

Imperialism wants reform Comrades want AK47's



Join our contingent on the AAM demonstration • Hyde Park • Saturday June 28



Summer Offensive

From June 29 to September 28 many readers and supporters of *The Leninist* will be taking part in our Summer Campaign. During this period each participant will aim to end up handing over three weeks of their income to the organisation on top of their usual donation. We are sure all our comrades will meet the three weeks income target, but we are also sure most will surpass it — it is after all only a minimum target. Such confidence in our comrades is born out of experience of their dedication and the knowledge that our politics produces a ready willingness to give one's all to the struggle for working class power.

The level of self-sacrifice we require is necessary. We have no arrangement to sell our political independence to a socialist country, or even a bourgeois nationalist government like Libya.

Marxism Today might be successful — at least with the editor of the *Financial Times* — but then it is subsidised to the tune of £1,000 per issue by the Party. More than that it is a vehicle of bourgeois society in the communist movement. And although the unsuccessful *7 Days* reads and looks like the old, pre-tabloid *Morning Star*, it plays the same role, and is likewise kept afloat by the fat of the past with an Executive Committee subsidy of £1,000 a week. We are not about leeching from the past; we are re forging the CPGB for the future.

The steady social democratisation of our Party has spawned an easygoing, let's reprint a Novosti article, let's sell a building, approach to finance. In this way most communists have lost all sense of what must be demanded to build a real Bolshevik type organisation in Britain.

With such an atmosphere surrounding us we have had to swim against the stream to convince some sympathisers that the odd fiver or two towards our costs is not good enough. Against the background of social democratisation it is hardly surprising that some have swooned at the mere mention that *The Leninist* requires from supporters 10% of their income for starters.

Without such a bottom line of commitment our fortnightly would be a dream. Revolutionary politics requires seriousness not empty prattle. To those who plead they have a mortgage, kids, or only a pension or the dole, we frankly tell them the revolution will demand more than 10% of one's income.

Because we have not compromised on the question of finance, because we have been serious, some have deserted our ranks. They have covered their retreat to the easy life with all sorts of pathetic self justification. Nonetheless not one of them has denied that for our paper to continue such a level of commitment is vital. Of course the worth of these dilettantes can be seen in their unwillingness to engage in any discussion with their former comrades and the complete lack of any pamphlets or papers outlining their position. Such 'communists' we can do without.

Our comrades know full well that to build a serious communist organisation requires more than pompous pub room theorising. They know that to reforge our CPGB will mean the highest level of communist self sacrifice. Because of this our Summer Campaigns have not only raised a magnificent £300 average from those participating, compared with a £5 average for our Party EC's appeal, but have acted as a purge of all that is soft, rotten, or simply pretentious in our organisation.

Centrally the Summer Campaigns have helped to take our organisation forward. First from a quarterly to a monthly, now to a fortnightly. Our next step is the creation of a truly national organisation and the production of books and pamphlets. In this, time is not on our side. Our CPGB is visibly sliding towards liquidation. As a result this year's Summer Campaign not only demands the same level of self sacrifice but is nearly one month shorter than last year's. All our readers are urged to join us in learning how to 'squeeze blood from a stone'. It may be hard but as the mere fact of our fortnightly shows it can be done.

The Editor

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

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LETTERS

Licence to kill

A signal to racists has been given by a jury at Maidstone, Kent, Crown Court. It acquitted Martin Avery, a 17 year old from Dartford, of a charge of manslaughter.

In November a Sikh girl student, Kalbinder Kaur Hayre, of Gravesend, died after being crushed against a wall outside her college by a van in which were five drunken youths, all white.

Avery, a passenger, was said to have grabbed the wheel of the van so that it swerved into a group of Asian girls coming out of North West Kent Technical College. He denied this, and also denied saying "Let's shake them up", or "Let's give them a fright".

The van was said to have no defects so the swerve across the road which caused the death of the 18 year old girl must have been due to human action.

The driver said in court that action was Avery's. The jury acquitted Avery. Will the driver now be charged? Kalbinder ("Kelly") was murdered. The Asian community of South East London and North Kent have no doubt about that. Kelly was the second student from the college — the second Asian student — to have met a violent death in the past handful of years. Is there to be another victim?

This acquittal is just a licence to kill.

The shame is that the labour movement and the 'left' in the whole area was unable to mount any campaign strong enough to secure a just verdict.

The police had charge of the case, and they made sure that any racist implications were completely suppressed. The jury were hoodwinked. But no one is in any real doubt that this was yet another racist scandal.

Oliver Howard
Kent

Congratulations

I have just received the latest issue; congratulations, keep up the good work! I do not belong to the Party. We have stray Party members in the vicinity but nothing functioning. I was a member years ago but left over Eurocommunism, I also did belong to the Labour Party but got fed up as it was a fight all the time there for the ideas of socialism, let alone communism.

I've seen it all from Ramsay MacDonald up to now, I'm seventy four and not senile yet! I was brought up to communism and I will never waver. I enclose £10 for your paper.

Elsie Woods
Sussex

Outrageous

Like many others, no doubt, I was grievously disappointed last year by the young comrades of *The Leninist* group, when they deserted to the Euros' camp at the PPPS AGM; but till now, in the interests of unity, I've refrained from entering into debate with them over their desertion.

But the latest *The Leninist* carries such an outrageous distortion of the situation over this, that it can't be overlooked. Sadly, it compels me to say I'm reminded of the well known anti-working class trick of attributing to others the dishonesty that you are about to perpetrate yourself. Their assertion that the *Morning Star* and the CCG are on a course away from Party politics is standing truth on its head; the reality being of course that those linked but separate groups are adhering to sound Party politics, upholding as no others do, in a

principled fashion, the Party's true position. But if one speaks of Party politics, the two regrettably no longer the same — that is a different matter; we are, and will continue to be, moving away from those. We have to do so, in order to adhere to principles, as the Party EC has been diverging so disastrously from these; and *The Leninist* group, by choosing to move in this mistaken direction with the EC, has voluntarily destroyed a major part of their own credibility and the reputation they previously held as honest and principled critics of the Euros.

Janet Cordon
Swansea

Chernobyl

The brief article on the Chernobyl nuclear accident (*The Leninist* — May 15) raised more questions than it answered. Firstly, the attempts by the media to "whip up an anti-Soviet hysteria" have not been as vigorous or as effective as your article implied. This was because in order to exploit the anti-Soviet factor, they would be forced to simultaneously fuel anti-nuclear feeling which they obviously wish to avoid.

They were quite simply caught between two stools.

Of course the Soviet Union must be defended against both the attacks of the ruling class and the various leftist groups like the SWP and the WRP.

This defence, however, should not preclude pointing out the shortcomings of the Soviet Government throughout the episode — from substandard building materials, corruption and bureaucracy excluding worker participation before the accident, to secrecy and incompetence afterwards. All this you rightly pointed out and we would agree with it. But it avoids the more fundamental issues involved and no clear opinion whatsoever was offered on the central question — namely *The Leninist's* position towards nuclear power itself.

The point about the Chernobyl accident is that although it may possibly have been avoided on this occasion by more stringent safety precautions, the inherent accident risk of any nuclear power stations can never be completely eliminated. The same is true of course for any piece of machinery from a bicycle to a coal-fired power station, but it is the consequences of an accident which are so drastically different. When considering nuclear power, some people seem to confuse the likelihood of an accident with the possible consequences. They reason (or rather don't reason) that if the risk of accident can be reduced to statistically tiny proportions then the consequences become somehow similarly reduced. Whereas in fact the two are entirely separate and should therefore be treated separately. In short, nuclear power can never be made totally safe and that as a serious accident will remain a catastrophic possibility, then it seems logical that coal, gas, oil plus alternative energy sources like solar, wind, wave and geo-thermal power should be used instead.

As materialists, we should study all aspects of nuclear power in an objective manner, not fall into the trap of adopting a rigid and unwavering acceptance of all scientific and technological development as progress for humanity. That kind of attitude is as un-Marxist as the anarcho-environmentalists who pine for a mythical pre-industrial golden age.

Marxists who believe that nuclear power can ever be a safe or viable source of energy in a socialist society have themselves become victims of the bosses' propaganda — "atoms for peace", "nuclear electricity too

cheap to meter" and other such nonsense. They have a duty to their class to argue the facts scientifically and rationally, not to bluster behind empty slogans about "petty-bourgeois hatred of technology". Yours fraternally,
Mike Bell,
Gill Bell,
South London

Jack Conrad replies:

As society's productive forces develop so does its need for energy. All forms of energy have their costs in terms of human life expectancy. Coal mining leads to many deaths directly through accidents and pneumoconiosis, and indirectly with bronchitis from air pollution. People die mining it, transporting it and breathing the air of cities powered by it. Definite dangers also go hand-in-hand with gas, oil, and the at present unpromising, and therefore marginal, alternatives like wind, wave etc power you mention.

