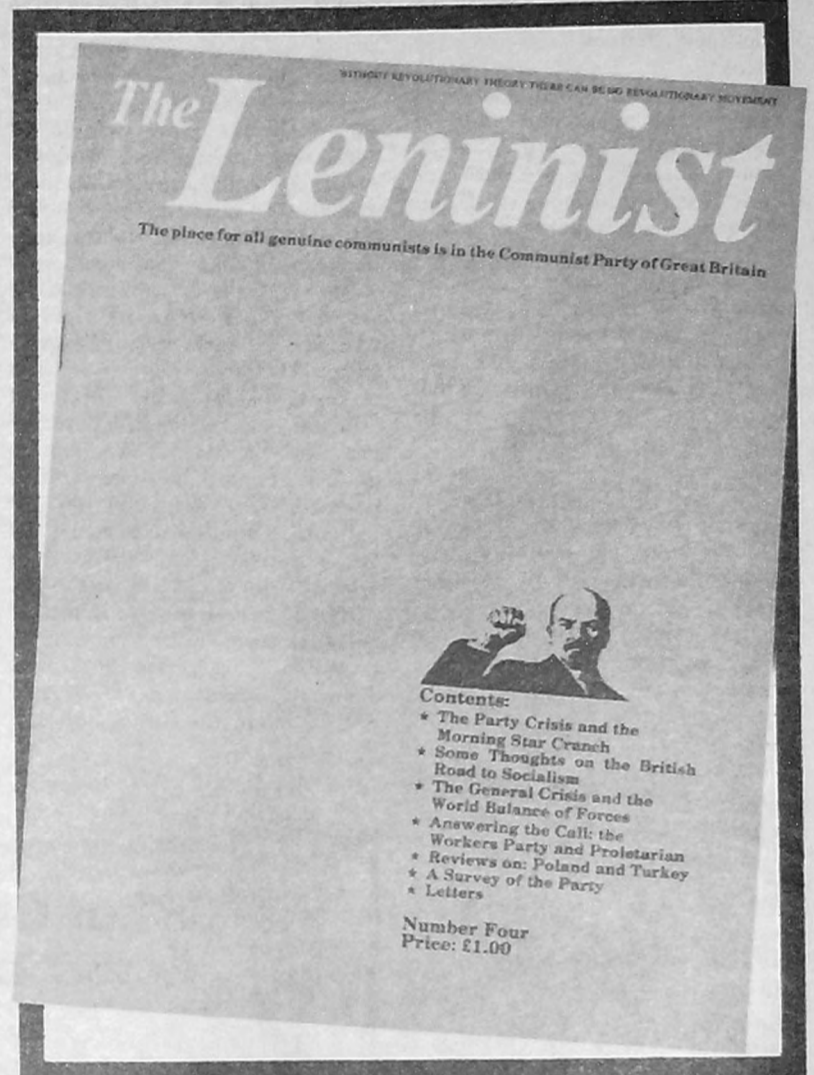
Straight Leftists. Despite this, it is essential to understand that in its first year or two the NCP was shifting to the left. It moved away from the CPGB's centrist opposition's traditional rightist positions on the AES, Ireland and socialist revolution itself. But in the absence of a solid theoretical foundation; indeed in the absence of any serious theoretical work whatsoever to prepare the break with the CPGB, the left impulses were bound to peter out.

The NCP Central Committee was dominated by the members and allies of the old CPGB Surrey District Committee. In fact the atmosphere on the NCP Central Committee was reminiscent of a CPGB oppositionist district committee. The problem was that there was no line coming down from King Street which they could rail against and wheedle around.

Out in the real world these theoretically barren centrists found they had no politics except the hand-me-downs picked up from the CPSU. Predictably, they could never take the NCP's early left momentum to genuinely Leninist conclusions. In point of fact the NCP leadership soon abandoned any attempt at building a serious revolutionary party in Britain. The dead hand of centrist conservatism inevitably asserted itself.

A watershed in this proved to be the NCP Central Committee vote on December 9 1979 to remove comrade John Chamberlain as National Organiser. This decision triggered off a definite shift to the right.

Attempts to honestly confront the NCP's dwindling membership (513 at the end of 1979) and political marginalisation was put down in favour of diplomatic internationalist financial reliance on a certain socialist country and wet dreams about the NCP becoming the recognised 'Marxist-Leninist' vanguard of the Labour Party. Consequently, the fight for a serious commitment from members was rejected in favour of a membership approach broadly similar to the reformist one that exists in our CPGB today. The predictable kick-back of this was the severing of all NCP relations with the Union of Turkish Progressives in Britain.



The Leninist theoretical journal: answering questions

The importance of Turkey

The UTP had taken a lead in supporting the Leninists of the Communist Party of Turkey and its militant paper *İşçinin Sesi* (*Workers Voice*). During the course of 1979 the principled communists of Turkey had been forced to take up the cudgels of open ideological struggle.

The CPT centrist leadership was retreating from the pressing tasks of revolution and thus into undeclared war against Leninists in the Party. A fearless ideological struggle by the Leninists was demanded. And given Turkey's position in the world, the constantly altering and exceptionally demanding conditions, the laying hold of many deliberately suppressed positions of orthodox Marxism-Leninism was a necessity.

Genuine communists in Turkey had to take orthodox Marxism-Leninism as their guide or they would humiliatingly fail the working class at every revolutionary zig and counterrevolutionary zag of Turkey's ever changing political reality. This has been brilliantly shown over the last few years.

Up to September 1980, when the revolutionary situation existed, the Leninists called for the vanguard to gird itself for the struggle for state power, the CPT 'official' leadership pleaded for legal status and attacked the 'anarchy'. When the September 12 military coup suppressed the revolutionary situation, the Leninists argued that it was fascist because the army was acting as a counterrevolutionary agent of finance capital, the 'officials' insisted the regime had a 'progressive' wing. When the fascist regime began to disintegrate

under mass pressure, the Leninists spoke of legal possibilities, and the need for a revolution to bring genuine democracy, the 'officials' now strangely decided that the civilian Özal government was nothing but a fascist front.

The ensuing debates, the predictable splintering of the 'officials', the fact that Turkey was a weak link of imperialism, and the poor response of the mainstream of the world communist movement to the developments in the CPT, demanded, and has produced, theoretical works the like of which have not been seen since the days of Lenin.

The works by CPT comrades around *İşçinin Sesi* like Yıldırım Gıneli, Cemil Silahtar, Emine Engin and above all R. Yürükoğlu, also opened the door to questions the political struggle in Britain poses but could at present never hope to answer. This renaissance in communist theory included the seminal *Turkey — Weak Link of Imperialism* by R. Yürükoğlu. It was widely circulated in the NCP and had a profound impact on elements increasingly impatient with its lack of dynamism and stuffy centrism.

But the fact that Yürükoğlu and the CPT Leninists were forced, through loyalty to the cause of the Party, the working class, and the revolution itself, to venture very mild mannered but devastating criticism of the mainstream leadership of the CPT was unforgivable for the majority of the NCP leadership.

After all, its supreme aim was to become the recognised contingent in Britain of that mainstream. So

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

THE LENINIST

Monthly Journal of the Communist Party of Great Britain

30p
Top for others

May Day Statement

The Miners' Fight



Is A Fight For All Workers

Workers in 1980 have a class fighter who would not flinch, who would be trained in an unending fight against the forces of reaction, who would be ready to die for the cause. This is the Communist Party of Great Britain. It is the only party in the world which has a programme for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society. It is the only party which has a programme for the abolition of the state and the replacement of it by a workers' state. It is the only party which has a programme for the abolition of the family and the replacement of it by a workers' state. It is the only party which has a programme for the abolition of the state and the replacement of it by a workers' state. It is the only party which has a programme for the abolition of the family and the replacement of it by a workers' state.

Intervention in the Great Strike

although the UTP had provided selfless aid to the NCP, including financial assistance, this counted for naught for the now right moving NCP.

Learning the lessons

Nonetheless, for those in the NCP who were in the process of breaking with its right moving centrism, the developments in the CPT provided the crucial international dimension to their political evolution which was now at last towards Leninism. The CPT and the turmoil that was Turkey laid before them rich revolutionary and ideological material which could not be found within the national framework of politics in Britain.

Recognising the role the international developments played in the birth of Bolshevism in Britain, our founding comrades eagerly read and absorbed the writings of the Turkish Leninists with the enthusiasm of those who had for so long been starved of serious theory by the poverty of centrism. By drawing from the experience of Leninists in Turkey, through lengthy study and discussion of the classic works of Marxism-Leninism our comrades set their sights on bringing genuine Bolshevism and Leninism back to the service of workers in Britain.

They understood full well that for revolutionary situations to mature in the advanced capitalist countries could take ten, twenty, thirty, perhaps even forty years. Nonetheless, they knew that upon the unfolding drama of these years the very fate of humanity depended. If our class fails to make revolution, imperialism will unleash a war that could not just lead to hundreds of millions of dead and injured, but throw the world into what is called a nuclear winter. Britain in particular, because it is showing all the signs of being one of the most volatile, dangerous, and vulnerable of the major imperialist powers will mean that revolutionary politics, far from being a luxury, an intellectual pursuit of the few, can and must become the property of millions of workers as soon as possible, so we can make revolution before British imperialism makes nuclear war.

Main link

It was in the light of these thoughts

that our comrades faced up to the crucial task of building a revolutionary vanguard party. They became convinced, through their own efforts, and with the aid of valuable advice from Turkish comrades, that the main link in the chain of British politics was the destiny of the CPGB. Although it was fast declining organisationally, although it faced a liquidationist crisis, it was no sect but a party with organic links with the October Revolution and the Communist International of Lenin. This vital link had to be grasped with both hands and secured before communists in Britain could shift the centre of their work to other questions.

Guided at last by elemental scientific theory and with some knowledge of the art of politics, our comrades took the decision to launch a theoretical journal. It was to be aimed at members of the CPGB and committed to a strategic plan of reforging the CPGB through conducting an open ideological struggle in its ranks which would draw in the best, the most advanced and determined elements from our class.

In November 1981 we wrote in *The Leninist* No 1 that on "the success of *The Leninist* hangs not only the Party's survival but the victory of our class." These words reflected our unique commitment to the main link, the CPGB, and the need to reforge it into a genuine revolutionary vanguard Communist Party.

The reason for this is straightforward. Only a revolutionary Communist Party is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the working class that can withstand the inevitable pressure of Labourism and relapses into narrow trade union politics. Only a revolutionary Communist Party is capable of leading the proletariat's class struggle to the point of the conquest of state power and the organisation of a socialist society. Without a revolutionary Communist Party the workers are left to wallow in the reformist mire for even their most violent, widespread and heroic spontaneous outbursts can never shatter the fetters of capitalist exploitation.

The problem is of course that our Communist Party Executive Committee has retreated from revolutionary politics. It is therefore

not capable of leading the proletariat to socialism. What is more, the opportunist alternative leadership's, whether they be Straight Leftists, CCG Chatterites or NCPers, offer no real alternative.

Of all the tendencies and factions in our communist movement, only that built around *The Leninist* has consistently, undeviatingly and proudly shown that it is 100% committed to the CPGB and the task of reforging it into the genuine revolutionary vanguard the class struggle necessitates. Only *The Leninist* has shown its fidelity to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and successfully applied them to living reality. Indeed, only *The Leninist* has stood four square for revolution and intransigently against reformism.

Looking back

From the vantage point of 1986 it is easy to forget that back in November 1981 the various Party groupings, which have now been fully revealed, existed as troglodytes under the deep cover of Party discipline. Using 'democratic centralism' as an excuse not to state one's views openly, they deigned to speak openly only in the prescribed pre-congress period, and then only in atomised 400 word contributions. These postage stamp polemics are considered safe by a Party regime which claims a monopoly of propaganda and which replaced democratic centralism with bureaucratic centralism before most of the current batch of centrist oppositionists were even born.

The troglodytic existence, and acceptance of bureaucratic centralism as genuine democratic centralism, was preferred by those with only 'official' world communist movement orthodoxy for brains, and dim and distant memories of the 1950s as an ideological point of reference. There are three main reasons for this.

- Firstly, it excused them from open ideological struggle as advanced and practised by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.
- Secondly, it was a deliberate and cynical ploy to hide the truth about their factional practice from the rank and file Party militants and prevented those outside the Party, incidentally including the advanced section of the working class, gaining any worthwhile insights into the various differences that exist.
- Thirdly, being ideologically bankrupt, and having no knowledge or grasp of genuine democratic centralism, as a result of being thoroughly brainwashed by the perverted school of bureaucratic centralism their main objection to the present bureaucratic whip is that it is not their hand holding it.

Because of this, the opportunist were forced by life itself to pompously proclaim their loyalty to the Party in public, while in private they practiced the most vile and unprincipled anti-Party factionalism. This was of course something they have not been able to theoretically justify. Despite this, factional fiefdoms, pyramidal alternative chains of command, and unofficial publications have mushroomed apace. Such ideological hypocrisy of course applied to most centrist oppositionists. But it was, as we all know, the Straight Leftists who took this public virtue/private vice dishonesty to its most extreme conclusion. They absurdly pretend, for example, that their factional publication *Straight Left* is nothing more and nothing less than a product of that catch-all for every opportunist sin, the 'broad labour movement.'

Far from this state of affairs maintaining the sympathy a powerful section of the advanced elements of the working class had traditionally shown towards our Party, the growing rightward drift of

the leadership and the absence of a serious revolutionary alternative, has seen the Party come to be regarded with a mixture of pity and contempt.

Pity and contempt

Advanced workers felt pity for a Party which had known the militant anti-bureaucratic glory of the National Minority Movement and the revolutionary reputation in 1926 which led to so many of its leaders being incarcerated by a fearful bourgeois state. Their contempt has come in the wake of organisational decay and collapse of the Party into the easy reformist life. And earning contempt is hardly something the admirers of *Marxism Today* have kept as a monopoly.

The centrists from all shades and factions have justifiably won the reputation of supporting the official labour movement's bureaucratic structure as a reflex reaction to any threat of grassroots initiative. This has led the centrists to think of themselves as the quartermasters of the official movement, Norman Willis, Neil Kinnock and all. Combined as this is, with a pathetic defence of yesterday's *British Road* and naive worship of modern revisionism's ideological origins, it is of no surprise to us that the centrists have been remarkably unsuccessful in winning advanced workers to the Party and very successful in driving many away.

Against this backdrop of ideological poverty and deception, how would a publication which was committed to genuine Marxism-Leninism and the strategy of open ideological struggle be greeted?

Well, when we first published *The Leninist* and pointed to the existence of the various contending opportunist groupings in the Party, we were met in the main from within the Party by two main reactions. There was the canned derision and feigned indignation of the 'in the know' factional chiefs who wanted to maintain the sham that they were not operating outside approved structures. But fortunately, as well as these charlatans, we also came across many honest Party members.

They greeted *The Leninist* with almost stunned disbelief. This was a result of closing their eyes to the signs of the liquidationist crisis as an act of faith. Of course this did not make the crisis go away. The degeneration of internal Party life, the underhand wheeler-dealing, the boycotting of crucial aspects of Party work (like supporting CPGB candidates in local and parliamentary elections and selling the *Morning Star*), while it first totally disorientated an ideologically unequipped rank and file, could not leave them unquestioning. With *The Leninist* they began to get answers to their questions. Indeed after *The Leninist* No.1 the inner-Party struggle, along with the factional troglodytes, has been forced into the light of day for all to judge.

This has led to a very encouraging development. Working class militants who had long ago dismissed the CPGB as dead, if not buried, have taken more than a second look at our Party because of *The Leninist's* existence. The winning of

such elements is of course pivotal to any serious plan to reforge our CPGB. Without them, the inner-Party struggle would be cut off from the oxygen of the class struggle and the fate of the sterile world of sect politics would stare the Party in the face.

Looking ahead

Since it first published *The Leninist* has given over many pages to articles discussing the nature of the period ahead of us. Because of our application of Marxism-Leninism we have been able to come to some important conclusions where others can only see the shifting sands of day-to-day politics.

We have, above all, pointed to the drift of world capitalism towards a new general crisis and predicted that the class struggle, somnolent for over half a century in Britain, was destined to erupt with a power far greater than the period 1910-1926. This would, we said, throw reformism and all forms of opportunism into turmoil and, at the same time, throw up the raw proletarian material for a mass revolutionary Communist Party.

Some of what we predicted in earlier editions of *The Leninist* has started to come to pass. Many opportunist groupings have already plunged into crisis, not least those in and around our Party. Moreover, who can doubt that the class struggle is on the rise. The miners' Great Strike shattered social peace throughout the year of the strike and has ushered in what looks like being a sustained period of new battles and struggles, which will further expose all that is rotten in our working class movement.

Although *The Leninist* has developed some penetrating theoretical conclusions, it has never been content to rest on the laurels of abstract theory. Theory without practice, as the famous dictum goes, is sterile. So increasing the frequency and impact of our publication was always a top priority. And this was never seen as an end in itself, but a precondition for providing our class with communist leadership.

As a quarterly journal, *The Leninist* laid the theoretical foundations of our tendency and declared them to the world. This was a first step.

The second step was taken when, with *The Leninist* No.7, we went monthly. The monthly paper allowed us to develop our views on a much broader range of questions and, above all, facilitated our intervention in the Great Strike which had an impact on advanced workers way out of proportion to our organisational size.

Our new fortnightly will be our third step and begin the real work of building a powerful network of supporters who will provide the well trained and dedicated foundations for reforging our CPGB. Such a structure will immensely strengthen our links with the advanced section of our class and will itself be a preparation for the fourth step of launching an agitational weekly which will set its sights on fusing communism with the working class struggle.

Jack Conrad

THE LENINIST RALLY

We will be holding a rally in central London in early May to celebrate the launch of our fortnightly. Speakers from: *The Leninist*, Wolf Tone Society, Union of Turkish Progressives, NUM. Workers' theatre from: Un-American broadcasting. Music from: Iscinin Sesi choir. See next issue for details.

PARTY PIECES

YCL

Latest card exchange figures for our Young Communist League stand at 150 (100 of whom are in Scotland). 1985, the 50th anniversary of the YCL paper *Challenge*, only saw two issues and there has not been an issue since. Ominously the July meeting of the Executive Committee of the Party is to discuss the YCL. Is it going to help rebuild the YCL or close it down via the usual opportunist route of "broadening" it? Unfortunately we must expect the worse. The recent reduction of YCL fulltimers from two to one and the other cost-cutting measures the Party centre is taking to subsidise *Marxism Today* and *7 Days* can only bode ill for the YCL. Party members should flood 16 St John Street with resolutions demanding substantial financial help for the YCL and the rejection of Euro-monarist cost-cutting exercises with our future.

Scapegoats

Faced with problems reactionary leaders always look for scapegoats. Kinnock blames *Militant*, Thatcher blames the trade unions, the fascists blame the reds and the blacks, Hitler blamed the Jews, Nero blamed the Christians. Those who did next to nothing in the miners' Great Strike except send condolences to the widow of South Wales scab Wilkie, who rant on about having to "grapple with the dilemma that feminism, lesbian and gay liberation pose to the established structures, theory and practice of the YCL" likewise look for a scapegoat for the over 95% decline in membership over the last two decades or so their like have controlled the League. For comrade Mark Ashton retiring YCL General Secretary it is the "revolutionary Marxists" still in its ranks who are to blame. Sounds familiar doesn't it?

Charming

Readers will be interested to know that the last YCL General Secretary, Doug Chalmers of the Yard, is still carrying out the 'anti-authoritarian' style of work that has made the YCL so small. Having earned a dishonourable reputation for calling the notoriously racist Hackney police on 15 young communists (seven of whom were black), purging the YCL leadership of principled communists, and making support for *The Leninist* an expellable offence, he is now 'policing' the Party in Scotland. Still on full-time wages Doug is witch-hunting suspect Leninists and generally helping to crack down on all dissenting voices. Membership in Scotland is of course spiralling down under this 'tolerant' regime. But the comrades on the Scottish committee always have "revolutionary Marxists" to blame for this don't they? Sounds familiar doesn't it?

COMMUNIST

Meetings and matters

Executive Committee

THE MEETING of the Executive Committee has provoked a deal of controversy. It was not the EC's debate around "The political situation and elections", nor "7 Days", or even the "Allocation of personnel" that has excited comment. No, as our readers know full well it was comrade Pete Carter's rather blandly named "Questions facing trade unionists" (soon to be issued as a Party pamphlet).

The report has been greeted with enthusiasm by the hard line Eurocommunists in the Party. Nonetheless deep concern exists amongst those trade union officials who have remained loyal to the EC. After all *The Guardian* said of comrade Carter's report that it is "the broadest and most vitriolic attack on trade union leadership, left, and right, since the foundation of the Communist Party in the early 1920s.. Neil Kinnock would not dare to launch such an attack — at least not in public. Nor would David Owen. Even Mrs Thatcher might hesitate". So no wonder leading trade union functionaries still loyal to the EC are said to be having doubts about just how far their Euro bed mates will go.

The gist of comrade Carter's report was a rejection of the Party's "traditional work in industry". Indeed comrade Carter blamed the broad left, Campaign Group of MPs, Communist Campaign Group, *Militant* and all, for much of the labour movement's problems. Their damaging role is apparently the result of the operation of "four principles: No compromise. No retreats. No sacrifice and socialism is the answer".

Examples of these "four principles" were not given. Despite this it is clear that they are a reference to struggles like the miners' strike and the intransigence of leaders such as Arthur Scargill. If this is the case it should be stated openly.

It seems that comrade Carter thinks that workers should compromise, retreat, and sacrifice when faced by a capitalism that can no longer afford the luxury of improving the "welfare state" and is determined to raise the rate of exploitation. In this he seems to place the CPGB leadership alongside the majority of Labourites who have collapsed and fled to the right under the impact of Thatcherite Toryism. Clearly the EC has taken another step to the right by voting to approve the report.

This is as the report shows the case. For comrade Carter advocated turning the CPGB towards an alliance with "the broad left as expressed by the Labour Coordinating Committee and personalities such as Bickerstaffe, Sawyer, Knapp, Livingstone and Blunkett".

Comrade Carter thinks the CPGB should play the role of a neo-Fabian think tank for these "left" forces. Without the Party the right moving reformists cannot come up with a "credible coherent alternative to Thatcherism".



Pete Carter: vitriolic

To facilitate this new realism of the Party leadership the industrial advisories are to be opened up. For many years these bodies have been strongholds of right opportunist trade union officials in the Party, who have used them as an inner sanctum of the broad lefts and thus useful vehicles for advancement and patronage. The hard line Euros who were of course kept out of these advisories simply because of their middle class occupations have long lusted for influence and control over these bodies. Now they are to have their way. "People from planning, consumers and those with specialist skills" are to be included. Thus the Euros can at last get into even the engineering, mining and print advisories, through claiming some "specialist" status no doubt like being a consumer of electricity or a reader of *The Guardian*.

Such a development will play into the hands of the Communist Campaign Group. Perhaps this is what comrade Carter intends. The fact is, as we have pointed out so many times, there are two playing at the splitting game. The CCG leadership is not alone in working for a split. The extreme Euros would love nothing better than what they consider trade union hacks, doctrinaire traditionalists and hard lefts, walking out of the Party. For them such comrades are not just part of the problem — they are the problem. No wonder the air has recently been thick with rumour of comrade Gordon McLennan's "retirement" and his replacement by a Euro nominee.

Communist Campaign Group plans

RAY COLVIN (who?) the fulltime CCG organiser has been doing the rounds recently, attempting to buoy up the flagging morale of his comrades. His best weapon is of course the Euros and their more outlandish statements. Comrade Pete Carter's slugging off the traditional broad lefts, comrade Dave Green's statement's concerning his belief that capitalism can never be "suppressed in Britain" and Sam Aaronovitch's call to dump the AES are grist to his mill.

Faced with these Euros the CCG can present itself as the true defenders of yesterday's revisionism. Like members of the Flat Earth Society they stand by the *British Road*, the AES, the *Morning Star* (all the while telling more left CCG

London District Congress

AS PREDICTED the London District Committee proved a walkover for the Eurocommunists. They won their major resolutions by huge margins of around 150 votes to 40 votes and their candidates swept the board in the election to the new District Committee. The 229 full and consultative delegates were told of the damaging effects of the drawn out factional struggle which exploded when the last District Congress was closed down.

Although only a small number have actually been expelled (35) it was reported that Party organisation has suffered considerably. Membership has dropped by some 400 and Brent, Harringay, Tower Hamlets and Westminster Borough Committees were dissolved. As well as this the entire membership of certain branches has been reregistered and many more have been reorganised or simply declared defunct.

Attempting to counter centrist criticism comrade Gordon McLennan based much of his fraternal address quoting from Gorbachev's report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU. This was done to justify everything the Party has done from articles in favour of the EEC in *Marxism Today* to clamping down on dissenting elements.

The opposition was not only reduced to a rump but was divided between the remaining pro-*Morning Star* forces and the Straight Leftists. While the Straight Leftists were as usual well-organised the Chaterites were at the congress more to complain about malpractices than consolidate a political position in the Party.

The major debates centred around *Racism in London* and *London's Future — Communist Strategy*. On racism the Straight Leftists put forward for them a healthy position which declared "Our Party's influence in the struggle against racism in general and in the lead up to, during and after the Brixton and Tottenham events was effectively absent." (composite 19) and

"welcomed" the "fearlessness of many young people in confronting a far better trained and equipped arm of the state" (composite 17).

Although this is a far more left position than the community policing line put forward in the past by them, there was a sting in the tail. Apparently the police were "acting on behalf of the state" and the role of the Communist Party is reduced to that of a body giving "deeper theoretical understanding and political edge which will enable those involved [in the riots] to become political leaders among the young people with whom they work". (*Ibid*) In other words the CPGB is to play the role of a think-tank not a vanguard.

But it was on the Party itself that the most interesting differences could be seen. The Chaterites presented a 2½ page composite which far from detailing a serious political strategy simply attacked the Euro take-over of the District Committee. The composite ends with the call to welcome "back the expelled, suspended and excluded members" and the ending of the use of "democratic centralism" as a "means of liquidating the Party as an effective political force". (composite 1) In contrast the Straight Leftist platform on the Party was 14 lines long. Composite 2 pleaded to the Euros to use "disciplinary procedures ... sparingly". Unity in the Party it declared can only be rebuilt "politically" on the basis of "socialism" and the "coming struggle to defeat the Conservative government".

Of course on the floor of the congress these different centrist approaches and other centrist resolutions on Ireland, the *Morning Star* and unemployment were drowned in a sea of petty bourgeois radicalism. It was the Euro's congress and they were determined to pass resolutions on acid rain, the GLC, drugs, and gay and lesbian rights.

So when it came to the elections for the new District Committee it was hardly surprising that the Euros swept the board.

elements that these "orthodoxies" will be looked at when "appropriate"). Thus the CCG attempts to have its stale ideological cake and eat it. Of course this is a classic example of opportunism putting the needs of the day before serious theoretical study. It is indeed forced to split theory from practice simply because it knows that the CCG is a heterogeneous grouping with no ideological unity except opposition to the Euros.

Colvin tells his fellow CCGers to "rescue and rebuild the Communist Party through mass resistance". But although he talks of a "strategy of transition" and says that there will be "no new party now" he covers the splitters in the leadership of the CCG by saying that the "options are open".

In fact the CCG has already gone half way to create a new party. The CCG is to have its conference on April 19 in London, supporters are being issued with membership cards and a regional and local CCG structure is being created under the unelected Steering Committee.

Readers may remember that the CCG was promising its supporters a theoretical journal last year. Obviously it failed to appear. Now Colvin is again promising CCG supporters a monthly journal. The *Communist Campaign Review*, as it will be called, will be launched with a lot of hullabaloo and a £10,000 appeal but is only scheduled to appear sometime in the summer. In the meantime CCGers will have to make do with a monthly newsletter.

THE LENINIST SUPPLEMENT

Questions of the revolution in South Africa



From ungovernability to revolution

"The South African revolution stands at the momentous threshold; the Pretoria regime is not strong enough to defeat the revolution; the revolution is not yet strong enough to defeat Pretoria."

(Comrade Moses Mabhinda, General Secretary of the SACP 1978-1986)

THE SACP rightly asserts that the conditions through which this transitional, unstable period have materialised are not, as some on the left both here and in South Africa myopically claim, purely a case of workers versus capitalists. To advance this argument, say the SACP, is to ignore the dual nature of oppression under apartheid, which manifests itself both through class and racial oppression, giving the liberation struggle a two-fold character.

In one form this takes on what the SACP has characterised as "colonialism of a new type", by which the African, Asian and Coloured masses in South Africa are super-exploited by the regime in much the same way as they were when it was a British colony, which has "brought to the fore the necessity on the part of the vanguard movement to adopt the strategy of armed struggle." (*African Communist*, First Quarter 1986)

Inseparably interpenetrated with this are the results of the high level of development of South Africa capitalism: a numerous black proletariat possessing many years' experience of intense struggle and consequently a high level of class consciousness, which poses "the issue of insurrection, as can be conceived of in any highly industrialised capitalist country". (*Ibid*)

So what strategy has the SACP developed from its analysis of the unique form taken by the contradictions of capitalism under apartheid? A central component of the struggle is the concept of "Peoples' War", which now sees its crystallisation in practice in South Africa.

A peoples' war is a revolutionary war in

which our entire nation — our peoples army, workers, the rural masses, women, intellectuals, students, the religious community etc. — use all forms of revolutionary warfare (armed, non-combat, legal and illegal) to attack and destroy all symbols, structures and organs of apartheid power, including all of those who man them. The underlying principle here is: all these forms of revolutionary warfare, even those forms of it which are aimed at achieving certain short-term goals, should have as their ultimate and fundamental objective the total destruction of the South African system". (*Ibid*)

This is realised through wide-ranging actions of the broad masses (civil disruption, school strikes, etc.), taking place alongside the armed guerilla war waged by Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), in which many SACP comrades play a vital role. The MKs are a full-time army of political cadres, educating the people in elementary guerilla and basic combat training generally.