Against the human cost of getting energy has to be weighed the closely related social progress which made possible the doubling of life expectancy in the last 100 to 150 years.

Under capitalism nuclear energy, is, of course, linked to nuclear weapons. Capitalism is driven by the necessities of capitalist accumulation. This subordinates safety to profit. The use by capitalism of coal, gas, and oil is inefficient and dangerous. The same applies, only more so, with nuclear power.

The class struggle of the workers and general popular demands, can and does, hem in the capitalist drive for greater and greater masses of profit. But this can never negate the fact that capitalism is inherently both warlike and against safety. Because of this we should demand the greatest possible degree of workers' control of the industry, the end to its secrecy, and the implementation of all necessary safety measures — if this means some or all nuclear plants close — so be it.

We are not against nuclear power as such. We think that it is theoretically quite possible to develop and use it within acceptable risks. Accidents will of course happen. The question is, can systems be developed which make it impossible for them to take on disaster proportions? We think the answer is 'yes'. That the Soviet Union has failed to do this shows, as we suggested, its lack of socialist development, not least its lack of socialist democracy.

It was not for nothing Lenin said communism equals soviets plus electricity. Communism is the culmination of the democratic development of socialism plus the growth of production to the point of abundance. This will obviously require a massive increase in the quantity or at least efficiency of power generation.

This will have dangers. But communism could well see the life expectancy quickly reaching 150 or 200 years. Whether a future communist society will use nuclear fusion we obviously do not know but it will need plentiful and cheap power.

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



WRITE TO:
The Editor
BCM Box 928
LONDON
WC1N 3XX

The Chaterites upped their margin over the EC but voting for motions supported by The Leninist points to a growing left.

Left Steps

THIS YEAR'S PPPS AGMs exposed to the full all forms of opportunism in our communist movement. Above all it exposed their dishonesty, above all the dishonesty of the Chaterite majority of the Management Committee.

They fear political debate like the plague. As a result neither they, nor one of their supporters, submitted any motions to the AGM, not even one congratulating the Management Committee on launching the tabloid. Indeed the Management Committee were absolutely determined to keep politics out, in order to avoid being committed to anything smacking of militancy, let alone principle. Perhaps this is why one motion calling for all tendencies, not least the Party Executive Committee, be given equal treatment to the CCG in the *Morning Star*, was "lost". More than that they decided to adopt the ploy of opposing other motions even while saying they supported them. This convoluted stance was dictated by one thing and one thing alone, political and ideological weakness.

The Executive Committee seems to have been reading their copies of *The Leninist* with care. Because of this it did not fight on the platform of rotten Eurocommunism but stood on the centrality of the Party itself. Their speakers therefore did not include the more overly liquidationist Eurocommunists.

Nonetheless the fact was that the Party leadership did not believe they could win. Stupidly the EC had called for comrades to reduce their shareholding down to the minimum and far out Euros have been allowed to continue their liberalistic rantings. Even more damningly the heavily subsidised *Marxism Today* did not even report the run up to the PPPS AGM and the even more heavily subsidised *7 Days* ran a campaign in support of the Party and its candidates that was truly equally uninspiring as it was pathetic.

The Eurocommunists must clearly know that their hold over the Executive Committee is not as a result of having a majority in the Party, nor it is due to the power of their political argument. Despite being a minority in the Party they have a dominant position simply as a result of the cynical manipulation of the Party's bureaucratic machinery which not only allows them to close whole districts but to secure a clear congress majority.

Despite this because the EC were standing on the idea of the Party and the Chaterites were standing against this idea it was correct and principled to vote for the candidates of the Communist Party as we Leninists did. We argued for support of the CPGB's candidates at the PPPS AGM just as we would argue for support of CPGB candidates at council and parliamentary elections.

As to the Straight Leftists they did not submit any motions, they did not stand any candidates and they did not mobilise their forces. Such is their centrism they find it impossible to make a clear public stand. So much for their 'pro-Partyism'. No wonder the Straight Leftists are wracked by internal division.

What of the tiny and unprolific 'pro-Soviet' centrist sect going under the name of *Proletarian*? Well

they called for a vote for the Chaterite candidates using their dubious doctrine of 'the lesser of two evils'.

They also submitted two resolutions. Motion 3 called for representatives to be exchanged between the editorial boards of *Proletarian* (having only produced two copies of their journal in over four years they obviously have time on their hands) and the *New Worker* (which has no editorial board), the *Morning Star* (which has no editorial board) and the supposedly broad labour movement *Straight Left* (which only has trade union big wigs on an 'Advisory Panel'); all in the name of 'communist unity'. Arguing that principled communist unity is only possible on the basis of Leninism and presented as we were with such farcical liberalism we urged shareholders to reject this nonsense.

But as well as this *Proletarian* also submitted a motion on Ireland, which despite in our view being flawed, was on balance positive. As a consequence we did not hesitate in calling for it to be supported.

In contrast to our principled stance *Proletarian* called for shareholders to vote against all motions except their own. Thus they lined up with the Chaterites in opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a campaign on class war prisoners and the call for a clear statement on the *Morning Star's* position on Turkey.

Motion 1 was moved by Stan Keable and seconded by Jack Collins, Secretary of the Kent Area of the NUM. It called for the *Morning Star* to "launch a militant and systematic campaign on behalf of all class war prisoners in British jails." Despite amazingly claiming that the *Morning Star* was already doing this Mary Rosser called for the motion to be rejected.

Of course the fact is that the *Morning Star's* reporting of imprisoned miners has been far from adequate and it certainly has gone out of its way to split the fight

for those imprisoned from those sacked. As to the black youth and the Irish, the paper has taken what can only be described as a chauvinist position. In fact on Irish political prisoners the *Morning Star* has systematically lined up with the British state in branding these freedom fighters as 'terrorists'.

So Mary Rosser claimed the Management Committee supported the spirit of the motion and the *Morning Star* was already doing its duty. The truth is that the Chaterites oppose in theory and practice a principled position on class war prisoners and therefore present a thoroughly reformist position in the paper's editorial and news items.

The same dishonest ploy was employed when it came to Motion 2. It called for the *Morning Star* to "give consideration to publishing material countering revisionism and supporting the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat." So although dishonestly claiming to support the essence of this motion these champions of the transparently reformist 1977 *British Road* called for the motion to be rejected.

Rosser even had the affrontery to claim that the Management Committee had only technical objections to Motion 5 (submitted by a supporter of *Proletarian* and critically supported by *The Leninist*) which described Sinn Fein as "revolutionary democratic in character". But actions speak louder than words. The Management Committee called for a vote against all motions. This means it opposes a "militant and systematic campaign on behalf of all class war prisoners", it opposes the Irish liberation struggle and it opposes the dictatorship of the proletariat. That it pretended that this was not the case is not only the result of congenital rightist dishonesty but a recognition of the growing left pressure building up inside and outside the ranks of the CCG.

How the PPPS shareholders voted

		For	Against
Motion 1	Called for campaign on behalf of class war prisoners	664	2,176
Motion 2	<i>Star</i> should publish material supporting dictatorship of the proletariat	557	2,130
Motion 3	<i>Proletarian</i> and <i>Star</i> should exchange members of their editorial boards	163	2,495
Motion 4	More sectional meetings	806	1,970
Motion 5	Support Sinn Fein	323	2,251
Motion 6	Stop supporting Communist Campaign Group	722	1,995
Motion 7	Clarify position on "Turkish Workers' Amnesty Call"	withdrawn	

Founder member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Robin Page Arnot has died at the age of 95. An intellectual who was associated with the petty bourgeois Guild Socialists of the time of World War I, he moved toward Marxism, and became a tooth and nail supporter of the Communist International. For many years he was an Executive member of our Party. In the faction fighting of the past few years he took the part of the Chaterites and the *Morning Star*, but could not subsequently break with these left reformists.

There can be no better testimony to a life long communist than to recall Page Arnot's part in the General Strike of 1926, when he was sent as a Party organiser to the North East of England, soon after he had served a six month sentence for sedition and incitement to mutiny over leaflets to servicemen.

In the notes sent to James Klugmann, the CPGB historian, Page Arnot recalls, "the intention was that the setting up of councils of action would enable the whole theatre of war from Tweed to Tees to be covered with a network....From these would arise a more revolutionary leadership...."

But Arnot was also there to organise a communist leadership, and a Communist Party.

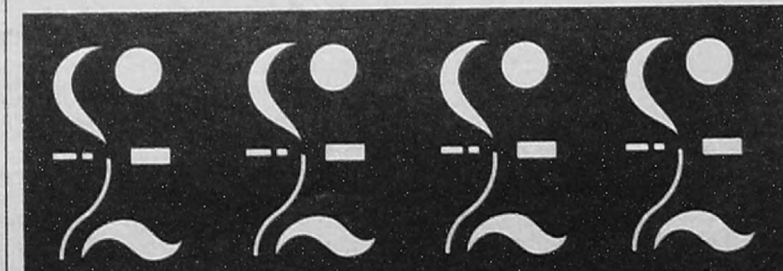
In May 1926 there was only one communist in Chopwell, Co Durham, a militant mining village.