This is the situation as it exists now. Obviously as an end in itself, it is insufficient to carry out the huge task of smashing apartheid. The SACP are the first to acknowledge this. To them the present period is one of transition for the liberation movement; one of preparation for future conflicts; a stage of growth, training and development through struggle. At the same time, they aim to deliver as many blows as possible to the racist state in order to demoralise and further destabilize the enemy, and consequently raise confidence amongst the masses. "No go areas" for police and a reduction in the number of informers in many areas are two consequences of this. Again, a central component of this is the MK: "Guerrilla tactics" are used to "attack and destroy enemy targets and to capture his weapons ... Guerrilla warfare essentially addresses itself to the question of harassing, eliminating and finally destroying the enemy military power". (*Ibid*)

To reiterate, the SACP does not see this strategy as the be all and end all of the liberation struggle, a sort of creeping guerillist conquest of South Africa, but as one laying the ground-work for an insurrection.

Because of the nature of the South Africa apartheid state, the task of splitting the army is made that much more difficult, as its core comprises of privileged whites, who have a material interest in the perpetuation of the apartheid system. In Russia in 1917 it was to a very large extent the sections of the army who went over to the revolution, who armed, defended and militarily educated the workers. In South Africa the situation takes a different form. White workers in the army associate, not with their black class brothers and sisters fighting on the streets for revolutionary change, but with the racist state for the maintenance of the status quo. Therefore, the MK must take on this duty to a much greater extent: it is more realistic to look to neutralise the South African army rather than facilitating any significant split in it, though this task is taken up wherever possible.

In view of the relative ideological uniformity of the state machine, it is ever more urgent and compelling that the masses should be armed, so that the armed struggle is not just that of the MKs.

The SACP sees these forces armed for the revolution as: "a) armed workers and the rural masses; b) advanced contingents (MK) of the representatives of these classes; c) units of government troops siding with the revolution". (*Ibid*) "We must weaken the SADF by winning over black soldiers and sowing doubt and division amongst the whites. (*Much more can be done here*)." (*Umsebenzi*, Vol 2 No.1, emphasis in original)

It should be made clear that the SACP does not subscribe to the Maoist strategy of surrounding the towns from the country. Rather our comrades believe that the most

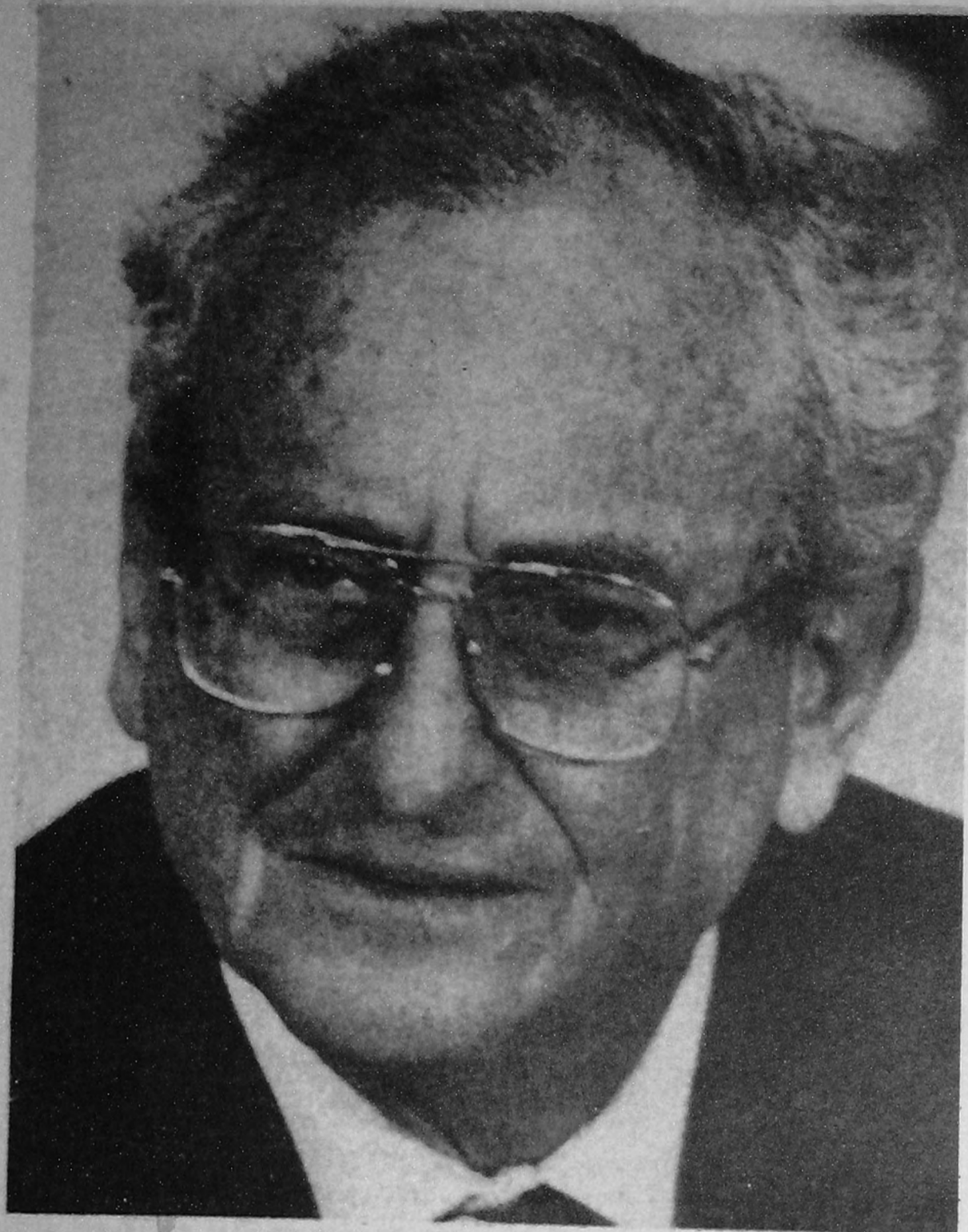
advanced sections are to be found in the towns, and consequently put out the call that "Militants from the towns must go among their country brothers and sisters and help spread the message of organisation and revolt. Let the towns surround the countryside!". (*Umsebenzi*) This follows on from the SACP's position of the necessity for the working class to imprint the democratic revolution with the mark of its leadership if it is to pass uninterruptedly through to socialism.

We have briefly outlined the strategy of our comrades in South Africa to escalate, deepen and broaden the liberation struggle by drawing ever greater numbers of the masses into the fray; also the revolutionary role of Umkhonto we Sizwe (which commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation on December 16 of this year) in the struggle. United with this is their understanding of the immediacy of the necessity of arming the masses, with both Marxist-Leninist theory and with the AK47s that are so obviously needed. All strands leading to the pinnacle of the insurrection sweeping out the rats of apartheid and their Western imperialist backers.

These points are taken up in an interview with David Kitson, communist, and ex-South African political prisoner, who we feel raises important questions on this strategy.

One thing is certain, if the revolutionary situation in South Africa is to be resolved victoriously, it necessitates a strong Communist Party. We therefore fully concur with our comrades when they call in *Umsebenzi* to "strengthen the workers' vanguard — the South African Communist Party!", and we call on all British revolutionaries to do likewise, politically and financially. Long live the South African Communist Party! Victory to the ANC/SACP revolutionary alliance!

Alan Merrik



David Kitson was for 20 years a political prisoner in apartheid's jails. Before that he was an outstanding militant in South Africa's Communist Party. Today his views still express the most profound commitment to proletarian internationalism.

Interview with David Kitson

The Leninist: Tell us something about the history of the Communist Party in South Africa and, in particular, the brief period of the Party's dissolution after 1950.

David Kitson: There had been a history of working class activity in South Africa on the part of white workers who had been brought out to South Africa to operate the mines in the days before they devised ways of getting large numbers of black people to work down the mines. So the British miners and artisans went out there to work; one of them for instance was Bill Andrews who came out from Suffolk.

There were some very fierce class struggles in South Africa at the beginning of World War I and generally during that period, in which people like Andrews participated. Consequently, a sort of Labour Party emerged and then, after the war, some of these people went on to form the Communist Party of South Africa in emulation of the Bolsheviks in Russia. It continued from there. At first it was mainly a white party and of course in the early '20s there was a sort of revolt in South Africa on the part of white miners in order to keep the skilled preserve in the mines, in order to keep black people out, in which Andrews participated. So there was a sort of racist attitude amongst the white miners which led to this action by white miners, which was put down by force, by the way, by the government.

Anyway, the Communist Party proceeded on the basis of being a mainly white party organised on the basis of artisans and the like. It attracted to it also white intellectuals. Most of the white people you met in the

Party in my day had come to it by an intellectual process rather than being forced into it through economic pressures.

The Leninist: So there was a similar process going on in the South African Party as had gone on in the Bolshevik Party: intellectuals who were acutely conscious of their privileged position in relation to the masses, being drawn to revolution.

David Kitson: Such people would have to be fairly well educated. S.P. Bunting, Brian Bunting's father, for instance, was an Oxford educated man. Similarly with others, for instance the leading guru in my young days was this chap Jack Simons who was a lecturer at Cape Town University.

The Politbureau of the Party sat in Cape Town. People used to say this was because Jack Simons, who was the Party's leading theoretician, lived there. But there was this problem anyway in South Africa that there were three urban centres with nothing in between. There was a lot of industrial and political activity in Johannesburg, the parliament sat in Cape Town so there was a certain amount of activity there, as there was in Durban where I was.

In fact, I myself came to the Party when I was a student at the university of Natal, studying mechanical engineering. After qualifying, I worked in various engineering workshops and I was the only person working with his hands amongst all the whites who were things like trainee officials and so on.

Some of us, myself to a certain extent, didn't like the race situation and the way black people were treated. And of course we were affected to some extent by economic pressure. When there was a slump on, my

father went bankrupt, and this made people think about things and of course, nobody had any answers in those days. There was the fascist threat — the Nazi ideology was very prominent. And so one tended to become a Marxist. In my case this process was accelerated by the Soviet Union and its military successes. When the Finnish war took place it was an unknown factor to me, but they accomplished something which did not correspond with the image of them that had been painted. They had conducted a war in the middle of an Arctic winter which was supposed to be impossible; they had smashed the Mannerheim line and no one else had been able to smash lines like that such as the Maginot line or the Siegfried line. So this was impressive.

Then when the Soviet Union came into the war proper, everybody gave it six weeks. Of course, it didn't quite turn out that way!

But still, I was an activist in politics and there were a group of us who moved to the left and eventually joined the Communist Party. In my case what precipitated this was the Second World War. Before the Soviet Union came into the war, there wasn't automatic support for the war in South Africa. The Communist Party of South Africa wasn't supporting the war. A lot of the Afrikaner people weren't and of course the black people thought that this was a quarrel between whites and it wasn't therefore a fight for democracy as they weren't being treated in a democratic way at all.

Indeed later on when the Communist Party of South Africa decided to support the war as an anti-fascist war, the black

members of the Party took a lot of persuading before they were won over to support the war effort and the campaign for a second front and the same sort of anti-fascist activity that went on in this country. Most of the white members of the Party had come into it for intellectual reasons and many of the blacks because of economic pressures. There would be some sort of class struggle over some local issue that would throw up leaders who would then be drawn into the Party, (often only to be thrown out again quite quickly afterward!).

For example, there was a strike in the Dunlop tyre factory. It was quite a fearsome strike; supporters of the strike would go round catching scabs and beating them up badly. The scabs, of course, were people who had been brought in from outside to replace the workers who had been sacked — they didn't have working class consciousness at all.

Anyway, this strike produced young black people who had natural qualities of leadership. They were drawn into the Communist Party and some of them were made into trade union officials. But they would be poorly educated and have no experience of running an organisation. Thus, they would get into difficulties in the day-to-day running of the trade union branch, for example over the collection and spending of subscriptions.

Now in those days, black trade unions were outside the law, so the treasurer could, and sometimes did, make off with the funds and there was nothing you could do about it! So if there was the slightest impropriety, someone would come from head office and throw the man out of the union and consequently he would be thrown out of the Party as well. So there was a fair turnover in those days.

But nevertheless, the majority of people in the Communist Party were black and Indian — quite a few of the Indians came into the Party for intellectual reasons.

The Leninist: Was this racial make-up reflected in the leadership?

David Kitson: The people with the better education of course rose to the higher levels of the Party. Therefore, inevitably, you tended to get a lot of whites in the leadership. But nevertheless, there were black people who had come in, had developed and who went on to the Party leadership — people like Moses Kotane and a man called Edwin Mofustanyana. Kotane was editor of the Party newspaper which was a journal called *Inkululeko* which means 'Freedom'.

Perhaps the most outstanding black leader was a man called H.A. Naidoo, who was originally a tailor whose formal education stopped at Standard 2. I suppose that would be about the 4th Year in British terms. But he went on to educate himself.

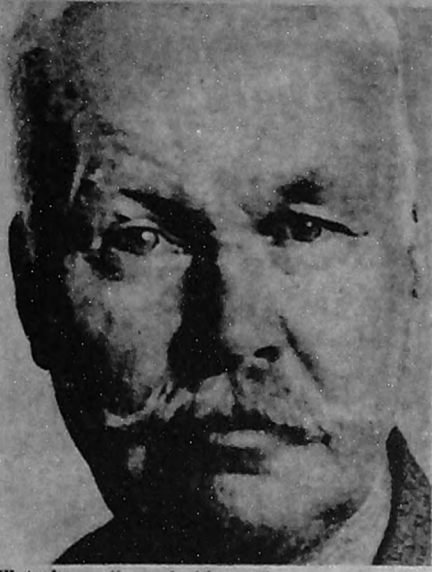
He was very intelligent, a great man who eventually became, of course, a member of the Central Committee of the South African Party and a member of the Politbureau...

The Leninist: Moving on to the dissolution of the Party. Do you think it can be accounted for by two factors we have already spoken about? First there was the predominance of intellectuals in the Party; second by the disorientating effects of the policy of supporting one's 'own' ruling class against the Nazis?

David Kitson: Well of course, the SACP had been a member of Comintern and had representatives in the Soviet Union; Bunting was one of them for a while. Now Comintern elaborated this policy of a Black Republic which the white South African communists didn't really cotton on to, you know. There was even a sort of 'racist' attitude in some ways. They thought in terms of a world struggle that would somehow affect South Africa and not in terms of national liberation. In fact, the struggle for national liberation only became the dominant sphere of work of the Party after World War II, although the policy before the war of fighting for the Black Republic clearly did imply a struggle for national liberation as well. In fact, at one time, people like Andrews and Bunting were actually expelled from the Party.

Of course, the South African Party was affected by the situation caused by the war. One of the things that happened was that at first the Party was opposed to the war, which it regarded as a straight inter-imperialist war conducted for the re-devision of markets. Of course, I don't need to describe that to you...

And then when the Soviet Union came into the conflict, it was felt that this



Bill Andrews: "grand old man"

transformed the character of the war, but there was quite an ongoing discussion to get the Party to support the war. Eventually, however, the Party was won and began to run campaigns in support of the Second Front. We made a lot of recruits then. There was a lot of support for that position; I remember myself speaking in big rallies in Durban in support of the Second Front.

But with the entry of the Soviet Union into the war, the Comintern was dissolved. The Soviet Union was occupied with fighting the war and thus could no longer give guidance to nascent Communist Parties in other parts of the world. There was a sort of 'vacuum'.

The 'vacuum' was filled by the American Communist Party which was the largest outside the European sphere. All the European parties you see, had 'disappeared' into the fight against the Nazis and nothing was heard from them. They could not and did not communicate with anybody. The American Communist Party then adopted the leading role and put forward the theory of Browderism and of course a lot of Party intellectuals tend to read books and swallow everything they read. A section of them became Browderites and moved for the dissolution of the South African Party in the same way that the American Party was to be dissolved.

Black trade unionists in the Party tended to think along the lines of 'Well, however benign the American capitalists may have become, our ones are still behaving just the same way as before; so we certainly can't dissolve at the moment'. The Party's attitude was that policy had been decided at the National Conference and that is what they planned to carry out. Meanwhile, they said, there could be discussion in the Party of the merits or demerits of Browderism and the way forward generally. Of course, simultaneously with this discussion, the Party was campaigning in support of the war. In fact, in 1944, the Party took the decision that all male Party members who were eligible for carrying arms, unless they had key jobs in



Moses Kotane: "the voice"

the Party, should join the army. I for one joined and saw service in Italy, where I was a Sapper because I was a qualified engineer.

However, the Browderite arguments were paralysing the Party in a way. The 'bible' as far as we were concerned in those days was *Labour Monthly*. We received an air-mail edition, printed on rice paper. Dutt's *Labour Monthly* had tremendous prestige in those days, even in South Africa. Whatever appeared in *Labour Monthly* was the 'given word' in many ways. And of course while Dutt didn't take sides in the Browderism debate, he nevertheless permitted articles by Browder to appear in *Labour Monthly*, which was a good enough 'accolade' for many people in the South African Party.

So during this period, while the controversy was raging, we were still continuing to make a lot of recruits. But many of them were not integrated properly into the Party as the officials who should have done that were Browderites and thought 'Well, what's the point of drawing people in when we are going to dissolve the Party as soon as the Party leadership see reason'.

The Leninist: Don't you think the 'paralysis' that you spoke about was exacerbated by the fact that the Party had subordinated itself to a cross-class 'national' effort in WWII. Of course, the Party did conduct some work in the army for equal pay and desegregation, but didn't the fact that everything was sacrificed for the popular front against fascism mean a certain disorientation in Party work and perspectives? As I understand it, the idea of a Party had been so buried and the Party structure made so inflexible that when the Suppression of Communism Act came along, the dissolution was assured.

David Kitson: Perhaps 'paralysis' is the wrong word. Although we were immobilised at the time to a certain extent, we were still making a lot of recruits. We even started talking of a mass Party as opposed to a vanguard Party because of the number of people who were joining it during the war.

So perhaps 'paralysis' was too strong a word. It turned the Party towards mass,



Oliver Tambo: "truce"

legalistic spheres of work. In 1944, there was an election in South Africa and the Party put up candidates. In those days there was a Labour Party in South Africa which was an election orientated organisation for whites, the only section of the population who had the vote. It represented the interests of the white workers alone.

Now, it didn't have the attitude of the British Labour Party towards the British Communist Party as typified by Herbert Morrison. We had quite friendly relations with the individual members, some of whom were Members of Parliament. We did a fair amount of electoral work in conjunction with the Durban Labour Party and that took a fair amount of my time. When the general election was on, I had to run around making speeches for the Party in support of the Party platform. And we got a fair vote too. In some towns a communist might be elected; Johannesburg town council had a communist representative, for example.

That absorbed a lot of our activity. Then of course, there were big rallies in support of the Second Front or in support of the Soviet Union. We would carry placards in support of Churchill, Mao Tse-tung, Chian Kai-Chek and Roosevelt! It was a broad front against fascism, a broad front which Browder mis-interpreted.

When the war was won and France was liberated, Duclos wrote an article attacking Browderism — a one page article which appeared in *Labour Monthly*. This destroyed the position of the Browderites in South Africa. Many of them actually left the Party because they couldn't actually stand the blow to their pride. By this time, however, the Party had become orientated towards electoral work. A substantial part of our work was the sale of the Party paper, which was called *The Guardian* in those days. It was a weekly paper and had quite a good circulation by South African standards.

Then the Party had numerous trade union officials in its ranks and there were some quite fierce trade union struggles in South Africa after the war. So there was still work

going on outside of the narrow electoral sphere of course. But nevertheless, the Party tended more and more to be drawn into this type of parliamentary struggle exclusively.

There was the situation in the Cape Province whereby coloured people who met certain qualifications had the vote, but they couldn't elect a black person to parliament; they had to vote for some white person as their representative. The communists participated in these elections: Bunting used to stand there before the war, though he never won. But after the war, a man called Sam Cahn won a place in parliament as the coloured representative. Other Party members were elected to provincial councils, so all of this tended to affect the Party's attitude.

So this was the situation when the Nats. came to office and started to set up the apartheid regime. One of the first things they did was to draw up the Suppression of Communism Act and move against the Communist Party. By that time I was in England, so from now on what I say is more or less hearsay!

Sam Cahn was in parliament and comrades in provincial councils, the communists started to penetrate things like the trades and labour councils, a sort of TUC; there were communists in the leadership of the ANC by then (although it was in those days a purely black organisation)—all these people had positions to lose if the Communist Party continued in existence, even though illegally. So the Central Committee started having discussions as to whether they should dissolve the Party.

Well, I wasn't party to these discussions and neither was Bill Andrews, who had been the chairman of the Party for many years and was regarded as the grand old man of the Party and he was still a Central Committee member although no longer chairman because of his age and a heart condition. He was excluded from all these discussions and only learnt of them by accident. He wrote a very long political analysis of it to Harry Pollitt which was put in the British Party archives where I read it when I was in the international department of the Party at one time.

The Leninist: Was Bill Andrews' position typical of a trend in the Party?

David Kitson: The majority attitude was that the idea of dissolving the Party was sound because then all these various people could continue in their various functions as individuals ... These people wanted to continue in their various positions, in the movement, in the liberation organisations and in the trade unions, and ANC, and so on where they were doing a good job. I think the idea was that Moses Kotane would pop up every now and again and make a statement as 'Moses Kotane' but which everyone really took as the voice of the Communist Party.

My first feeling was that if they had gone underground and taken the consequences this would have sorted the men from the boys, so to speak. But they decided to dissolve. Everyone I was in touch with at this time regarded the dissolution as a manoeuvre — that really, underneath it all somewhere, was a Communist Party. I could never really find out whether there was or not, because they were buried so deeply, if in fact they were buried and not dissolved. Then gradually it seems that an organisation was re-formed, basically around people who could be trusted by the people who were bringing together this organisation, called the SACP, not the CPSA.

When I got back to South Africa, there was an organisation there. Though it never made statements in the name of the Communist Party, sometimes an individual would make a statement and that is what everyone regarded as 'the line'. In fact, what happened was that, after Sharpeville, a state of emergency was declared and everybody with records on the left that the authorities knew about were pulled in, including people who had been Browderites and had left the Party. The people who were left, of whom I was one, had to carry on and we 'dug up' the Party and started issuing statements in the name of the Party from then on. So there was a situation where no one admitted to being a communist, but there was a Communist Party.

The Leninist: Tell us something about the political process by which the Party was re-formed.

David Kitson: I don't know much about the process because I had come to England in 1947. If you were a member of the

Sharpeville: "after it everybody was pulled in"



Communist Party in South Africa, one of the rules was that you couldn't leave the country without the agreement of the Party. I wanted to come to England to further my engineering experience in the aircraft industry as there wasn't an aircraft industry at the time in South Africa.

So I made an application to come here and the leadership agreed. In fact I spent a morning with Moses Kotane when I was all packed up and waiting to board the ship. He gave me a letter of introduction to the British Party and so on. South Africa was part of the Commonwealth in those days, so I almost automatically became a member of the British Party, which was what Moses wanted me to do.

Once I was here, I didn't have a tremendous amount of contact with the people in South Africa. There were quite a lot of South African emigrés here already, but I wasn't really in contact with them either, because I was working in Hatfield and they were in London. I thus became more active in local politics — branch chairman of Hatfield Communist Party and a member of the Party branch committee. So I was away from South African left emigré politics in London. So I don't know exactly what went on.

The people in London may have been informed by the centre (which in those days was in South Africa itself), but if they had been, they weren't telling anyone. So I can't really say from my personal experience whether it was just a manoeuvre to dodge the consequences of the law; remember it may have been, as there were quite a lot of lawyers in the Party in those days. They were for ever inventing legal dodges to get around the law in South Africa, except that when they won something, the Nats just changed it all back again! Probably, though, they really did dissolve the Party. Personally I think they did.

The Leninist: Why was Andrews excluded from the discussions about the dissolution?

David Kitson: They said to Andrews: 'We know that if you ever get involved in some political controversy, you throw yourself in wholeheartedly and we didn't want to be responsible for killing you given your heart condition and so on.' This actually turned out to be the case in fact...

He (Andrews) was fiercely opposed to the idea of even a nominal dissolution. He wanted to go underground. So they bypassed him. He argued on a very orthodox position of the need for a party of the working class. Also, he said, in the situation in South Africa the Party should go underground and accept the consequences. He argued for the creation of an elaborate underground apparatus for the Party; you know how those kind of things work. On the other hand there were those people who had positions of influence in the movement and didn't really have a clear idea of the real situation in South Africa. There was constant harassment of the Party officials, parliamentary representatives and so on. One week *The Guardian* would be banned and the next a paper just like it would appear on the streets! They weren't really taking account of reality.

The Leninist: Do you think the refounding of the Party, involving as it did some sort of effort to re-establish the idea of a Party, helped the Party establish a healthy line in South Africa?

David Kitson: ... Most of the time, the South African Party took a very good line and they still do. So, OK let's assume there was a dissolution process; the refounding was by invitation only as I understand it. I saw 'the man' over here who was the representative of the Party, although he didn't say so. I had some discussions with them. Then when I went back after a little while I was approached — one of them was Mike Harman who's now dead. They were instructed to find out whether I was 'all right'. Only then was I inducted into the Party. They approached me, not the other way round; I couldn't just sign on some dotted line.

In the Party, membership was divided into A, B, C, and D. D meant you were completely under cover and weren't supposed to be known at all as a communist. I thought it was a bit ludicrous in my case as I was first arrested in 1941, during the anti-war period, for distributing communist propaganda in Durban. When I was finally arrested, I discovered that the South African authorities had a long and detailed report on my activities in Britain. The record went up

to when I won a scholarship to Ruskin college and left the London scene; then they lost track of me. So obviously what that indicates is that there were some South African emigrés who were actually informers. The police knew a hell of a lot about me!

Even after the refounding of the Party there was still the practice of individuals issuing statements that would be regarded as the Party's statements, but it was still very deep underground. It never put out any statements in the name of the Party until after Sharpeville. Then there was even an attempt to rebury it when the 'old sweats' came out of jail. Quite how it grew I don't know, but it was on the basis of people who knew each other.

Then, of course, there was the Treason Trial, with 156 defendants. That went on for several years, so those people got to know each other very well. Close affinities were created between them. In fact, I have a personal experience of that closeness. After my return, I had tea with Rusty Bernstein and Mike Harman in Rusty's house and Mike started talking about the 'cult of the individual' in relation to Stalin. I chipped in and said: "And what do you think of the Letulee personality cult?"

Letulee was then the president of the ANC — a practising Christian and a member of the board of directors of an insurance company that concentrated on getting insurance from blacks. He was an honest and good man, but in no way a communist. Of course, I had seen what had happened to Nehru. When he got into office with the help of the communists he proceeded to put them all in jail because he represented the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie — not the interests of national liberation. I felt there were black people in the movement like that. If there were a liberation victory, one couldn't count on Letulee continuing as before — although he may have had sufficient integrity, who knows?

Anyway, I made this crack and there was a sort of 'explosion'. Mike wouldn't have a word said against Letulee. Now that was because they'd been in that trial for all those years together. There in that trial. I suppose there were links made which helped to build the SACP.

... I'm still quite unclear about whether the dissolution was a manoeuvre or not, I suppose. There was no real guide given from the Party and I haven't had too much opportunity to speak to anyone since leaving jail. I certainly regard it as a mistake — but then of course I was safely in England! I don't know whether the South African comrades regarded it as a mistake. What used to bother me at the time was this comparison between the American Party and the South African Party. After all there were several acts passed in America discriminating against the Communist Party which was regarded as an agent of a foreign power; some communists were in jail for over 10 years and other communists who were born in other countries were expelled from the United States. I met some of them here — Claudia Jones for instance — tremendous people. And they wouldn't dissolve. They just took it in the neck, you know.

The Leninist: We've spoken about the 'cross-class' alliances of World War II and some of the dangers that posed to communist parties around the world. Today the SACP is in a 'cross-class' alliance with a non-proletarian revolutionary organisation, the ANC. Are there dangers in this as well?

David Kitson: Oh, I'm sure there are. I remember the problems with Yugoslavia. Remember in Yugoslavia the Fatherland Front was created, of which the Yugoslavian Party became a part. This was attacked because they had accepted the lead of a peasant-based organisation. This made it difficult for them to carry out the vanguard role of a working class party; they had to subordinate the independence of the proletarian party to this organisation.

There was a lot of criticism of the Yugoslavian Party at the time. I used to think that if the SACP accepted the leadership of the ANC as such, it would open itself to dangers. It could lose its working class revolutionary fervour and its role of representing the working class as a class.

Of course, in South Africa you have a very large working class. There must be an independent party representing working class interests. Then again, of course, you have Castro who made a revolution while the Cuban Communist Party twiddled its thumbs! Then he took Cuba towards socialism...

The Leninist: But wasn't this the exception rather than the rule? After all, look at Zimbabwe ...

David Kitson: Well, in Zimbabwe obviously you had a national liberation upheaval and now they haven't really gone towards socialist tasks, have they? So the outcome of a national liberation struggle doesn't necessarily have to be a turn towards socialism.

I think in South Africa without that 'social turn' we are going to have a tremendous problem because of the highly developed nature of the capitalist system in South Africa. I used to cite the experience of the Yugoslavian Party as an example and worry what could happen to the SACP.

A national liberation organisation isn't as revolutionary as a proletarian organisation. The people of South Africa at the moment are dragging everyone along. However, there is a propensity to negotiate in the leadership of the ANC which must be guarded against. At one time Tambo called for a truce before Botha invaded Botswana. However, the South African authorities, on the other hand, are clearly determined to put down the revolutionary situation by force: there is no leaning towards negotiations with them. Then you had the business of visiting Lusaka, which indicated a deal remains a possibility in some people's minds. Some sort of compromise which wouldn't affect overseas investments was implied, wasn't it?

... I don't think you can say that its a straight socialist revolution that's on the cards in South Africa. Its difficult to analyse and the Party has analysed it as 'colonialism of a special type' which tends to exclude the role of imperialism to a certain extent. But the people want equal democratic rights, bourgeois democratic rights; but it must go on from there, mustn't it?