"Three months later no hall in Chopwell could hold the Party members and I had to address the nearly 200 communists of Chopwell in a shallow amphitheatre amid the sunshine and breeze of an autumn afternoon".

Communist Party leaders were class fighters in those days.

The Communist Party of Greece split under the impact of the military fascist coup in 1967. The Eurocommunist wing, the Communist Party of Greece (Interior), formed in 1968, completed its social democratic evolution, with its 4th Congress, over May 11 to 18. This was symbolised by the decision to change its name to the New Hellenic Left Party and the dropping its so-called commitment to Marxism-Leninism in its statutes. The liquidationist move was resisted by the party's general secretary Yiannis Baniyas who leads the largest grouping in the party. But after a fierce debate in front of the 600 delegates he was defeated by a narrow 50 votes. The humiliated Baniyas was then replaced as general secretary by Leonidas Kyrkros, the party's only MP. This was made possible by Kyrkros' group lining up with the faction headed by Kostas Filinis which has left pretensions. A split with the Baniyas group was put off until the October municipal elections in the name of unity. The name change was heralded as a broadening of the party's appeal not least to disappointed PASOK voters. It also made way for formal parliamentary cooperation with the Communist Party of Greece, the KKE, which had excluded any such collaboration because of the usurping of the Party's name by the Euros. Although the Euros only gained 1.84% of the vote in the general election last June (compared with the 9.89% for the KKE) Kyrkros has been courted by the KKE. Instead of channeling the growing mass discontent of the working class in a revolutionary direction it is eager to cobble together an alliance with the Euros and the increasingly unpopular PASOK. This alliance with PASOK is excused by reference to the cynical and tactical anti-American rhetoric of prime minister, Dr. Andreas Papandreu, a mistake committed more than once by the mainstream of our world communist movement.

"In a revolution you have to make up your mind which side you're on." So said Chris Nawrat on the BBC's *Heart of the Nation* on Sunday May 25. Quiet right Chris. Except in the printing 'revolution' this former reporter on the *Morning Star* has chosen the side of the bosses and daily scabbed for Murdoch in his fortress Wapping. Thankfully, if tardily, the Executive Committee of our CPGB expelled this rat. Surely the Labour Party should follow suit and expel its numerous members who scabbed at Wapping, not least its prospective parliamentary candidate in Stevenage, who works alongside Nawrat?



As readers will know we were £400 short last month of our £1,200 target to make up for equipment robbed from our organisation. Fortunately already this month we have seen £539 come in. So we are well on target to achieve our £600 monthly fighting fund and make up for the short fall in last month's emergency appeal. But there must be no complacency. We must reach our target. If we do our plans to increase the size of the paper can quickly go ahead along with the commissioning of pamphlets and later, books. With the remorseless slide of our Party deeper and deeper into crisis and the bankruptcy of the traditional leadership of our class who can doubt this is a burning necessity. Comrades the future is in your hands. Give generously.

South Africa: ten fighting years

The massive May Day general strike by black workers, the rise of the Nazi AWB, and the first signs of dual power show that the revolutionary situation has reached maturity. Now everything depends on making revolution.



A REVOLUTIONARY situation has now existed for a decade in South Africa. This is an extraordinarily spread out period for such conditions to exist. That it has shows that neither the forces of liberation nor those of apartheid have been sufficiently strong enough over the other to score a decisive victory.

The black masses might vastly outnumber the whites but apartheid has the state, it has wealth and it has powerful, if frustrated, allies in the United States and Britain. That against these advantages the revolutionary upsurge has continued to remorselessly grow in strength year after year is both evidence of the courage and determination of the black masses, and in a way more importantly, the basic weakness of apartheid and the South African ruling class.

Ten years ago this month, on June 16 1976 to be precise, the fighting black youth shattered the apartheid myth. In the early 1970s the racist regime was triumphantly proclaiming it had eliminated the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. The rise in the price of gold, the continued inflow of overseas investment and political backing from its imperialist allies meant that South Africa's ruling class and the apartheid system seemed all-powerful.

The uprisings in Soweto, Guguletu, Mannenburg and other townships exposed the vulnerability of apartheid. But they were more than that. The uprisings were not a flash in the pan but the beginning of the existence of a revolutionary situation in South Africa. In other words these events, as well as being the heroic outburst of frustration and desperation by the black youth, were an organic product of the growing socio-economic and political crisis of South African capitalism and the apartheid system.

Apartheid's crisis

The mass student demonstrations against government moves to make teaching in Afrikaans compulsory were part of a general upsurge of popular resistance fired by apartheid's crisis.

This meant that millions were propelled into political action. 1976 saw the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement. Although it had negative features it did act as a milieu where youth in particular could develop their ideas about the world. Finding black separatism unsatisfactory and flawed as a revolutionary weapon, a whole generation began to look to the politics of the ANC. As a result youth in their thousands found their way out of the country in order to join the ANC, the SACP and Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Most importantly the sleeping giant, the black working class, began to stir. In the 1970s the number of strikes began to gather momentum along with trade union organisation. A qualitative development in this was the 1976 strike in solidarity with the Soweto students; the fruits of which eventually produced Cosatu and this year's near 2 million strong general strike to mark May Day.

Internationally too, things in the mid-1970s

began to turn against apartheid. The defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique helped to shift conditions in favour of the liberation movement and indeed provided an inspiration for the youth of 1976. MPLA and Frelimo slogans appeared on the walls of Soweto and other townships and the black masses began to see that if Portugal could be defeated so too could apartheid.

Faced with deteriorating internal and external conditions the contradictions in apartheid grew more pronounced. Pretoria responded in time-honoured fashion with a wave of open and covert terror against the frontline states and murderous attacks on protesting black students.

But, unlike the 1960-4 upsurge, the masses could not be cowed. Why was this?

The reason was not simply the determination of the people not to be ruled in the old way but the fact that the ruling class could no longer rule in the old way.

Carrot and stick

The slide into international economic instability, the stagnation of South African industry in the late 1970s and a general decline in the rate of profit necessitated for the South African ruling class the restructuring of the apartheid system. This resulted in it being forced to adopt a contradictory and ultimately unsuccessful carrot and stick approach to the masses.

Far from easing social and economic contradictions, the reforms produced divisions in the ruling class amounting to a crisis of policy. As it found itself blindly swept along by the helter skelter of events, whichever way it turned it only deepened its difficulties.

Vorster's and Botha's desperate efforts to reform apartheid were dictated by dire necessity, by forces outside their control or understanding. They could not, and did not, end the country's economic difficulties. They did not win the black masses, but they did alienate many whites and set one section of the ruling class against other sections of the ruling class. In this way fissures were created through which mass discontent found expression.

Naturally, given the savage persecution of black political organisations, the banning of the ANC, the SACP and the South African Congress of Trade Unions, when discontent turned into rebellion it was still characterised by spontaneity. In other words, it lacked discipline, co-ordination and a coherent strategy.

The ANC and the SACP, of course, spared no effort to re-establish and consolidate their organisations inside South Africa. Nonetheless it must still be said that although their slogans, symbols and perspectives have become the property of the masses, the revolutionary upsurge in the country still, to some degree, suffers from the same spontaneity that ushered in the revolutionary situation in 1976.

The insurrectionary movement in many townships and the success of the campaign to make black areas ungovernable, attest to the sweep of



and vision to the service of the masses and mould all popular organisations into organisations of insurrection.

It must be said, the lack of national dual power organisation after ten years of a revolutionary situation and dramatic advance in political consciousness is, in many ways, a result of the continued effectiveness of apartheid's network of spies and informers in the townships. But this does not detract from the fact that this weakness will soon come to represent the greatest threat to the success of the South African revolution.

Without the revolutionary alliance of the ANC, the SACP and Sactu imposing its discipline, bringing consciousness to the masses, discontent can be diverted into all sorts of dead ends and rebellion will remain localised and uncoordinated.

The SACP has, as we have said, a particular responsibility. It must ensure that the workers are organised in bodies of a higher, more developed nature than trade unions, are given socialist consciousness. With this the workers will have every chance of asserting a vanguard role in the revolution. Socialist consciousness would mean the working class asserting its political independence from all other classes and thus placing itself in a position to rally to its side all the oppressed in South Africa for revolution.

If this is done, tribalism, black power, religious illusions, nationalism, liberalism, workerism or reformism, all presenting a danger at present, can be overcome, along with understandable but wrong, blind violence directed against all whites. Certainly without socialist consciousness the mass revolutionary upsurge can never lead to genuine liberation. In other words with the objective conditions for revolution rapidly maturing the future increasingly rests on the subjective factor — namely the SACP — catching up.