OBITUARY

A great leader

A great man

A great sorrow



Moses Mabhinda

THE South African Communist Party has lost a great leader with the death of comrade Moses Mabhinda. He was a staunch internationalist, a brave freedom fighter and dedicated revolutionary. He guided the Party from the beginning of the present stormy revolutionary situation which offers so many possibilities for the masses to overthrow the apartheid regime.

Comrade Mabhinda personified the healthy ways the SACP has developed: indeed he personified the SACP's deep involvement in every field of the working class and liberation movement.

In addition to being General Secretary of the SACP he sat for many years on the ANC National Executive and was a leading figure in the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

The SACP statement announcing the death of comrade Mabhinda expressed its "profound sorrow" and noted the fact that "The South African liberation movement has lost one of its most outstanding political leaders". As the statement points out, "Moses Mabhinda played a big part in the preparation for the historic Congress of the People in 1955 where the Freedom Charter was adopted. 1955 was also the year of the foundation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU); as an active trade unionist Moses Mabhinda was invited to participate in SACTU's first congress in Johannesburg in March and was elected one of its four vice-presidents.

"Following the declaration of a state of emergency by the racist regime after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, Moses Mabhinda was ordered by his comrades to leave the country and organise solidarity actions abroad. For some time he worked as SACTU representative at the World Federation of Trade Unions.

"In 1963, while still attached to WFTU headquarters, Moses Mabhinda was instructed by ANC president to leave the solidarity field and devote himself full-time to the work of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the liberation movement.

"He has elected General Secretary of the SACP following the death of Moses Kotane in 1978.

"The SACP dips its revolutionary banner in solemn tribute to great freedom fighter whose life and work are an example and inspiration to all his comrades and to all who love peace and social progress." The statement concluded.

We communists in Britain join our South African comrades in mourning Moses Mabhinda.

Umsebenzi

WE COMMUNISTS in Britain must do everything to assist the SACP and its aim of smashing the apartheid state and taking the struggle of liberation uninterruptedly towards the tasks of socialism. For this reason *The Leninist* is pleased to announce that, since last month, our comrades have collected nearly £150 for *Umsebenzi*, the paper of the South African Communist Party. This is on top of the £165 we already handed over to our South African comrades. This money has not only come from our supporters and readers but from every section of our CPGB. Our comrades have also collected generous donations from Turkish progressives, members of Sogat, building workers, miners and various leftists.

As we have repeatedly emphasised in *The Leninist* we are only too aware that our efforts are by themselves merely a token gesture. For that reason we have made, and continue to make, the call for

all communists and militant workers to take up the task of raising money and therefore solidarity with *Umsebenzi*. The growth of the SACP and *Umsebenzi* will greatly strengthen the fight against apartheid and international imperialism. In the words of *Umsebenzi*, the working class in South Africa "in alliance with the landless and rural poor, holds the key to victory and real people's power. Strengthen the workers' vanguard — the South African Communist Party!"

That is why we say take collections for *Umsebenzi* at every trade union, Party or Anti-Apartheid Movement meeting you attend, organise work-place collections, do not let an opportunity slip to raise money. Collection sheets and copies of *Umsebenzi* can be obtained by writing to us at BCM Box 928, London WC1. *Umsebenzi* can be contacted c/o Inkululeko Publications, 39 Goodge Street, London W1.

The GLC was created by the Tories. It was part of the capitalist state machine. Despite this the left mourns its death.

Red Ken's GLC



AMID TALK of County Hall being gift wrapped and labelled from 'Mrs Thatcher to private enterprise' and court cases denying radical groups their next year's grants Londoners witnessed the passing of the Greater London Council.

A great loss to the capital's oppressed or a non-event? As the London Residuary Body sits down to debate the selling price of County Hall let us look at the body which under Livingstone promised popular power and delivered bread and circuses.

The late 1970s saw a shift in the Labour Party left back towards the belief that control of local councils was a platform from which to launch a serious offensive against the powers that be. This was of course an idea with a long history.

Municipal socialism

Back in the 1920s for instance left Labour controlled councils pursued municipal socialism with much the same hoo-ha as Sheffield, Liverpool and London councillors have recently. The 1920s had its heroes too. In 1921 Poplar councillors defied the law by refusing to collect a government set rate from the 'poor' and were jailed for their stand. Although the councillors earned a lot of respect the rate was inevitably won; the councillors had made a brave and noble gesture but for the people of Poplar little changed.

The new municipal socialism is inevitably fostering illusions in the state, local, regional and national. Like their predecessors the argument is put forward that the state cannot be viewed simply as a machine of the bourgeoisie, a machine to ensure its control over the masses and a means of keeping the existing social order intact. Thus the GLC is seen as an arena of struggle which can, with the right people at the head of it, usher in popular power.

So what pioneering policy did the London Labour left set in motion once embedded in the County Hall bureaucracy? Did we see an example of socialism or just bad old municipal Labourism which operat-

ed perfectly easily within the capitalist state and its framework?

Ratepayers money

Well clearly the radical GLC has not provided serious solutions to London's growing housing crisis. It has likewise failed to provide anything like decent social, educational and recreational services to meet the needs of Londoners. It has in short changed little. Of course we have seen a massive propaganda on the rates campaign. Huge sums have been ploughed into winning popular sympathy over abolition. And the same approach has been used on an array of other problems. Rather than seriously confront issues, mobilise the power of the working class and risk a head on confrontation with the government, the GLC has thrown around ratepayers' money as if it was going out of fashion.

Thus to combat racism it purchased bill board space and financed endless quangos. The same approach was taken on sexism, peace and jobs. So devoid of real roots among the masses the GLC opted for bread and circuses instead. Thames Day, Peace Year, Nuclear Free Zones, anti-racism one week, feminism the next, all with a GLC grant and seal of approval. And yet despite all this money little or no genuine mass actions could be staged let alone sustained. Flop has followed flop. From the 'Can't pay won't pay' protests about the Lords bugging up the Fares Fair policy to fighting government rate capping, the GLC has failed.

So although GLC financed opinion polls show massive opposition to abolition we must ask why the working class has not leapt into action to defend their council? Yes, GLC councillors launched an 18 month, £10 million anti-abolition advertising campaign. And if this were not enough the struggle against abolition was taken into the hallowed chamber of the House of Lords. Livingstone clearly had great hopes from their Lordships: "you'll be surprised at how many of those peers are real groovers" he announced. And when



these "real groovers" blocked abolition for a short time Red Ken had hung a banner reading "Peers — thank you for saving London's democracy" outside County Hall.

But despite the money, the House of Lords, the use of the press and TV and of course millions of pounds in propaganda the GLC never managed to convince Londoners to take mass action. The reason was they did not want to. Not a few of the leading Labour lefts had their sights set on the GLC providing them with a springboard over the Thames into the House of Commons where they can at last exchange their municipal socialism and all its false promises for parliamentary socialism and its even bigger false promises.

Prime minister

That Ken Livingstone wants to be prime minister is not news. His every step has been fashioned to serve this aim. He is a career politician, who wants to get to the top. Of course instead of taking the usual route via parliament Livingstone had the bright idea of doing it via the GLC. And such is the state of the left in Britain that it has greeted this calculating climber as a socialist demi-god.

The media have unwittingly been Livingstone's greatest ally. Their easily provoked outrage was cleverly played on. The resulting hatred and vindictive reporting built up Livingstone's image quickly. As a sinister part lunatic, part red-under-the-bed Livingstone hit press and TV headlines. Of course with time, the carefully chosen personal interview and very clever presentation Livingstone was able to turn all this on its head and present himself a 'victim', a 'victim' of the press, a 'victim' of the TV, a 'victim' of the government, and even a 'victim' of the Labour Party establishment when the NEC blocked his last attempt to get into parliament.

Livingstone has played to the gallery: pulling off all sorts of stunts and all with such aplomb that we can only marvel at his sense of self-publicity. To become all things to all men we have seen Livingstone go in for:

- Ken the chat show host on London Weekend TV.
- Ken the hep cat singing along with the Flying Pickets.
- Ken the great working class hope always willing to sponsor any radical cause.
- Ken the committed public servant who gave Camden council tenants his personal telephone number and would cheerfully accept calls day or night.

Yes Livingstone has carefully cultivated a fine range of pluses to his image. And with his undoubted abilities, drive and modest charisma he has made a hit of himself — coming only second to the pope in BBC's 1982 Man of the Year poll.

Ireland

But what about his forays into dangerous areas? What about his statements on Ireland? Livingstone is reported by the media to be sympathetic to the republican movement in Ireland. The truth is that this highly publicised sympathy (though why an invitation to Gerry Adams to visit London constitutes sympathy is beyond us) is shown to be something of media invention when we hear Livingstone deplore "all acts of violence" and insist that "force cannot be used to impose a solution".

The fact is that Livingstone does not support the IRA or Sinn Fein. And he never did. His statements are a result of a recognition that in the long term popular opinion could be clamouring for a British withdrawal; indeed even today as Livingstone knows full well the majority of the public in Britain want out from Ireland, and whatever odium he may earn from the press, his call for Britain to pull out meets a popular resonance that he hopes can see him all the way to Number 10.

So although thousands will lose their jobs with the end of the GLC and although many a printer or advertising agency will mourn its demise, Ken Livingstone the populist politician will not disappear. Indeed Livingstone could be the face of British Labourism in the 1990s. And that means we've got to watch him.

Ashley West

and...

Party members Stanley Leveson, former sports editor on the Morning Star and Chris Nawrat also an ex-Star journalist are regularly crossing picket lines at Wapping. Surely it is not good enough to just make "Party policy clear to them"; they should be instantly expelled from our ranks.

The 'we are not a faction' faction of the CPGB, the Straight Leftists, love to present themselves as terribly 'hard' and security conscious. They have had, however, a number of little 'hiccups'. There was the time, for instance, when comrade Fergus Nicholson's briefcase and his 'alternative list' found its way into Euro hands during a London District Congress. Whoops. Now news reaches our ears from Glasgow that a faction meeting of Straight Leftists in the Star Club (surely not the most secure place to organise this sort of thing, comrades?) left a little present behind for the pro-EC Scottish Secretary comrade Jack Ashton: a notebook containing the names and addresses of all concerned with the Straight Leftist faction.

Most national daily papers are written for those with a reading age of between seven and 13 years old. The Sun and the Daily Star are clearly designed to be readable for the lower age group, the Financial Times and The Guardian start at the top of the age range. Wanting to ply a middle course Mr Tony Chater says the Morning Star ("Britain's Iskra") is readable by an 11 year old. We doubt the real Iskra was or was designed to be. But then Lenin was editing a paper designed to equip advanced workers for revolutionary action not a "working class Daily Mail" designed to unite workers around Neil (scab) Kinnock and "the next Labour government."

Comrades in the Kent NUM tell us of goings on in the union which make sad reading. Apparently, instead of wanting to help the Board out with upping their own rate of exploitation, a large number of motions going to the recent General Meeting criticised the backtracking over the issue of the victimised and jailed men. "If they want us out, then we should come out" was the general tone. The critical mood of the men prompted two branch officials at one pit, who were not previously noted for their love of going underground, to appear on the face to try to talk the men out of pressing their motions.

Do Euro 'hegemonic thoughts' encompass fascists as well as SDPers, Tory wets and Bishops? According to Searchlight a few years ago the founders of Groupe-ment de Recherches et d'Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne, a group of French ultra-rightists, were so impressed by the ideas of Gramsci that they set out to establish a 'Gramscism of the right'. Now the NF in Britain are busily following suit. Their Nationalism Today is full of the whacky 'distribution' theories of Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton which are used to give the NF's usual moronic racist fare a 'Gramscian' flavour. Gramsci, who died in one of Mussolini's prisons in 1937, must be turning in his grave.



Miners Support Committees: embryonic soviets?



Soviets do not spring from the heads of theoreticians but from the class struggle itself

For a soviet Britain

IF YOU EVEN float the idea that soviets are not just some peculiarly 'Russian' little political idiosyncrasy amongst most sections of the working class movement in Britain; that in fact one day (and the sooner the better) we will see them here, in my experience you either get peals of near-hysterical laughter or looks of disquiet from the people in your immediate vicinity who begin moving swiftly in the general direction of 'away'.

These reactions are hardly surprising in some ways. Those revolutionary groups who claim to stand in the traditions of the Bolsheviks and to take their politics and perspectives from the experience of the Russian revolution, reduce the notion of 'soviets' appearing in this country to such a dull, formalised article of abstract 'faith' as to make the whole idea seem heavily unconvincing to the practical advanced workers of today's Britain.

Fortunately, however, soviets do, not spring from the heads of these proverbial revolutionary scholars, musing on the nature of the world in their clinically clean labs while thoughtfully evacuating their noses with their index fingers. In the real world, soviets appear out of the turmoil of the class struggle itself as higher forms of proletarian organisation.

As such, they retain elements of the lower forms like trade unions or co-operatives in that they embrace the mass of workers, but, at the same time, they also show their potential future as organs of a revolutionary workers' government in such features as their high degree of responsiveness to the demands of the class exercised through the recallability of delegates, or their role of organs of debate and action where the legislative and executive functions of the workers' state are combined. Soviets are practical, efficient and realistic forms as much for workers in Britain as anywhere else in the world. So let's look at some examples both from history and the present day to help reassure us that the Leninist tendency of the Communist Party of Great Britain has not gone collectively ga-ga when we state that we want to see, and are confident we can achieve, soviet rule in Britain.

First Wave

Many people tend to forget (some conveniently) that the validity of the soviet experience was not simply confirmed in the upheavals of the Russian February and October revolutions of 1917, but also in myriad soviets and revolutionary workers' councils which mushroomed throughout Europe during this period and threatened to act like a scarlet wave that would capsize the old continental bourgeois order. Even in 'conservative' old Britain,

the embryo of soviets emerged in the form of the militant Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees.

Important points to note about this first 'wave' of soviets are both their diversity of origins and also that none of them emerged 'ready-made' or 'squeaky-clean' in theoretical terms. Rather they all clearly were the product of untidy reality and went through an evolution in parallel with the 'up and down' tempo of the proletariat's class struggle. Soviets in Russia, for example, emerged first in the form of strike committees during the 1905 revolution. The Bolsheviks at first had a rather lukewarm attitude to these new bodies, suspecting that they would only be capable of low-level workerist consciousness and thus susceptible to domination by reformist trends unless they were directly subordinated to the Party. Lenin fought this sectarian attitude, and was able later to fully appreciate the significance of the soviet experience and their potential as organs of power.

In 1905, the soviets were raised by the challenge to the autocracy; with the development of the struggle in Russia onto a higher level with the actual overthrow of the Tsar, they were able to flower after February 1917 into the very organs of revolutionary working class power that Lenin had foreseen.

Thus, while the revival of the Petrograd Soviet in February 1917, dominated as it was by a Menshevik majority, did not greatly excite or animate the local Bolshevik group, Lenin in his *Letters from Afar* written in March, hailed it as a "new unofficial, undeveloped, still comparatively weak workers' government expressing the interests of the proletariat and of all the poorest part of the town and country population". In the aftermath of their experience in the fierce heat of the struggle, Lenin and the Bolsheviks generalised and put forward the idea that soviets as bodies both of the class struggle and as the organs of revolutionary working class state power after the revolution were universally applicable forms (although the details of their birth and development were unlikely to be exact carbon copies of the Russian experience). And when Lenin and the Bolsheviks said it, no one laughed.