Botha's ploy

To avoid the long term danger of the anti-apartheid revolution going uninterrupted from democratic to socialist tasks and as a cynical short term ploy to split the revolutionary alliance, Botha called upon "nationalist members" of the ANC to return from exile and join the "political process". In this he has been backed by international imperialism which has growing fears of South Africa seeing a working class-led revolution and thus falling into the "Soviet orbit".

Botha's appeal for "peaceful negotiations by all groups desiring a place in a more just, more democratic and more prosperous South Africa" is linked to his claim that 63% of the ANC Executive Council elected at its congress last June, are members of the SACP. That and the setting up of Mandela as the 'last peaceful hope' by white liberals and the Eminent Persons Group, are part of a plan to drive a wedge between the SACP and the ANC and thus cripple the liberation movement.

Confronted by this Joe Slovo, Chairman of the SACP and a leading commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, emphasised on *Radio Freedom* the centrality of the revolutionary alliance. He also spoke about the liberation movement's relationship with the Soviet Union and the socialist community, from where much of the humanitarian and military aid to the ANC and the MK originates, and the need to strengthen the links.

"The enemy does not want to talk to the ANC as it exists" said comrade Slovo "it wants to talk to a different kind of ANC." The apartheid regime, he said, wants to smash the liberation movement by encouraging its transformation into the kind of organisation which will enter into sell-outs. "All the propaganda about dialogue" the comrade rightly insisted "including dialogue with the ANC, is intended to alter the content of the revolutionary forces."

There is obviously a danger, of which comrade Slovo is only too aware, that the ruling class could bribe or frighten middle class forces into betraying the revolution. The revolutionary alliance consists of all sorts of different elements and at present the working class — the only consistently revolutionary class — does not command a hegemonic position over the ANC or the revolution itself.

The struggle to achieve this must be at the heart of all the tactics of the SACP. For, unless the working class wins a position of leadership, the best that can be obtained is an impoverished South Africa, deserted by skilled whites, under a South African version of Mugabe.

Fortunately the crisis in the South African ruling class is providing the revolution with considerable breathing space, preparation time and room for manoeuvre.

For hand-in-hand with attempts to split the ANC apartheid has found itself engaging in

actions which crassly contradict and puncture all the talk of dialogue and reform. The Botha regime has unleashed the awesome SADF military machine against those who it wants to entice into peace talks. Not only against the townships but also, of course, against what it said were ANC offices and bases in neighbouring Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Far from this showing the strength of apartheid it again shows the depth of the crisis affecting it and the inability of the ruling class to pursue clear sighted long term aims.

Eminent Imperialists' Group

It is said that Botha ordered the bombing of targets in Lusaka, Harare and Gaborone in the full knowledge that it would make it diplomatically impossible for the Eminent Persons Group to continue their stay in South Africa. This Commonwealth arm of imperialist counter-revolution, centrally British imperialism, was in an important sense the key to splitting the ANC. And yet Botha was prepared to scupper their mission. Ironically the bombing raids also let the ANC 'nationalists' off the hook and served to cement the unity of the ANC.

The 'irrational' SADF attacks were carried out apparently in an effort to appease Afrikaners who say his government has 'gone soft'.

So the crisis in the ruling class means it feels compelled to throw its own long term strategy to the wolves for the shortest term reasons. This is clearly due to the dynamic of the revolutionary situation.

The revolutionary situation has flung a number of liberal whites into the arms of the UDF. But as well as this it has also caused a large swathe to desert the Nationalist Party and flock into the ranks of the Conservative Party and the Herstigte Nasionale Party, as well as the Nazi style Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging.

The spontaneous stage of the revolution means the liberation forces are not yet able to fully exploit the divisions amongst whites. Nonetheless the unity, the ever-increasing political and military power of the revolutionary alliance, combined with the deepening economic and social crisis affecting South Africa, means the SACP can now seriously talk of making a political intervention amongst white workers. It aims to prise away a significant number of them from apartheid through drawing them towards the non-racial trade union movement and presenting the real perspective of advancement through socialism.

Fascism

Unless this is done, unless the democratic movement — especially the SACP — can split, or at least neutralise, whole sections of apartheid's white working class social base, including its state machine, there remains the possibility of the revolution being resolved negatively through fascism. In fact, unless the crisis is taken to the point of a successful revolution the ruling class will be forced to turn to the fascist solution.

Some looking at South Africa today say it is fascist already. This is an important mistake, not least because it creates complacency about the dangers the future could hold.

In essence fascism is not racism, nor authoritarianism, or the use of force. Fascism is counterrevolution and the imposition of a monolithic regime.

In South Africa there is a wide range of white, black and multiracial, legal and semi-legal opposition organisations and parties, which are allowed to operate within the law as it exists.

Fascism would mean unrestrained terror against the black masses, perhaps the carpet bombing of townships, the slaughter not of thousands but millions. It would see all black and democratic opposition groups, trade unions and social organisations, banned and their leaders murdered.

Fascist terror would also seek to suppress the contradictions inside the ruling class. Whether it came through the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, the army, or the Nationalist Party itself, it would be forced to employ the methods of blood and iron to create a monolithic ruling class front.

This would mean the elimination of all disparate tendencies in the ruling class. Today's break-up of Afrikanerdom, the collapse of 'Total Strategy', the English/Afrikaner conflict and the demands by the heads of big-business for reform, could only be suppressed by force, albeit in a sense self-inflicted.

Only in this way could the ruling class gird itself to suppress the revolutionary situation. While the ruling class remains divided mass anger and discontent will continue to grow and

continue to pose a threat to the capitalist system itself.

So fascism could be a messy and costly business for members of the ruling class. Despite this it would serve, at least for a time, to close the fissures in their ranks and thus end the crisis of policy. It is therefore a very real option for the not too distant future.

In fact, if the masses are not for one reason or another strong enough to resolve the revolutionary situation positively, by overthrowing the crisis-ridden ruling class through revolution, the stark truth is that the only alternative in South Africa is fascism. This is the one sure way the ruling class can suppress the contradictions in its own ranks and crush the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

Working class

Central to a positive resolution of the revolutionary situation and the consolidation of the democratic revolution is of course the working class. Its social position and weight makes it the most intransigent and powerful enemy of apartheid. Moreover, its class interests mean it will fight to ensure the democratic revolution does not lead to the replacement of the exploitation of black workers by white capitalists, with the exploitation of black workers by black capitalists.

The workers want to see the revolution go uninterrupted from democratic to socialist tasks. Only this programme, purged of all ambiguities, can win over white workers and break the hold of the evils of tribalism, sectionalism and racial division.

The organisation of the working class has taken a huge stride forward with the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Parallel and directly related to this the workers are increasingly asserting themselves. As well as staging important economic strikes, the working class gave a glimpse of its power on International Workers' Day on May 1, with a massive nationwide political strike.

This points to the rise in political consciousness amongst the workers and the spread of the ideas of socialism and communism.

It rests upon the shoulders of the SACP to spread further socialist consciousness within the working class and lead it to become the hegemon of the democratic revolution.

In Britain our job is to do all in our power to aid the SACP and the revolutionary alliance. The Trotskyites, ex-Trotskyites and left sectarians, may blockheadedly insist against all the evidence of life itself that the SACP, along with the entire world communist movement, is counterrevolutionary. We, on the other hand, prefer to base our judgements and theory on the reality of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the role of communists in it and the ANC and Sactu.

These same followers of Leon Trotsky — who invariably look to socialism in Britain coming through their futile struggles in the Labour Party — abstractly and arrogantly call for the formation of a workers' party in South Africa.

Those in social democratic glass houses would be well advised to look again at their own party — for it is no 'workers' party' but a bourgeois workers' party. More than that, there is of course a workers' party in South Africa already — the SACP, a party which can trace its origins back to Lenin's Comintern.

The reality of the SACP, and its tasks, is the point of reference of genuine Marxist-Leninists. This does not mean tailism. Nor does it mean giving up our critical faculties. Indeed, because in a very real sense the fate of the revolution in South Africa depends on what the SACP does, and does not do, on its ability to be innovative, dynamic and theoretically precise, we consider it our solemn duty to present our criticism and assessments openly, in the spirit of true proletarian internationalism.

In the same spirit we must say that we do not think we can usefully aid the revolution in South Africa, or the world revolution for that matter, by appealing to Thatcher, Reagan, or the Eminent Persons Group to side with the liberation movement through imperialist sanctions. We look to the class struggle in Britain, we look to the example of the Hands Off Russia campaign which saw the working class itself impose sanctions. Real sanctions it must be said are workers' sanctions.

Jack Conrad

Join our contingent on the
AAM demonstration

London Saturday June 28

Imperialist sanctions are no sanctions

Real sanctions are workers' sanctions



David Kitson, the South African communist imprisoned for twenty years by the apartheid regime, is being rubbished by TASS leaders. Whilst comrade Kitson was in prison, TASS promised him a post at Ruskin college, Oxford. Now, funding of his fellowship has been withdrawn by the union because he has quite rightly refused to denounce the hyperactive City Anti-Apartheid Group.

Did anyone else notice apart from us that the very first word of the very first issue of the new tabloid Morning Star was "Benn"? Start as you mean to go on, presumably...

The Leninist's award for the most convoluted 'angle' on a news story must go to the Sun journalist that managed to get sex into the Iran/Iraq war. The intrepid reporter tells us: "Iranian prisoners of war — all devout Muslims — are being tortured with sex films by their Iraqi captors." Now why can't the Leninist have investigative journalists of that calibre?

The New Communist Party reports that the purging of the print union's contempt, in order to unfreeze its assets, is a good thing as it enables the union to act more effectively.

Harry Steel's zany column, in May's Straight Left, has a report on Libya. Harry ends with a quote, which has the rather dubious formulation: "God is greater than America and greater than NATO". And, presumably, greater than the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact if you start from the premiss of believing in God at all. As we have pointed out, defending Libya does not mean you have to tail Gadaffi, let alone Allah.

The Morning Star's contribution to the journalistic art of creative subediting peaked recently in a remarkable review of the film Zina. The report manages to rabbit on about the film for several hundred words, but without reference to the fact that Zina was in fact Trotsky's daughter and the film is primarily concerned with her fraught relationship with her famous father.

The destruction of the Communist Party's organisational structure continues at a horrifying rate. In Hackney, previously the area with one of the greatest concentrations of communists anywhere in the country, the borough committee has gone from regular meetings of twenty seven comrades down to scabbling together four people, if they are lucky.

ASK JOE Public who represents the aspirations of Irish Republicans and in all probability the answer will be 'the Provos'. Ask him about their erstwhile stablemates in the Worker's Party (WP) and, as like as not, all you will get is a bemused look and a shrug. Unsurprising, as they don't do much headline making in the British press. But it is not so long ago that Irish Republicanism was considered a two horse race.

However, I think I do the WP no disservice by now completely removing them from the category of republican. They have taken the tortuous, embarrassing, and to the concerned observer, rather nauseous path to social democracy; the umbilical cord between the WP and revolutionary republicanism has been long since cut.

The effect of this has been markedly different on either side of the border. In the Six Counties, Official Sinn Fein/SFWP/WP has seen a decline in support since the split in its ranks over sixteen years ago, polling only two per cent of the vote in the 1983 General Election. This has been accompanied by a corresponding shift rightwards. This decline is hardly surprising when you consider the absolute impotency of this reformist organisation operating in the irreformable conditions of a revolutionary situation. The nationalist community soon found out who the real republicans were. "Workers Unite", a WP slogan, is hardly irrelevant, but the WP's neglect of the objective situation, the creation and maintenance of a Loyalist labour aristocracy through British imperialist domination, transforms such 'unity' into a reactionary utopia.

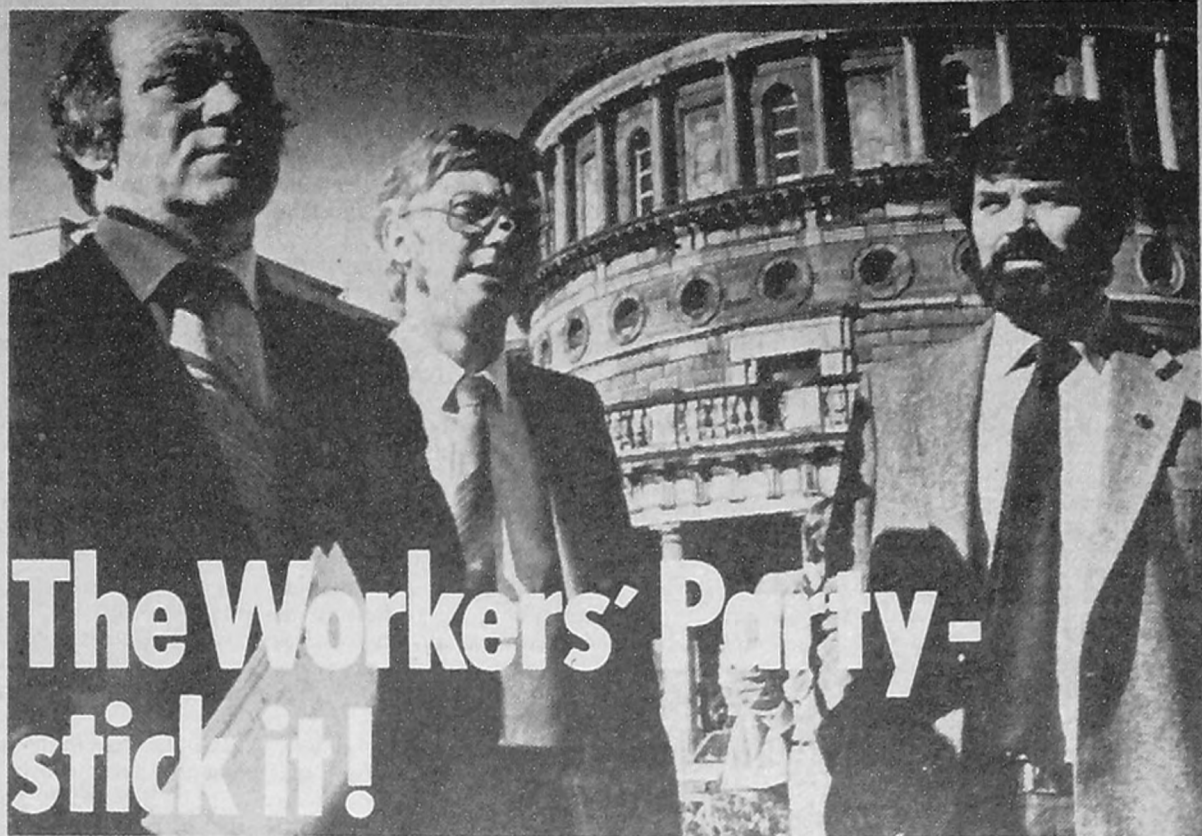
In the Twenty-six Counties, under different conditions, the WP has been far more successful. Its first TD(MP), Joe Sherlock, was elected to the Dail in 1981. Prionsias de Rossa and Paddy Gallagher followed him soon after, although Sherlock and Gallagher lost their seats in the General Election of November 1982. This was with a membership roughly equivalent to the British SWP's today. This success for the WP has continued, and they have now overtaken the Irish Labour Party in Dublin, with a real possibility of repeating this throughout the Twenty-six Counties. Workers there can afford their illusions in the WPs' rotten reformism, unlike in the Six Counties where those holding such illusions swiftly had their noses rubbed in the mess of the WPs' opportunism by the firm hand of reality.

A little bit pregnant

How then did such an odd creature evolve? From the honest aspirations of the Irish working class, or perchance a sick joke? Strangely enough, as indicated above, it has its roots firmly in the republican tradition which it now so virulently attacks.

This trend initially came to the fore in Sinn Fein and the IRA after the failure of the 1956-62 Border Campaign. Such an important defeat led to the questioning of previous strategy. A section of the movement, having had their fingers burnt by the military campaign, sought to withdraw from it, hiding their retreat behind a cloud of pseudo-socialist rhetoric. As the 60s progressed this trend strengthened, encompassing IRA chief of Staff Cathal Goulding, Sinn Fein President Tomas MacGiolla, and its trailblazing ideologue, education officer and "Marxist" Dr Roy Johnston.

Things came to a head with the 'militarists' after the explosion of the revolutionary situation in 1969. The



Workers Party TD's outside the Dail

majority, represented by the MacGiolla trend, submitted two resolutions to the Extraordinary Army Convention in December 1969, proposing a 'National Liberation Front' with organisations of the Left, and the abandonment of electoral abstentionism. On top of this the leadership refused to defend the Catholic areas from Loyalist attack. The minority walked out. Similar events occurred at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis on January 10-11 1970. Joined by the women's organisation, Cumana na mBan, the minority formed Provisional Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA — the split was complete. This was seen by some at the time as a straight left-right split. True, the Provos had a streak of 'anti-communism' in them, but this was as much to do with the reputation gained by the opportunist pretenders to the mantle of 'Marxist' as any 'conservatism' on the Provos' part. More on this shortly. Anyway, circumstances were to push the Provisionals left as fast as they shoved the Officials right.