In Britain

Without belittling the significance of the events of the Clyde, possibly the highest achievement of the broad labour movement in the immediate post-World War I years was the mass, militant movement to spike intervention against the Soviet republic of Russia. On the second anniversary of the revolution in

1919, a national Hands Off Russia committee had been established, but was passive for the first few months of its life. Then in May of 1920, London dockers electrified the movement when they struck against the *Jolly George*, one of the many freighters loading munitions bound for *Solidarnosc's* favourite historical figure, Marshal Pilsudski and his counterrevolutionary intervention against the Soviet Russia.

As few months later, dramatic changes of fortune in the Soviet-Polish war forced the pace of developments here in Britain still further. Budienny's famous *Pyervaya Konnaya* (the first cavalry), in a series of brilliant counter-thrusts drove the Poles headlong out of the Ukraine and carried the red banner to the very gates of Warsaw. The European bourgeoisie, jittery to the point of neurosis and reduced to babbling stark terror by the spectre of world revolution, realised with a start what an outright victory for the Red Army would mean: the floodgates of the European revolution would be flung wide, wide open. The Lloyd George government in common with other imperialist governments adopted a bellicose, openly provocative stance against the socialist homeland. The working class movement, though, had other ideas.

Practically to a man, the labour movement rose and there were some quite extraordinary demonstrations around the country in solidarity with Soviet Russia. In this atmosphere, with the acrid sniff of hard class struggle hanging in the air, the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, the Labour Party executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party met in the House of Commons. Not a very promising venue or worthwhile participants you may think; yet the deliberations of this group were quite remarkable. From the meeting on August 9 1920, the executives of all affiliated bodies were notified of a National Conference in London and that they were all under obligation "to instruct their members to down tools on instruction from that National Conference". A representative Council of Action was constituted with full powers to implement these momentous decisions.

Four days later, the conference met in Central Hall Westminster. It drew a line and then *dared* the government to step over it when it pledged itself to resist "any and every form of military and naval intervention against the Soviet government of Russia", and authorised the Council of Action "to call for any and every form of withdrawal of labour which circumstances may require to give affect to the foregoing policy". The

government's interventionist plans lay in tatters, ripped to bits by the network of local Councils of Action which had sprung up, 350 in all, in every major centre of population and the revolutionary internationalist action of British workers organised in and around them.

Despite calls for the Council of Action to expand its scope and take up such issues as the war in Ireland or unemployment, for the moment the Councils of Action had reached their achievable peak. This does nothing to diminish their importance, however, for in these Labour Party/TUC inspired organs, British workers had achieved an instrument, very practical, very familiar and 'terribly, terribly' British through which they could one day exercise state power. "Who says?" I hear the sceptic sneer. Well, how about Lenin for one:

"This Council of Action, independently of parliament, presents an ultimatum to the government in the name of the workers — it is the transition to the workers' dictatorship... The whole of the English bourgeois press wrote that the Councils of Action were soviets. And it was right. They were not called soviets but in actual fact they were such".

Still though, these organs, these embryonic soviets, were sketchy outlines, waiting to be given tone and life by the sweep and creativeness of the class struggle. The massive confrontation of 1926 was to infuse them with dynamism and growth as the working class began to sense its own power and potential.

1926

A contemporary *Workers' History of the Great Strike* records in bland tones the swelling scope of the 9 day general stoppage before its betrayal:

"... by the second week the strike organisation in nearly all the towns of which we have information was in full working order and the workers reaching out to fresh developments ... Mass pickets, defence corps, propaganda, commissariat, federation over wide areas — all these were just coming into play".

A general strike like that of 1926 paralyses the normal administrative apparatus of bourgeois social life and thus poses to the working class the task of actually organising the running of society. For example, many local Councils of Action during the strike began to issue transport permits, without which nothing moved by road or rail. This shows the way the councils, as the days of the dispute grew, began more and more to assume powers that had previously been exclusively the province of the constituted ruling class authorities. And in the great majority of cases, the power thus assumed by the strike committees were effective powers: if you didn't have a permit, you weren't going anywhere, Jack.

In Methil, Fife the level of organisation of the local communist-influenced Council of Action was amongst the very highest and consequently it supplanted the prone bourgeois state apparatus in many spheres. Its Workers' Defence Corps, able to field 700 men under the leadership of ex-NCOs, effectively 'policed' the district and kept the filth off workers' backs. Its courier service for information and propaganda was also a large scale and effective affair employing three cars, 100 motor bikes and a veritable legion of push-bikes.

We can see then that Councils of Action emerged in a very 'impure' and 'non-textbook' way. In 1920 they were called into being by a labour bureaucracy at least partially to placate the more strident demands of their militant members and who maintained a vice-like grip at a national level. Even in 1926, when

the councils reached their qualitatively highest form, often right-wing Labourites controlled them at a local level. This does nothing to alter the nature of these bodies and their significance.

Today and tomorrow

All of which brings us to today and ... and what? After all, the experience of Councils of Action were lost to the generations that followed the 1926 defeat; since then our workers' movement has been lulled and corrupted by the long years of boom and toothsome morsels from the imperialist table and as of yet there is no international movement or upheaval that can galvanise British workers into action by example. "So O.K., *The Leninist* may be formally correct on the question of soviets" you say, "but just look at the state of the movement today — let's be realistic". But before you start reaching for that bottle of pills, sharpening your razor and running your hot bath, let us not forget the miners' Great Strike of 1984-85.

Often the participants in great historical events cannot truly appreciate their significance until sometime later. People are too close to history's hullabaloo to fully perceive the importance or nature of what is happening around them. Thus, the majority of the thousands and thousands of workers and militants who staffed the Miners' Support Committees and who took a vigorous part in all the arguments about baked bean tins, turkeys, to 'twin or not to twin', whether 'punk poet' Seething Wells was available to do a benefit (and whether anyone really wanted him to) and also, more importantly as the strike wore on, the way it was being led and how the Support Committees could start to actually translate some of the rhetoric of the NUM leadership about solidarity action into reality, did not realise at the time and possibly still don't, that what they were involved in were in fact embryonic Councils of Action.

The miners' strike was on at least a commensurate level of class struggle with 1926. It was a major strategic confrontation between a key section of the working class and the capitalist state. Thus the forms of organisation and lessons that it threw up during its course have a general relevance for the working class; they are applicable to all the struggles of the proletariat in the same way that those of 1926 were. The organisational innovations of the strike were indicative of the future, whereas in many ways the strike was hampered by the politics of the past. Why do we say this? Well, we can identify one crippling weakness of the platform of the NUM leadership and show how the MSCs in practice began to circumvent it.

Sectionalism is a product of capitalist society: the stronger the hold of bourgeois ideas over the workers' movement, the closer will workers identify with the profitability of 'their' industry. The miners' strike, for example, was ostensibly fought on the basis of the *Plan for Coal*, a classic class-collaborationist document that explicitly tied the livelihoods of the miners to the profit levels of the NCB. This platform, and the dominance of the same approach in other unions, at least partially explains the inability to mobilise the mass of other workers in Britain to the side of the miners: after all, if your concern is not the solidarity of the working class as a class, but the profits being achieved off your back by 'your' employer, why should you come out on strike and jeopardise those profit levels? Scargill and the NUM leadership's inability to break from the traditions of labour bureaucracy of which they are a left part, meant that this debilitating approach

underpinned the strike and also made it impossible for them to reach over the heads of the trade union bureaucracy and directly organise the workers there to take action alongside the miners.

The bosses have returned to the class war positions that characterised British industrial relations of the early part of this century; our working class movement, however, lags way behind. We desperately need to return to the type of no-nonsense approach that marked out the National Minority Movement (NMM) of the 1920s. Significantly, towards the end of the strike, the Miners' Support Committee which probably reached the highest level, Camden in London, reprinted a pamphlet of the NMM from 1925. Neil Harrop, a leading Kent militant miner pointed out in the forward that "rank-and-file organisation alone is not enough. We must link that independent initiative to clear, unambiguous revolutionary leadership in the tradition of the NMM. If the miners' strike illustrated one thing, it illustrated the limitations of old-fashioned industrial militancy". A key element of the programme of the explicitly revolutionary NMM was the idea that "the curse of the trade union movement is its sectionalism" and therefore the NMM was constituted as "a movement in the working class movement, anxious that the interests of the workers as a class shall come before all other interests, either individual or sectional".

Advanced elements of our class are now moving towards this position spontaneously, even without the intervention and guidance as yet of a mass vanguard Communist Party. Isn't this what the MSCs, uniting as they did some of the best militants from various unions and the multifarious 'politicos' in an attempt to provide a common front with the miners, implicitly represent? By the end of the strike, many MSCs, particularly those where Leninists had influence, had gone way beyond their original brief and were discussing ways to actually

organise effective solidarity action for the miners: Camden MSC for instance, on the initiative of miner Neil Harrop, had set up a campaign which was supplying £600 per week to finance the picketing that the official union leadership were running down. MSCs were a product of a mass strategic class confrontation and the political and organisational level they achieved reflects this: a point underlined by the fact that there was not even a conscious mass communist section of the movement there to help guide them.

In the Print

The lessons of MSCs, and the potential type of organisation these can move towards, have now become part of the collective property of an important advanced element in the working class. For example, there is today an almost direct lineage in terms of personnel between the old MSCs and the new Printworkers' Support Committees (PSCs) that are being set up at a rate of about one a day. Already, these PSCs appear to be drawing some of the best militants in the print into their orbit. Larry Hyett for example, a sacked Sogat member of *The Times* Day Machine Chapel and co-ordinator of the Lambeth Printworkers' Support Committee has spelt out the importance of the PSCs.

"Support groups have a crucial role to play in this fight. It is essential that rank and file printworkers are centrally involved in the groups ... it's important now to concentrate on building support groups and co-ordinate their activities for a long fight ahead. Mass picketing of Wapping is extremely important and this must be organised better."

Lawrence Jenkins, a Sogat '82 *Telegraph* worker from Lewisham PSC however, has really put his finger on the crux of the matter. PSCs like the MSCs before them, can start to organise militants, regardless of sectional divide and

independently of the trade union leaderships not as simply printworkers, or miners, or whatever, but as a class fighting as a class:

"This a question for the whole working class and that is why support groups are so important because they allow workers to get fully active even if their union leaders are hesitant about fighting."

PSCs will draw on some of the best militants in the industry quicker than the MSCs were able to do and have a more 'independent' feel to them from the very beginning simply because of the different view militants take toward leadership of the print unions and the NUM; they will not go to the same level as the MSCs, however. This will be impossible simply because, despite *Morning Star* supporter Mike Hicks' bull-frog posturing that the print strike is more important than the miners', this dispute cannot go the level of the Great Strike. Having said this, it would of course be a sectarian crime to boycott them. It is vital for we communists and militants to take such bodies, as they are thrown up, to the highest possible level the class struggle allows us to, and then carry over the lessons to the bigger and greater battles looming darkly on the horizon for our class.

As we have shown, soviets or embryonic soviets do not emerge from the untidy whirl of the struggle with neatly printed little signs hung around their necks reading "Hi! I am a workers' soviet — join me!" No, they emerge bearing backward features of the past, but also features of the revolutionary future. Those who call themselves revolutionaries and sit back on their asses, boycotting MSCs and now boycotting PSCs, waiting for new Councils of Action to be delivered pristine and shiny new to their doorsteps will wait forever. The struggle is on now to transform the imperfect forms thrown up by the working class movement into the revolutionary bodies of tomorrow. Stand aloof at your peril.

Ian Mahoney

Grand old Dukes of Wapping

THERE IS A danger that the Wapping struggle could become another GCHQ. True the government has stepped back from sacking the remaining trade unionists at Cheltenham and perhaps Murdoch might one day come to some arrangement with the print unions. In the meantime though, trade union organisation at GCHQ and Wapping have been smashed.

Worse, the trade union big-wigs can turn these battles into diversions. There is a truly urgent need to fight a war against the press barons on all fronts.

Over GCHQ, every union leader — from the Communist Campaign Group's Ken Gill to open scab Eric Hammond — has huffed and puffed but done not a thing to mobilise a serious counter-offensive. Likewise, these self same caricatures are now huffing and puffing over Murdoch's Wapping fortress and doing exactly nothing to generalise the struggle.

We have argued that the only way to safeguard the printworkers' jobs and organisations is to extend the fight against Murdoch to include all print workers on national papers.

Some have objected that this would stymie the boycott campaign. That is true. After all, if the whole of Fleet Street came out there would be no possibility of boycotting the *Sun* or *The Times* in favour of the *Star* or the

Daily Telegraph. Of course the other print bosses might put the screws on Murdoch, start to collectively demand he compromises with the unions. Moreover, with 20,000 print workers out on strike, and with a concerted and serious agitational campaign using joint strike committees and Printers Support Committees, proletarians from London and around the country could be mobilised to Wapping in a turnout that would put even Saltley Gates into the shadows. This would well and truly block Murdoch's strike-breaking operation.

Others have said a national newspaper strike might upset Neil Kinnock. This is also true. Neil Kinnock despises industrial struggles. At least ones that do not confine themselves to the purely symbolic. So to win, we must place no faith whatsoever in scum like Kinnock, Willis, the Parliamentary Labour Party or the TUC. Remember what they said they would do for the miners and what in practice they did not do for the miners.

It must be emphasised time and time again — the only way to victory lies in a national newspaper strike and spreading it to as many associated and sympathetic sectors as possible. Unless this happens not only will Wapping remain a scab stronghold but other press barons will each in turn follow Murdoch's lead.

Already we have seen Maxwell,

that self-publicising Labourite, get rid of 'excess fat' at the *Mirror* and lock out print workers and journalists on his Scottish titles. *Express* papers are confident they will get away with cutting 2,500 jobs and with union agreement.

To cover their bankruptcy, Dean and Dubbins have pretended to fight a crusade for workers' rights. Of course the reality is co-operation with sequestrators, passing the buck to the stab-in-the-back merchants of the TUC, and Grand old Duke of York marches to, and around, and around again Wapping. This, and even getting arrested, is good for the image and helps keep the rank and file busy.

Inevitably, after endless marches, token pickets and failure to stop Murdoch, disillusionment will, it is hoped, set in and the stage will be set for a rotten TUC negotiated sell out.

This must not be allowed to happen.

Militant rank and file NGA, Sogat, NUJ, AEU, and EETPU printworkers must organise against the *Express* sell out and start organising themselves across the entire industry in united strike committees. If they do not, then Dean, Dubbins and their left reformist minions, will sign away thousands more jobs. Without linking resistance to job cutting exercises, paper by paper defeat stares the printworkers in the face. With a united fightback, victory can be won.

Afghanistan and Amin



The face of reaction

V. Ashitkov, K. Gevorkyan, and V. Svetozarov, (compilers). *The truth about Afghanistan*. Novosti, Moscow 1986, pp.159. np.

THIS SOVIET pamphlet is the third to appear under the title *The truth about Afghanistan*. This one contains, amongst other documents, a speech by comrade Barbrak Karmal to a meeting celebrating the formation of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. It makes interesting reading, in part for what it says, and in part for what it does not say.