The Officials were influenced in their superficial 'left turn' by the Irish Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, now reunited as the Communist Party of Ireland. This can be seen even more clearly today as the seeds of opportunism have borne rotten fruit. Well before the direction to be taken by the Officials was clear, both the IWP and CPNI had a clearly programmed stagist theory, and the CPNI had even evolved a 'two nations' theory within this, aiming to "build a new Ulster of the common man...to keep in step with Britain and the new world." (For a Prosperous Ulster, CPNI pamphlet) Like the CPI, the Officials rejected the call for 'Troops Out Now' after 1969 as being unrealistic and leftist, instead calling for a British declaration of intent to withdraw at a given date and a withdrawal of troops to barracks in the meantime. All this and more has been taken to its logical, thoroughly pro-imperialist conclusion by the WP today. From this tendency's initial pretensions of 'proletarian republicanism', originally propelled by the cajolings of the Irish communists, it has hurtled headlong towards its current status as James Prior's favourite political party in Ireland.

To use an oft, but never over used metaphor; you cannot get away with being a little bit opportunist any more than you can get away with being a little bit pregnant.

Initially the split led many on the British left to give qualified support to the Officials. After all, unlike the 'conservative' Provos, they took on board 'real social issues' and claimed the mantle of Wolfe Tone and James Connolly. So what if there was more than a sniff of reformism: at least they talked about the workers. Even as late as 1973 they were able to come out with "it is only the Irish working class...who can now lead the (national) struggle." (Ard Fheis Report). Ah, those halcyon days before they forgot about such things as national struggles.

Towards 'unity' with imperialism

Soon the 'socialist' raiment began to fray. After the Aldershot barracks bombing in 1972 the Official IRA dumped arms as the military campaign was leading to 'sectarianism', only to pick them up again two years later when the IRSP/INLA was formed. The Officials responded to those who split with them with pistol whippings, kneecappings and assassinations, culminating in the murder of IRSP leader Seamus Costello in 1977. Still they tried to cover themselves with 'left' rhetoric; the Provos and INLA were, it seems, 'sectarian', and of course "sectarianism kills workers".

The Officials claimed the blame for sectarianism could no longer be laid at the feet of British imperialism, as it was only a "sociological and cultural problem."

In common with their new-found bed mates in the Unionist camp, the WP also supported Jim Prior's Northern Ireland Assembly (although they didn't stand a snowball in hell's chance of being elected to it) as it represented — according to them, mark you — an increase in democracy, and in the spirit of their two nations theory "any change in the position of Northern Ireland within the UK can only be achieved with the democratic consent of the working class in Northern Ireland." (Irish Worker No.1)

The WP has come out in favour of the Hillsborough agreement, as a step towards 'normalisation', but opposes power sharing as it violates 'Northern Irish democracy' (violates what?).

In its attitude to foreign versus Irish capital the WP has undergone a strange political metamorphosis. Early on, like so many other reformists, part of the blurb on the back of its publications read "we oppose all foreign financiers,

speculators, monopolists, landlords and their native collaborators." Nothing unusual in this, but their evolution has led them to an entirely contradictory position today. Now, apparently, Ireland needs to be pulled up by the bootlaces, and "finance of the magnitude needed can only come from Westminster and the EEC...The World Bank and European Bank are sources of loans at favourable rates of interest." (Getting Northern Ireland back to work). This is because "foreign industry means a progressive industrial base, explicit imperialist control and a vast workforce which at times of crisis is open instantly to the argument for state socialism, rather than feudal and reactionary appeals of the 'Buy Irish' nature." This in turn would erode economic barriers. North and South, facilitating 'workers' unity', a process which is only being prevented by the supposed 'sectarianism' of the Provos.

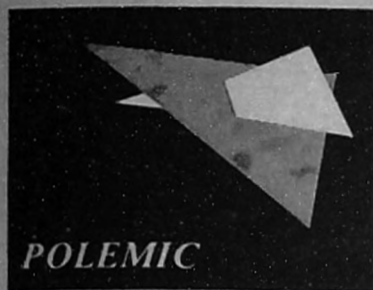
Which brings us to the WP's stance on the national question. As might be guessed, it isn't that wonderful. In fact it has even earned the polemic of the CPI in its acquiescence to imperialism. The WP has in the past condemned the republicans' armed resistance as "a method of destroying potential revolution". Now they go further: the Provisional IRA and INLA are "when analysed, fascist type organisations" (Prionsias de Rossa, WP TD). This has led them to liken the heroic Bobby Sands MP to the Nazi SA member, Horst Wessel, and come out with 'critical support' for the RUC; after all, "the alternative...was 'kneecapping and breezblocks'" (Irish Worker, No.1). Ever the champions of freedom, they claim "no one must be above the law" (Teoric, Autumn 1979). Presumably since they still claim to be revolutionary, the WP intends to stage a 'lawful' revolution.

The IRSP has gone from being characterised in Teoric in 1975 as 'ultra-left' and backed by the SWP(US) and the International Socialists (now the SWP), to a "fascist type organisation". To have had the effrontery to come out with this twisted crap we must at least credit the WP with a (sick) sense of humour.

All this serves to show the pro-imperialist nature of the WP, vying with, and probably surpassing the SDLP in its sycophancy to the British ruling class. Now even their 'old rusty guns' are no more than the vaguest memory.

Alan Merrick

Which way for Labour?



Communist Campaign Group, *Which way for Labour?* April 1986, pp.49, £1.00

THIS SECOND CCG pamphlet presents to the labour movement (and to its own supporters) for the first time the CCG's strategy for "advance to socialism".

Vigilant CCGers, drawn into rebellion against Eurocommunist curtailment of democratic rights within the CPGB, should be outraged to have this ready-made reformist programme foisted upon them without the least whiff of democratic process. But perhaps for some CCG big wigs their oppositionism is based more on loyalty to their own expelled heroes of the trade union bureaucracy, such as Durkin, Gill, Hicks and Robbo, for whom they are ready to forget any such principles!

Certainly, the CCG leaders are embarrassed by the lack of democracy in their organisation. But if rank and file CCG comrades are looking to the long-awaited "theoretical and discussion" journal for the opportunity to thrash out differences, analyse the long opportunist slide towards liquidation, and discuss how to rebuild a genuine Leninist revolutionary vanguard party, they will be disappointed.

Which Way For Labour? defines the boundaries of debate amongst the left, which "should be conducted in accordance with... some basic principles" including "that a new Labour government... should begin to challenge the basis of capitalist power." Presumably the CCG *Journal* (that is how it is advertised on the back of *WWFL* — neither "theoretical" nor "discussion"!)" will not go beyond these limits. The first issue is promised for TUC week (September), obviously for external consumption, to win the trade union bureaucrats for the utopian Alternative Economic Strategy (AES). Goodbye to communist theoretical discussion!

Lenin, who maintained that parliament is part of the bourgeois state machine, and must be abolished, and that revolutionaries must win the workers away from the Labour Party because it is a "bourgeois workers party" which "exists to systematically dupe the workers" would not have met the limits of debate set by the CCG!

Despite all its rhetoric about the "leading role of the working class", what the CCG tops really believe in is the leading role of left bureaucrats in the Labour Party and trade unions, including themselves. All working class struggle is to be subordinated to the election of a left Labour government (of a new type) which will solve the capitalist crisis at the expense of the capitalist class by implementing the reformist AES, within capitalism, to be imposed on the hostile capitalist class by its own capitalist state machine. This will weaken the capitalist class and strengthen the working class, thus opening the way to socialism

through the democratisation of the state, bringing it under working class control.

The idea of the AES — that an imperialist state-monopoly capitalist (Labour) government can choose policies to solve capitalism's crisis within the capitalist system — is nothing other than the opportunist idea of capitalist economic planning, which is covertly expressed in the discussion (p.4) of the post war boom.

"The direct intervention of the state at every level of the economy seemed to yield dividends" and "the 50s and 60s witnessed a sustained expansion". In other words *state intervention caused boom*. At the same time, "cyclical crises" were "restricted" and their consequences "dampened" but (to avoid heresy) "did not disappear".

The confusion here is due to the difficulty of trying to describe the obvious fact of the post-war boom without contradicting the dogma of the mainstram of the world communist movement, repeated boringly throughout the 50s and 60s, that "the general crisis of capitalism is deepening". The simple truth is that the general crisis of Lenin's time was eventually resolved in 1945-8 and the crisis phase of world capitalism gave way to the biggest ever boom phase. The pamphlet correctly identifies the turn from boom to decline at about 1970, but disappointingly 'substitutes' "world crisis" for "world crisis" with no explanation, and less justification.

It is not the general crisis phase of the world capitalist cycle, but merely its pre-crisis phase (of relative overproduction, speculation and the stretching of the credit system) which has already "reacted with extra special force in the ailing British economy" (p.5) and forced the ruling class to go for class confrontation instead of class collaboration, so as to weaken the working class and raise the rate of exploitation. The effects of the crisis phase itself will be devastating in Britain.

The pamphlet correctly points to "divisions in the Tory ranks over the future strategy of British imperialism" (p.1) as a sign of weakness, but tries to rationalise this as a conflict of interests between (parasitical) finance capital and industrial capital, ever the issue of de-industrialisation, and claims "a certain coincidence of interests between some sections of the capitalist class and the working class on economic expansion and job creation".

In his classic work *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin showed that capitalism began its imperialist stage when banking capital merged with industrial capital to form finance capital. There can be no return to a pre-imperialist stage of capitalism, to capitalism *not* dominated by parasitical finance capital. Far from de-industrialisation being either a "mistake" or a "conscious and deliberate" policy of the Thatcher government (p.23) it is a characteristic of imperialism, part of its nature.

Until the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, every British government will represent the interests of finance capital, and must attack the working class to raise the rate of exploitation.

If we are already experiencing the depths of the world capitalist crisis (which we are not) and if Labour can overcome imperialism through parliament (which it cannot), then who needs a revolutionary party? The CCG wants to restore the CP to the golden days of the early 1970s, when it "traditionally acted as the think-tank of the Left" (p.44) to "assist" the Labour Party to dupe the working class?

Ian Farrell

Fighting racism

Workers Against Racism. *The roots of racism*, Junius Publications, London 1985, pp85, £1.95.

ALL THE past strategies for fighting racism have suffered from the deep "failures and current paralysis" of the anti-racist movement. Thus goes the argument of the Revolutionary Communist Party and its front, WAR.

Ever since Notting Hill and before, black workers and black petty bourgeois have been reacting in sometimes more, sometimes less, militant fashion against the onslaught of the racists, whether the latter be state organised, institutionalised, or just street thugs.

It has been a matter of survival. What has been the response of the RCP? It set up the WAR propaganda front. But this front has been almost non-existent in the real fights of the black community, the mass movements which have actually developed. It seems that when the going gets tough the 'tough' RCP is never there.

Not that they do not have some theoretical inking of the roots of racism. This booklet does discuss the matter. But to make the sweeping observation that "before the development of capitalism, concepts like racism, nationalism and chauvinism had no meaning" is to completely ignore class history, and that is the history of all 'civilised' society. A little thought would recall that 'divide and rule' is inseparably associated with the Roman Empire and the very word xenophobia is of the essence of the Greek democracy.

But enough of this elementary sociology. Racism in its present form is endemic in imperialism, and is the result first of the colonial adventures, and then of the moving of great armies of reserve labour, especially to the more highly developed capitalist countries.

But not only to them. Many thousands of Indian and Arab workers find work in Libya and the Gulf States.

Racism has developed as a powerful force to split the working class and to turn the class struggle into a sectional struggle of one group against another to the advantage of the ruling class. The booklet quotes from Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish question*:

"The English bourgeoisie has not only exploited Irish poverty to keep down the working class in England by forced immigration of poor Irishmen, but it has also divided the proletariat into two hostile camps. The English



RCP: class war or PR?

worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the standard of life. He feels national and religious antipathies for him. He regards him somewhat like the poor whites of the Southern states of North America regard their black slaves. This antagonism among the proletarians of England is artificially nourished and supported by the bourgeoisie. It knows that this scissor is the true secret of maintaining its power".

Today, as capitalism goes into crisis, the material conditions for racism become deeper. As the conditions of all workers become harder, so the conditions for black workers especially become that much more harsh, for black workers' conditions are exacerbated not only by their productive relations to the capitalists, but by the blows of racism.

The labour movement in Britain has always shied away from fighting racism head on. Indeed racism is embedded deep in the British working class mind, even among some of the most class conscious and militant sections. Many miners were amazed at the militancy of blacks. They had been brought up on the ideas that exclude blacks from workingmen's clubs and were formulated quite clearly by TUC conferences.

One conference resolution in 1893 spoke of "the injury done to a large number of trades and trade unions by the wholesale importation of foreign destitute paupers"; another in 1919, seeking to abolish "under-paid Asiatic labour in the mercantile marine", suggested that "preference of employment be given, first to British white and secondly to British coloured, in preference to Chinamen".

The Labour Party, which has always been pro-imperialist, laid blame for race riots of the 1960's on

black workers, speaking of the "attitude of some of the coloured colonials themselves, and their undisciplined behaviour".

The petty bourgeois revolutionary groups have been active over racial issues. For one thing this helps to satisfy some of their nonconformist liberal consciences, and provides plenty of excitement on a street level. But like the SWP and its highly successful Anti Nazi League, they have been band-waggoners, and when the waggon stopped rolling, they got off.

But black workers are a contingent of the working class and have to be brought into struggle as such as a contingent, as workers, not only as blacks; shouting 'black and white unite and fight' is just not enough to win them to class consciousness. In fact to exaggerate, that is also a kind of patronising "Uncle Tomming".

It is necessary to organise black workers, and the petty bourgeoisie, against racist attacks, and the RCP is correct when says "the most effective response to racism is the formation of workers' defence groups".

"The time has come to cut out the rhetoric and begin to organise workers' defence groups. A prerequisite for realising this objective is the organisation of anti-racist work inside the labour movement."

That was written nearly eighteen months ago. The black workers are fighting back, in all kinds of ways, from Broadwater Farm to anti-deportation petitions and actions. But they are not being led by a general staff. Their militancy is not being coordinated into the general fight of the class and that can only be done by a revolutionary communist leadership...which is not the RCP.

Eduard Walker

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The struggle for socialism needs artists. Poems to cut through the hypocrisy of capitalism, songs to give us courage and paintings of revolutionary optimism. But we don't need Red Wedge. Why?

REVOLUTION AND ART

THERE IS DEFINITELY something going on among the doyens of modern popular culture. Not only have we seen the ongoing success of the Bob Geldof initiated Band Aid charity spectacular, but now the studiously apolitical popsters of yesteryear are nailing their flags to the mast of the Labour Party through the vehicle of the Red Wedge movement. In fact this organisation has plans to include in its ranks not simply the Juniors and Paul Wellers of the world, but also writers, poets, film makers and actors: all united in the crusade to get the scabby Neil Kinnock into No.10. We have made our view of such a project clear elsewhere, but the whole Red Wedge phenomenon does raise broader questions about the nature of the relationship between art and society, and particularly between art and movements for social change. So how do the two relate to each other?

Constructivists

One particularly galling aspect of the whole Red Wedge gang has been the way they have appropriated as their symbol the Russian Civil War street poster, *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, by El Lissitzky, for their project of injecting the youth of Britain with social democracy. In fact, it is instructive to look at the Constructivist movement, of which El Lissitzky was a part, and their indirect forerunners, the Futurists, to help clarify the way art may relate to working class politics and political change.

Each new rebellion against the established art order — such as classicism, cubism, romanticism, realism or impressionism — has been easily assimilated and tamed by the establishment. With the sheer scale of resources available to them, the ruling class has no difficulty in first neutralising and then recruiting the best of each successive generation of artists. This provides the bourgeoisie with aesthetically pleasing art which is 'theirs', for which they hold the purse strings and which justifies and upholds their world view. This subtle and complex process of assimilation of the most talented artists proceeds quite unproblematically during periods of relative social peace. However, profound social crisis can interrupt and destroy such a process.

In pre-1914 Europe's, Futurism's conscious rejection of the past and its drive to smash old forms struck a resonance amongst revolutionaries. Gramsci looked approvingly on the Futurist's frenetic outbursts against the old bourgeois culture:

"The Futurists in their fields, the field of culture, are revolutionaries; in this field, in terms of creativity, it is

unlikely that the working class will be able to do more than the Futurists for a long time. When they supported the Futurists, the groups of workers demonstrated that they were not afraid of destruction, that, sure of power, these workers could create poetry, art and drama like the Futurists: these workers were reinforcing the historical possibility of a proletarian culture created by the workers themselves."

The Futurist's fascination with technological progress and modernity was shared by their indirect successors in Russia, the Constructivists. In the words of Mayakovsky, the Constructivists set out after the Russian revolution to make the streets their brushes and the square their palette. Despite the sometimes fraught relationship between artists and the new Soviet regime, many threw in their lot with the new order and thought of themselves as being in the vanguard of artistic creation in much the same way as the Bolsheviks were in the vanguard of proletarian revolution and socialist construction. A *Manifesto* issued by Malevich in 1920 proclaimed:

"...We are going to work on new creative constructions in life... Three cheers for the overthrow of the old world of art. Three cheers for the new world order of things. Three cheers for the communist all-Russian auditorium for construction. Three cheers for the Red leaders of contemporary life and the Red creative work of new art."

A Bad Dose

In contrast with the innovative and consciously revolutionary Constructivist movement of the 1920s, this Red Wedge thing of today is a product of the despair and feelings of impending doom that are beginning to infect sections of the petty bourgeoisie in Britain today. The impulse to form the movement has come not out of a class struggle optimism or an upsurge of grass-roots initiative, but rather out of various figures in popular music such as Billy Bragg and Paul Weller being laid low with the same malady that has swept through leading sections of the workers' movement itself: a bad dose of the 'realisms'. As a Red Wedge statement put it:

"... the fact that Red Wedge exists at all is evidence of a new realism, a backs-to-the-wall awareness that, as Billy Bragg would have it, 'Wearing badges is not enough'."

Amongst the Red Wedgies a "...hard-earned realism [has] replaced a devil may care idealism." (*New Socialist*, March '86). Billy Bragg, one of the movement's founding members and leading lights has tried to put a positive face onto what is

essentially a process of panic and despair:

"Pop music has always paraded itself as a radical means of change but has never come up with anything. It's always been about selling radical chic — from Presley to The Clash onwards. It's never been *pro-anything*." (*New Musical Express*, January 25, 1986)

And so when pop finally decides to be 'pro' something, it is scabbing, pro-imperialist traitor, Neil Kinnock. How wonderful. Bragg is right on one level, however. Rock/Pop music has never been truly 'angry' in the same way as say, jazz has been. At its most worked up, it has been slightly miffed about having to tell its parents what time it was going to be dragging its bum in that night, or about not being allowed to borrow the family's (second) car that weekend. The punk rock 'explosion' was, as has been pointed out by others, nostalgia for that lie of rock'n'roll anger. But now the punkettes of the class of '77 have grown up, taken a sober look at the world and decided the best thing they can do for the working class youth of Britain is to get Mr. Kinnock elected to No.10:

"[Red Wedge is] an organisation set up by various artists, musicians, young actors and writers ... all totally committed to one thing — the creation of a fairer, saner society which benefits all and not just a few. To this end, Red Wedge believes that the re-instatement of a Labour Party at the next general election is vital." (Red Wedge pamphlet: *A State of Independence*)

Cynical Labourite hacks like Clare Short MP are using the poisonous 'lesser of two evils' argument to good effect with the

naive popsters of Red Wedge, and trying through them to get this message of defeat, despair and submission into the ranks of working class youth. She outlined the false rationale that underpins the whole Red Wedge con-trick in a round table discussion in the *NME* earlier this year:

"Remember that the worst possible Labour government is still better than the best possible Conservative government..."

This is the type of passive, useless argument that has gained ground in the workers' movement since the defeat of the miners' strike. But tell us, Clare, (or why don't you have a go, Billy Bragg, or Paul Weller?), what is electing your precious Labour government going to do for the millions of unemployed? The leadership of the Party is even now promising that mass unemployment will continue! What will it do for the heroic Irish people who have had to suffer an imperialist army of occupation for the past 17 years, an army your wonderful Labour Party sent in in the first place? What will it do for the heroes of the 1984/85 Great Miners' Strike, the imprisoned miners, who Kinnock has already promised will continue to rot in prison? Tell us, Red Wedge comrades: if you are an unemployed black youth in Brixton, an Irish fighter for the freedom of your country facing the British army every day on your streets, or Terry French, Kent miner sentenced to five years in prison for fighting for his class in the Great Strike, what difference will it make to you that Red Wedge has helped get a Labour government led by Kinnock into office?

That communist artists like Robert Wyatt are involved in Red Wedge we

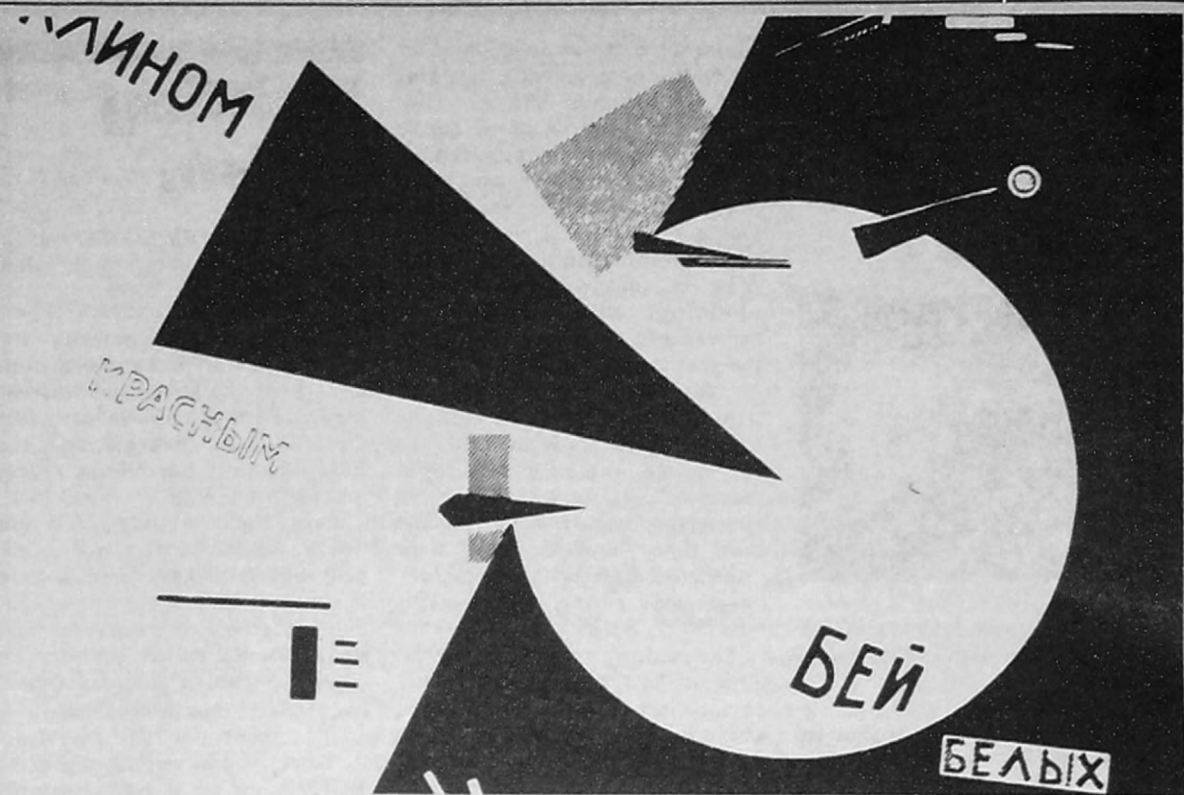
believe to be 100% wrong. Communist artists of today need to take a lesson from the movement that produced the first Red Wedge symbol and remind themselves of what that Red Wedge represented.

Communists

Russian Constructivist El Lissitzky's street poster was overtly propagandist in its intentions. In its use of simple shapes and blocks of colour it illustrates well the clash of socially antagonistic forces in revolutionary Russia — the Red Army and the White counterrevolutionaries. (It might be worthwhile those involved in Red Wedge considering what side a politician like Kinnock might have been on in the imperialist-backed Civil War launched against the young Soviet regime). As we have shown, the Constructivist movement regarded itself as revolutionary and a component part of a great revolutionary social experiment. Although no such social upheaval exists at the moment, this is no excuse for communist artists to advocate social democracy to the working class youth of Britain.

Communist artists in this period must be iconoclast. They must absorb inwardly the truly revolutionary essence of Marxism and seek to express it externally in art. Above all, the revolutionary artist of today must be uncompromising and consciously take the decision that their work will be part of the struggle and preparation for proletarian revolution: so what about revolutionary artists for revolution? Anything else not only sells the working class short, it also betrays the revolutionary artist's own integrity.

Alec Long



Wapping: up the stakes

THE RESOUNDING vote by printworkers to continue to struggle for jobs and union recognition at Wapping is an ideal opportunity to take the whole struggle to a higher level. Certainly if victory is to be secured this must be done.

While demands should be made from the leadership of the NGA, Sogat and the TUC the rank and file must now assert its hegemony. This can be done by militants linking the struggle for union rights at Wapping to resistance to job cutting exercises by other newspapers publishers.

In relying on public sympathy not working class power Dean and Dubbins have clearly played into Murdoch's hands right from the beginning.

Instead of a PR version of

industrial struggle — so acceptable to Neil (scab) Kinnock — militants must fight for an all out strike in the national newspaper industry supported by as wide as possible solidarity from workers in transport, ink, paper etc.

With such a strategy the rank and file can really get Murdoch and other press barons worried and on the run.

The struggle at Wapping must not be allowed to slip back into a rut of ritualistic twice weekly protests. It must not be allowed to slip back into an isolated struggle good for anti-Tory hot air but useless for getting back the jobs of the sacked 5,000. Wapping must not be allowed to remain a union free monument to the weakness of the working class.

Militants and their supporters in the Printworkers Support Groups must do their utmost to make picketing truly massive. In order to be effective, and effective they must be, picketing must be defended with Workers' Defence Groups. Above all militants in the print must now forge links across the NGA, Sogat, NUJ, AUEW, EETPU divide and establish joint committees. With strong rank and file organisation militants could up the stakes.

Murdoch wants to fight a war of attrition. If he is allowed to keep on doing this he will, at the end of the day, win. A strike that is allowed to drag on endlessly is bound to be eroded; some will find new jobs, some will retire and others will simply become exhausted.