Rightly, comrade Karmal lays a great deal of stress on the running sore of counter-revolution and the tremendous help that has been given by the Soviet Union and the other socialist states. Unfortunately, the history of the Party itself is quickly passed over. Perhaps this is understandable.

Karmal refers to "petty bourgeois factionalism" and the installation of "agents in the Party ranks in order to undermine the unity and combat capability of the Party". Presumably this is Karmal's explanation of the fact that the PDPA, only founded in January 1965, split down the middle in June 1967. If this is the case, it is an incorrect way of treating political differences. These were real and should not be blamed on "agents". After all we would not blame the 1903 split in the RSDLP on "agents" would we, even though there were Tsarist agents in both Bolshevik and Menshevik wings of the Party?

The truth is that Karmal led a split around the paper *Parcham* which wanted to co-operate with 'progressive' elements in the feudal regime. Tarakki the General Secretary and the now reviled Amin stood firm and fought him under the banner of the Party paper *Khalq*.

The palace coup of Daoud (the king's brother-in-law) in 1973 was designed to head off a maturing revolutionary situation. It tested both groupings to the full. *Khalq*, after initially vacillating, came out against Daoud. *Parcham* in contrast did all in its power to constitute itself as the left-wing of the new regime. It was given four ministries for services rendered but was soon discarded once the revolutionary upsurge had subsided.

Only after difficult negotiations was the PDPA reunited in July 1977. Although there was a 50-50 division of Central Committee seats between the two groupings, *Khalq* insisted — because of Amin — on keeping its organisation in the armed forces separate. This proved an absolutely correct decision.

The revolutionary situation reasserted itself in 1978. Daoud attempted to crush it; Party leaders were killed and Tarraki, Karmal and Amin were arrested; but not before Amin had given orders to the *Khalq* followers in the army to launch an armed uprising. The revolution was successful and Afghanistan began its march out of backwardness.

Today comrade Karmal admits the need to physically destroy the counterrevolution but, when in the Tarakki government, he and his *Parcham* comrades urged retreat before it. This was the reason why *Parcham* elements were relieved of leading positions and why Karmal was sent abroad and later removed from the Central Committee.

As *The truth about Afghanistan* makes clear, from the earliest days of the revolution the Soviet Union supplied material aid, including military advisors. This was vital. But it was not enough to put out the flames of counterrevolution. As a result, both the Tarakki and Amin led governments requested large-scale Soviet military assistance under the Afghan-Soviet Friendship Treaty. Unfortunately, although 14 such requests were made, the Soviet Union responded negatively.

Forgetting their own history, the Soviet comrades appeared to believe that the *Khalq* leadership were responsible for the counter-revolution. They thought that, if Karmal and the *Parchamites* were in charge, things would be different. As a result it seems that they played a not insignificant role in the overthrow of the Amin leadership and supported his cold-blooded killing along with that of 97 other leading PDPA members. To justify it, Amin has been branded an agent in the pay of the CIA and Israel who was out to eliminate half the Afghan population in true Pol Pot style (see the first *The truth about Afghanistan* published in 1980).

Of course imperialism has portrayed the Soviet intervention in December 1979 as a straightforward invasion which imposed communism on freedom-loving Afghanistan. They forget the slavery and feudalism, and — for their own twisted reasons — that there was an overturn of an existing communist leadership.

As we know, the killing of Amin did not stop the civil war. Far from it. Today over 80,000 Soviet troops are fighting a revolutionary war against Islamic reactionaries who receive support from China, Pakistan and Iran (for so long called progressive by our centrists — that is until Khomeini started to butcher Tudeh members) and international imperialism led by the USA. So did the ousting of Amin — the driving-force behind the April Revolution — help things? We think not.

This does not lead us to forget our duty to unconditionally defend the Afghan government, even though it is led by a comrade who, as we have seen, pursued what can only be regarded as a Menshevik line. The counterrevolutionaries are determined to turn back the wheels of history. They want to impose an Iranian-style theocracy which will imprison women, massacre all communists and block social progress. Because of this there will be no talk from us about Soviet troops pulling out until reaction has been crushed.

Clearly the Amin-organised 1978 April Revolution was no coup, as a motley band of Eurocommunists, Trotskyites and Labourites have monstrously suggested. It was a social revolution which saw the country pull itself out of the dark ages. Under the old order, Afghanistan languished in feudal/bureaucratic poverty and backwardness. According to *The truth about Afghanistan*, of the 129 states covered by UN statistics, it came 119th for health and 127th for education. Certainly the working class existed in a petty bourgeois ocean. Surely, that under such conditions the PDPA could make revolution deserves a tribute to its *Khalq* leadership, not least Amin.

We can all be pleased at the progress *The truth about Afghanistan* reports. Prior to 1978, industry accounted for only 3% of the country's GNP; today this figure is already over 10%. One million people have become literate, education is now free and equality guaranteed for women who were so long veiled and shackled by feudal oppression. Surely many of these measures were initiated by Amin; surely the revolution he planned and gave the signal for made this progress possible.

In the first *The truth about Afghanistan* in 1980 it was said that "facts irrefutably demonstrate that Amin and his associates were CIA agents on the payroll of imperialist forces". Yet the documents to prove this still have not been produced; indeed Amin and the evidence to damn him are not mentioned in

the current volume. If evidence exists, it should be published. In its absence we will go on defending Hafizullah Amin, the revolutionary, the enemy of opportunism and the great part he played in creating today's Afghanistan.

Jack Conrad

Draft nonsense

London CCG, Policy document — discussion draft, February 1986, pp12, np.

THE Communist Campaign Group were so disgusted with the Euros' London District Congress discussion document *London's Future: Communist Strategy* that they decided to write their own.

Amazingly, the final version (suitably amended after discussion in the various CCG strongholds) is to be published at a rally this month, after the London Congress! Instead of trying to influence the development of the Congress itself, the expelled leaders of London's communists are very concerned that London's Labour left should not have to flounder about without the benefit of their own gifted guidance, i.e. communist leadership as it was in the good old days before the Party's general secretary closed the 1984 London Congress.

One may search the document in vain to find the faintest whiff of self-criticism, let alone an acknowledgement of complicity in yesterday's opportunism which gave birth to today's Eurocommunism. No, this policy statement is part of the CCG's "work-in", carrying on as usual — almost an act of habit — giving the same lead they would have given had the expelled comrades been still in charge of the London District of the Party.

No analysis of how the Party degenerated to its present state of liquidationist disintegration. No rounded critique of present CPGB policies. No assessment of the CCG tactic of assembling as many comrades as possible outside the Party — ready for the inevitable split. No discussion of the drift of impatient CCG and *Morning Star* supporters into the Labour Party marsh, nor the more widespread drift out of political activity altogether. No mention of the necessity of reorganising the CPGB into a Leninist-type revolutionary Communist Party.

Loyal CCG comrades! Close your eyes and carry on working!

The discussion document is in three parts, drafted by different individuals: Part 1: *Peace and International Solidarity* (Tom Durkin, Roger Trask); Part 2: *London and the South East* (Bernie Steer) and Part 3: *The GLC and Local Government* (Ivan Beavis).

Part 1 quite correctly castigates the "congress document of the Euro rump" as "pathetic and an insult to communists" because it does not even mention peace.

Durkin and Trask declare that "the prevention of nuclear war is humanity's supreme task" and attempt a theoretical underpinning by saying war is "a product of class divided societies" especially "capitalist imperialist", which has unleashed two world wars for "markets, raw materials, territory and, above all, profits".

At this point the comrades should have extended their famous "class politics" to the international field and drawn the obvious Leninist conclusion that peace can only be safeguarded by the destruction of capitalist imperialism, through proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary struggle of the world's working class in alliance with the national liberation movements.

The object of the CCG is to curb imperialism, not to end it. A "reluctant Reagan" was "forced" to Geneva by "pressure by the world peace forces", therefore peace itself and complete disarmament can also be imposed. No, comrades, only the armed forces of existing socialism can stave imperialism's aggressive hand and only the completion of the world proletarian socialist revolution to replace capitalist imperialism with world proletarian dictatorship can safeguard peace.

To express a sound Leninist principle — that capitalist imperialism is intrinsically

warlike — and then throw it away for all practical purposes, is typical of centrism.

Pandering to British chauvinism, the words "British Imperialism" are not used (not even when dealing with Ireland!) and the arms race is presented as a policy or plot of "US Imperialism" in which "other countries" (including "the Tories") are being involved by the "bribe of huge contracts". We are reminded that "the US escaped the horrors of both world wars" so presumably Japanese, Federal German and British imperialisms are peace-loving because of their bad war-time experiences? Britain's recent war with Argentina is conveniently omitted, as is the armed liberation struggle in Ireland, although we are lectured that "the British labour and peace movements have a duty to support the Irish people's struggle". The failure to fall in line with the *Morning Star* editorials and the CPI and condemn the "sectarian armed struggle" is presumably an indication of differences within the CCG over this key issue.

How is imperialism (especially the US kind) to be ended? Whilst this is not made explicit, hints are given in an inspiring reference to the CPSU 27th Congress. They will build a communist society in accordance with the thesis of advance to communism in one country. Meanwhile the peace movement will prevent nuclear war by the mobilisation of public opinion to curb "US nuclear maniacs." In due course (avoiding revolution lest imperialism retaliates by launching a nuclear war) the people will see how good communism is, and vote for democratic socialism. Sorry, comrades, but this is the only way it makes sense!

The concept of "capitalist crisis" is reserved for poor old Britain, and for Bernie "theory later" Steer in Part 2 of this discussion document. This subject is full of pitfalls for simple comrade Steer, who at one CCG rally was honest enough to openly call for the postponement of theoretical work in favour of the CCG's "work-in".

The point of describing the decline of British imperialism relative to US, Japanese and European imperialisms as a crisis of British capitalism is that it leads on to the presentation of the reformist Alternative Economic Strategy so that Labour can run British capitalism without crisis, and without harming the workers. If there was no crisis, the AES would be unnecessary.

Ron Bellamy, the *Morning Star's* most authoritative centrist economist, calls the AES a "counter crisis strategy" and locates its origin in a 1966 Ramelson pamphlet "after a more acute phase of Britain's long-standing crisis" (*Morning Star*, February 10 1986). This at the height of the post-war boom, when the rate of profit in manufacturing industry was still rising, in both Britain and the US (see *The Leninist* No.2). In the same article comrade Bellamy says of the AES "We are not, of course, discussing socialism, but the capacity of a sovereign state to continue to advance within the constraints of the international division of labour." Class politics, Ron? No wonder Bernie Steer is against theory! This is the sort of revisionist mumbo-jumbo that a simple honest class-conscious worker like Bernie Steer is unable to absorb, and will probably never be able to repeat.

So Bernie puts his foot in it and introduces the AES by calling for "a government committed to socialist policies". Comrades Durkin and Trask in their section, demonstrate their more astute capacity to accommodate reformism by referring to "a future British government that promotes policies leading to social change".

But this error is not your fault, Bernie. This inverted view of British imperialism is indeed at the root of the AES, and was upheld by Ron Bellamy in the article mentioned above: "Britain's dilemma ... has everything to do with the concrete, historically developed, imperialist form of its external relations — their subordination to the export of capital". For comrade Bellamy the export of capital is not the essence of capitalism in its imperialist stage, as it was for Lenin, but merely an erroneous policy, which can be corrected by an enlightened (Labour) capitalist government.

Military spending, at the expense of public services is a "key element of conservative strategy" for Ivan Beavis in Part 3, and is highlighted by comrades

Durkin and Trask in Part 1, but is omitted entirely by Bernie Steer both from his analysis of Britain's "crisis" and from his list of essential features of an updated AES: free collective bargaining, nationalisation, withdrawal from the EEC and extensive import and capital controls.

Ivan Beavis' analysis of the GLC campaign records the emphasis given by the (then) London District Committee of the CPGB to mass struggle as the key to victory, and blames "Labour Party sectarianism" and "Labour Party elitism" for the collapse of the anti-ratecapping campaign. "Extra-parliamentary action" saved ILEA, and the GLC was lost when "the GLC Councillors made the fatal error of relying on the House of Lords" and "the people were misled into believing that parliamentary action was the only way to win".

Whilst attacking the "careerist and sectarian leanings of the Labour Party, which uses these struggles to advance the personal aspirations of many of its leaders" Ivan does not discuss whether a cleansed, non-careerist, non-sectarian but still reformist Labour Party could take us a single step nearer to the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist beast, or whether it would still be part of the problem.

Instead of trying to improve Labour's image, communists should be exposing it as a "bourgeois workers party" (Lenin), attacking parliamentarism and reformism as blind alleys for the working class and upholding the necessity of a Leninist-type revolutionary Communist Party.

After quickly sketching the perspective of a decentralised, democratic and popular local government system without attempting to connect it to the struggle for socialism (perhaps if capitalism is made very democratic and decentralised, it will become socialism?), Ivan identifies "vision and perseverance" as the qualities required to lead the struggle for local democracy, and declares the CCG is the only organisation ready to face the challenge. Not much room for optimism, then!

Perhaps the most significant idea in the discussion document, the nearest approach to self-criticism, is the call (in Part 1) for education classes from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism "to deepen party understanding of the causes of war, the nature of imperialism, the problems of the Third World, etc". Clearly, the CCG leaders do not understand these areas, as the present article has indicated, but why limit theoretical study to foreign affairs? Presumably because the *British Road to Socialism* has already been worked out, and theory is no longer necessary in relation to Britain!

Those comrades who are preparing themselves to follow the CCG leaders out of the Party with the Menshevik *Morning Star* millstone round their necks should be warned that they will not be forming a Leninist revolutionary Communist Party, but a crisis-ridden centrist body which believes in class struggle but is incapable of leading it.

Britain's decline in relation to other imperialist powers promises that the impending crisis phase of the world capitalist economy will take a particularly severe form in Britain. It is the approach of this crisis, and the consequent sharpening of the class struggle in Britain, which is causing the crisis of all forms of opportunism in the workers' movement, and which guarantees the disintegration of the centrist CCG.

Ian Farrell

In MacLean's footsteps?

John MacLean Society, *Vanguard*, No.1, Glasgow, pp.4, £0.20p.

WE ARE always particularly pleased to greet the launch of a publication which firmly and unequivocally places itself in the militant and revolutionary tradition of the working class. *Vanguard* says that it does this by standing on the politics of John MacLean.

Who can doubt that John MacLean was an outstanding militant and revolutionary. Born at Pollokshaws near Glasgow, the son of dispossessed peasants, MacLean worked his way through the Scottish educational system eventually obtaining an MA at Glasgow University while working as a teacher. The poverty of working class districts in Glasgow and his own diligent studies drew the young MacLean towards socialism. In 1902 he joined the Social Democratic Federation, Britain's first Marxist organisation. He soon became one of its leading propagandists in Scotland, earning a brilliant reputation.

The SDF was led by one Henry Mayers Hyndman, the so-called founder of the British Marxist movement. As well as being a barrister, City gent and snob, Hyndman was a chauvinist. Being a genuine revolutionary, it was not surprising that MacLean came into increasing opposition with Hyndman and the path he wanted to take the SDF along; not least the call for Britain to arm itself with more Dreadnaughts against the German threat. Against this chauvinist filth MacLean organised strident opposition.



MacLean: a brilliant reputation

In opposition to Hyndman's support for the inter-imperialist slaughter, MacLean founded the newspaper *Vanguard* in September 1915. "The war" its first edition declared "shows that the day of social pottering or reform is past". The British state became more and more fearful of such anti-militarist propaganda that MacLean and other Red Clydesiders were producing.

In January 1916 Lloyd George attacked MacLean personally in the Commons and announced that *Vanguard* was the "worst paper in the country". Quickly following this the fifth edition of the paper was seized. Other state attacks followed. MacLean himself earned three terms of imprisonment throughout the war for his principled stance. But as well as earning the hatred of the bourgeoisie, MacLean also earned an outstanding international reputation which culminated in 1918 in his appointment by Lenin as honorary Soviet council in Glasgow.

If the new *Vanguard* is dedicated to stand on this tradition, then we are sure it will have a healthy future. Unfortunately MacLean made some profound political mistakes and proved unable to truly absorb the central lesson of the October Revolution: namely the need for a workers' party of a new type. And this leads us to worry about the direction the new *Vanguard* could take.

MacLean proved incapable of winning the militant shop stewards he influenced away from syndicalism or decisively intervening in the great class battles that shook the Clydeside at the end of, and just after, the war. Of course, in this he merely reflected the failure of other British left centrists at this time. The British Socialist Party (what the SDF merged into in 1916), the Socialist Labour Party and other small socialist groups proved hopelessly sectarian, theoretically abstract and mechanical as well as amateurish in the face of the tasks of the day.

As we know, many of these problems were overcome through the unification of the best forces in the socialist groups and currents into the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Communist International in 1920. Under the guidance of Lenin and other Comintern leaders, comrades like Gallagher, Mann, Pollitt and Murphy were weaned from their sectarian and syndicalistic prejudices.

The tremendous advance this meant was clearly seen in the early years of the CPGB's

history, not least its highly successful operation of united front tactics through the National Minority Movement and the National Left-wing Movement. The CPGB, with all its faults, was therefore undoubtedly a qualitative development from the socialist groups which had gone to form it.

Tragically, MacLean stood aside from the CPGB and the Comintern. In this he implicitly rejected Leninism and the necessity of international democratic centralism. MacLean proved unwilling, for one poor reason or another, to go beyond impotent sect politics. This fact cannot be ignored. So far from glorifying MacLean's abortive, parochial, and anti-CPGB, Scottish Workers' Republican Party and his embrace of left Scottish nationalism, as the new *Vanguard* does, we consider this represented a retreat from his previous relatively healthy, if left centrist, position and practice.

For the new *Vanguard* to say that MacLean was "ostracised by the London-based socialist parties" and then leave it there, is to pull the wool over the fact of his rejection of the CPGB and Leninism. To honour MacLean the revolutionary, MacLean the internationalist, MacLean the fiery propagandist is a worthy aim. To honour his nationalistic response to the CPGB and Comintern is mistaken, as is the new *Vanguard's* attempt to revive MacLean's separatist plan for a Scottish Socialist Republic.

Our position on MacLean is not a manifestation of London-based chauvinism, but flows from proletarian internationalism and the imperative need for all workers in Britain to unite against their common enemy, British capitalism. Thatcher and the ruling class would love nothing better than to see the working class become fragmented by fostering division along every conceivable line: that of sexuality, religion, trade union, colour, and nationality. They love seeing one trade union scab on another, they rejoice when male workers say that a woman's place is in the home, they certainly prefer white working class youth going round in racist gangs or bashing each other at football matches to workers' unity. And if the working class can be divided along the lines of Scotland, England and Wales (and maybe Cornwall, Yorkshire, north and south London etc.), all the better to exploit them.

It is one thing to recognise the right of Scottish self-determination but another for communists in Scotland to advance Scottish separatism. That some of them are doing so must be blamed on the CPGB's long-term decline and its shift to the right. Nonetheless, this does not make the new *Vanguard* Leninist, or anything like it. We can only urge the comrades around it not to take the failed, left nationalist SWRP as their model, but the successful young CPGB and Lenin, the intransigent internationalist, and successful revolutionary.

Jack Conrad

No alternative

Ben Fine and Laurence Harris, *The Peculiarities of the British Economy*, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1985, pp.345, £7.50

THE publication of a major new work by two leading communist economists ought to be a significant intellectual event. That the release of this eminently missable book by Fine and Harris clearly is not such an event speaks volumes about the extent of the political and theoretical crisis in which our Party finds itself. For, rather than startling us with clear and penetrating insights into the nature of British imperialism, this book merely succeeds in displaying in the light of day for all to see the peculiarities of British centrism.

We have for a long time looked upon the Communist Campaign Group as offering up the revisionism of yesterday dressed up as the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy of today. This book by two intellectual leading lights of the CCG confirms this interpretation fully. This book looks for all the world as if it

were written three or four years ago as far as the majority of its chapters are concerned. Even the data which it presents to defend its arguments are out of date: no table offers data from any year later than 1981, and most don't even produce information concerning the 1980s at all. But the problem goes far deeper than simply being out of date. Instead of offering a thoughtful re-appraisal of the changes in the structure of British imperialism in the period which it does cover, and an outline of a revolutionary strategy for the working class to bury this stinking corpse once and for all, our centrist friends prefer to present us with the same old revisionism and reformist pap that the Communist Party leadership has been coming out with for years.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the final section of the book which presents a defence of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

The whole of the book is structured so as to lead up to this crescendo. Each word of the text carefully prepares the ground for the tired arguments of the economic counterpart of the *British Road to Socialism*. Each chapter establishes the case for vigorous state intervention to revitalise industry and to rescue poor old British industrial capital from the talons of nasty old financial capital and multi-national firms. Every care is taken to make sure that we see this to be in the interests of the working class, too. In other words, every care is taken to bind the British working class to the interests of 'its' ruling class, and to reinforce parliamentary illusions of a peaceful road to socialism.



Fine and Harris represent the right-wing of the anti-Euro CCG, but also represent its leadership. For whereas for some comrades who rally behind the banner of the *Morning Star*, and who see defence of the revisionist *British Road to Socialism* as a tactical imperative in the struggle in which we are all engaged within the Party these days, the leadership of the CCG actually believe in the *British Road to Socialism*.

When one reads books like *The Peculiarities of the British Economy*, one wonders, with the likes of comrade Monty Johnstone, what on earth all the fuss is about in the CP. How can one group of reformists get so upset with another, almost identical group? What is so revolutionary about the 1978 edition of the *British Road* that drives the likes of Chater, Fine and Harris into such flagrant breaches of Party rules? The answer is simple. What these two major factions (numerically) of our Party represent are the working out of the contradictions within the *BRS* from the earliest draft to the current edition — a working out of the inner dialectic of a programme which attempts to cut across class lines in its strategy to construct socialism. What the Euros have done is to take this process to its logical extreme, whereas the CCG hold back for fear of the implications. The instinct itself is sound — an attempt to maintain some adherence to the working class as the agent of revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, but the form it takes precludes any real advance towards the building of a revolutionary party.

Brian Curren

Ireland: from Easter 1916 to Easter 1986 Support Connolly Support the IRA

knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders...".

The here and now

We all know that the struggle for Irish liberation did not end in 1916, it did not end with partition in 1921 and it has still not ended. So what of those British and Irish centrists who claim the mantle of Connolly, who noisily commemorate the Easter Rising, who proudly call themselves Marxist-Leninists? What is their position to the living tasks of national liberation?

To be sure, it has little enough to do with the stance of Connolly and Lenin and much more in common with the Labour Party and — dare one say it — even Trotsky's position.

In the *Morning Star* of February 21 1986 CPI Executive member, comrade Antoin O'Muircheartaigh, had a half page report on the CPI Congress which he states was "widely regarded as one of the most successful national congresses ever held". Yet, believe it or not, there is no mention of the armed struggle, Sinn Fein or the IRA in his report.

The Irish comrades, like the proverbial ostrich, bury their heads in the sand to the realities of the Irish struggle and, instead, content themselves with anywhere, anytime platitudes about winning people for peace, progress and national unity.

The same approach pervades our own centrists. Former London District Organiser of the Party, Roger Trask, now operating as Foreign Editor of the *Morning Star*, interviewed Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein president, in the March 3 issue of the paper. Trask's monologue, into which are inserted limited snippets from Gerry Adams, is disgustingly patronising and smug:

"The Provos and Sinn Fein claim to be a liberation movement, yet in practice they reject the participation of the majority of the working class in the Six Counties under British rule who are Protestant and Unionist. No liberation movement in the world takes such a stance".

(What about the ANC in South Africa's 'whites only' areas?)

According to Trask, Adams' response to his criticism "seems curiously fragile":

"First, he emphasised that the issue of working class unity should be seen in the context of a 32 county Ireland and not just the partitioned North.

"But relying on a quote from James Connolly to describe the Unionist working class people as the 'aristocracy of labour', he could see little room for drawing them into the fight against the British ruling classes".

Trask, the centrist, has taken on the same role as comrade Chris Myant, the Eurocommunist, used to fulfill for the *Morning Star*: that of anti-republican movement hack. He therefore sneers but he does not answer Adams' point. He contents himself with stating that it is an inadequate response to the CPI's position "reiterated recently by CPI general secretary Jimmy Stewart" that the Provisionals did not take into account whether their actions would "alienate winnable sections of the Protestant working class". One might ask how many of these workers the CPI has in its ranks, but that would be a diversion. The key question is that today a revolutionary situation exists in the Six Counties and has propelled into revolutionary action the Catholic masses.

This is a living reality that cannot be escaped and the task of communists in Ireland is surely not to boycott the revolution, but to lead it. As to communists in Britain, they are duty bound to support in every way the democratic struggle of the Irish masses. This was the practice and teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and all subsequent genuine

communists. Now what were you saying about fragile positions, Rog?

Trask complains that the Sinn Fein leader is oblivious to the fact that the bombing campaigns in Britain "alienate the British working class". Apart from the fact that the Brighton bomb at the Tory conference actually got a very favourable response from striking miners at the time, it would not seem out of place to suggest that the role of communists is to win the working class away from backward ideas, from social patriotism, from loyalty to their imperialist ruling class, rather than to tag on behind! But Trask's patronising chauvinism knows no bounds: "So far, the progressive movement [sic] in Ireland has been unable to move Catholic opinion away from this 'bomb the British out' response...". Let's educate the poor barbaric Paddies with the civilising influence of good old British Labourism, eh Roger (Union Jack) Trask?

But of course all poor old Roger is doing is being loyal to the positions of the CPI: the view that the armed struggle strengthens the position of British imperialism rather than weakens it. In contrast to the dramatic impact the armed struggle has actually had on British imperialism in the real world.

We do not take the position that the workers in Ireland should just tail the IRA, nor do we believe that the Protestant section of the working class have no rights. We see a crying need for a genuine Communist Party in Ireland (see the supplement in *The Leninist* December 1984), but there is no contradiction between this and support for the national liberation struggle in Ireland. It is because we recognise the democratic content of the struggle of Sinn Fein and the IRA that we unconditionally support their demand for Irish self-determination, and this includes a refusal to withdraw support because of the tactics they are driven to employ.

Memories

While many find it easy to support national liberation movements when they are thousands of miles away, when it comes to a few miles over the water 'special features' suddenly appear which invalidate the IRA's claims to be a national liberation movement. The truth is that our opportunists' opposition to the national liberation movement in Ireland has everything to do with their loyalty to the peaceful parliamentary road to socialism and increasingly to British imperialism itself. Lenin, writing in the aftermath of Easter 1916, put it like this:

"If we do not want to betray socialism, we must support every rebellion against our main enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big state, provided it is not the rebellion of a reactionary class. By refusing to support rebellions of annexed territories we objectively become annexationists". (CW, Vol 22 p.333)

The memories of opportunists are always both selective and short-lived. This Easter they paid homage to James Connolly and those who died at the hands of British imperialism in Easter 1916. Eulogies are heard for these fighters who were not afraid to use violence to achieve national liberation. Yet, maybe even in the same breath, these hypocrites condemn their present day counterparts. We say to them: save your crocodile tears; it takes little to imagine what you would have said in Easter 1916. Would you, like Lenin, have stood with the brave rebels? Hardly. No you would objectively line up with the annexationists, the imperialists and the murdering British Army butchers, just as you do today.

Geraldine Duffy



Connolly: iconised by opportunists who attack the IRA

THIS SPRING saw the 70th anniversary of the heroic 1916 Easter Rising. It is an anniversary which is commemorated by just about everyone on the left, not least our comrades in the Communist Party of Ireland. Many simply pay lip service to the memory of the brave men and women of 1916 but, at the same time, seek to bury the principle of linking the struggle for socialism with the national liberation movement that Connolly and his followers stood by. We on the other hand consider that this perspective has lost none of its relevance. On the contrary, it is more relevant than ever. This can be seen if we look at Easter 1916 itself and then the problems of today.

Easter 1916

In the early part of this century Ireland's working class was one of the most militant and revolutionary in the world. Mass strikes and the subsequent violent battles with the police became a regular feature of Irish life.

The General Strike of 1913 paralysed Dublin, and was only finally broken by state terror. Despite — and, in a way, because of — this defeat, the working class continued to build the Citizens' Army. Led by James Connolly, the Citizens' Army had been set up to protect the working class from the brutality of British imperialism's servants in the Dublin police. It

received nearly all its support from active trade unionists, and the Irish T&GWU even provided a firing range for it to use.

The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 saw the majority of Ireland's socialists, like Russia's Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, oppose the war. Those around Connolly successfully agitated against conscription being extended to Ireland, and proclaimed the need to turn imperialist war into a war of liberation, as the Bolsheviks proclaimed the need to turn imperialist war into a civil war against imperialism. Outside Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Irish T&GWU and the Citizens' Army, Connolly hung the slogan "We serve neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland".

Connolly had long understood the necessity of linking the workers' struggle to that of national liberation, and this was concretised when the proletarian Irish Citizens' Army joined nationalist Irish Volunteers in staging the Easter Rising of April 1916. The plan was for simultaneous risings throughout Ireland, beginning with the seizure of Dublin city centre, to be followed by risings in the provinces.

Unfortunately, despite the extremely favourable conditions for working towards a widespread insurrection, the leaders of the Easter Rising, including Connolly, provided no central role for the broad working masses. It turned out to be an essentially military affair

which was quickly isolated by the British forces and, despite heroic resistance, easily crushed.

The events of Easter week deprived the working class of its most talented revolutionary leaders; 90 of the insurgents in the Rising, including all its leaders, were sentenced to death.

Contemporary reactions to the events of Easter 1916 are illuminating:

The Labour Party: When news reached Parliament that the army had executed James Connolly, Arthur Henderson led Labour MPs in applause.

Trotsky: "An all-Ireland movement such as the nationalist dreamers had expected simply failed to materialise... The basis for national revolution has disappeared even in backward Ireland... The experiment of an Irish national rebellion... is over".

Lenin: "To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc. — to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution.

"It is only in premature, individual, sporadic and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire