

THE LENINIST

RALLY

UNDER THE BANNER
OF OCTOBER



SPEAKERS INVITED FROM
TURKEY, IRAN, UNEMPLOYED WORKERS
CHARTER, COMMUNIST FORUM
7.30 PM NOVEMBER 8 1986
391 CITY ROAD LONDON EC1
(NEXT TO ANGEL TUBE)



Celebrate October on November 8

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION happened 69 years ago on November 7, 1917 (October 25 in the old Russian calendar). It was not just a revolution within national boundaries. It was primarily of an international, world order because it signified the beginning of the world proletarian revolution; the first decisive step in the transition from capitalism to communism.

Of course, for many years, the advanced social order ushered in by October was left isolated in economic backwardness as the world revolution was held back by social democratic betrayal and counterrevolutionary terror. Socialism, which in essence is a higher mode of production than capitalism, found itself confronted with the necessity of catching up with capitalism. This had its costs.

Hand in hand with painful economic advances many early communist measures were abandoned simply because the economic basis for them was lacking. This was by and large unavoidable. What was not was a centrist adaption to backwardness and its elevation to the status of 'official Marxism'. This explained backwardness and every retreat by doctoring the scientific tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

This centrism has acted as a bureaucratic break on the world revolution begun in October 1917, it has also opened the door to a craven adaption to bourgeois society by many sections of our world communist movement and its disintegration. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that the land of the October Revolution, led by centrists though it is, remains the main bulwark of the world revolution against imperialism. It therefore remains a historic gain for the working class internationally which must be unconditionally defended against all reactionary attacks.

We say that the key to this defence of the USSR, above all stopping imperialism's plans for a redivisionist anti-Soviet World War III, is not placing our hopes in 'another Reykjavik' but making new revolutions along the lines of October.

The objective conditions in the world today are certainly ripe for socialism. Capitalism is a block to the full development of the world economy and its contradictions increasingly demand resolution through socialism. This does not mean there is a generalised revolutionary situation. The world revolution, like capitalism, develops unevenly, and finds expression first and foremost in imperialism's weak links. This was why pre-1917 Russia was able to play a vanguard role in the world revolution.

Russia, like many of today's weak links like Iran and Turkey, had to make the most advanced democratic revolution to lift the country out of backwardness; and that meant the revolution going uninterrupted towards socialism. This, and the conditions of struggle, not least the speedy changes in the forms the revolutionary movement took, demanded the enriching of Marxism. Lenin brilliantly did this and the success of the party he led means Russia's history is still unequalled in revolutionary theory and instructiveness.

Taking hold of this theory and instructiveness and putting it to the service of the working class is the aim of all the various organisations sending speakers to our rally to celebrate the 69th anniversary of the October Revolution and the 5th anniversary of the launch of *The Leninist*.

For instance, the comrades from Iran have learnt under the lash of black reaction that the lessons of October are as relevant as ever. As to the comrades from Turkey, they have been forced to question many old assumptions and come up with new answers because of centrist cowardice and the rapidly changing and testing conditions of their struggle. In so doing they have, it must be said, enriched Marxism-Leninism in true Bolshevik fashion. Join them and us in celebrating October on November 8.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Nationalism

Dave Douglass (Geordie) misses the essence of *The Leninist's* argument against separatism i.e. communists take as their starting point the existing country/state, not nationality. We have no interest in Britain being divided into a patchwork of small states along the lines of the English, Welsh, Scots, Manx, Shetland, Cornish, Channel Islander ... let alone Geordie, Cockney or Scouse.

"Communists" as *The Leninist* says "always support the organisation of the proletariat in the largest and most centralised units. And in the absence of objective conditions compelling separate organisations in Britain the proletariat vanguard must organise in a single party."

Marxism recognises that things can have a number of different qualities. The Scottish nation can through evolution evolve to being part of a British nation and at the same time retain certain features of having been a fully fledged nation.

Of course because the Scottish people remain a nationality, communists must support their right to self-determination i.e. their right to form a state if they so decide.

But this is not the nub of the debate. No, what is being argued about is whether communists in Scotland should actually fight to form a Scottish state, not a "workers' state" — this is a left cover — but a state separate from England and Wales.

Nationalism is rampant in Scotland, not least in the Labour movement. As Dave Douglass well knows the Scottish Area of the NUM fights for "Scottish coal" not miners' jobs and when it came to supporting the boycott of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games so-called communists (supporters of Straight Leftism) argued that apartheid was not supported by Scotland and therefore scabbed on the boycott.

The problems of Scottish workers are not due to national oppression but class oppression. To expose this fact for Leninists it is incumbent on English communists to stand by the right of the Scottish people to be allowed to form a state if they so decide. This strengthens the basis for the unity of all workers in Britain.

But at the same time it is a requirement of proletarian internationalism that communists in Scotland fight tooth and nail against all manifestations of separatism, Al Donaldson and Paul Cockshott do not do this nor does Dave Douglass — that is why Jack Conrad is correct to criticise them for deviating towards nationalism.

Mick Preston
Liverpool

BT sanctions

Reg Mikes' letter (September 25th) is reflective of the rampant defeatism that is so apparent among our working class today.

The NCU did not used to be called the Post Office Engineering Union; it was formed as a result of a merger between the POEU and the Post and Telecoms group of the CPSA. Thus, a union of clerical and engineering workers was formed within British Telecom. This will help in creating the maximum unity within the framework of workers' sanctions against South Africa.

Indeed it is disappointing that Reg Mikes only deals with the UCW as far as taking action is concerned — Is this an indication of sectionalism within your argument Reg? Let us hope not!

The news companies and state broadcasting networks (including

the South African Broadcasting Corporation) have to use the international exchanges in London for every type of transmission. These exchanges, along with the earth stations at Goochilly and Madley, are the jewels in British Telecom's crown, and are therefore the key to effective action by Telecom workers.

It is important to recognise that the refusal to handle South African work must be backed by the threat of general strike action if management seek to victimise any worker who takes blacking action. In fact it should be the aim to fight for general strike action and occupations in any case.

The possibilities for action by Telecom workers are endless. However, if the question of undertaking action is approached in a reformist way, then it will be doomed to defeat and the mass of workers in Telecom will know it.

In conclusion, the South African working class is fighting not an economic struggle but a political struggle for its liberation. As part of the international working class we are a component part of that struggle — hence the need for workers' sanctions.

M E Mailer

Tactics

The continuing hold of Labourism over the mass of British workers will act like a ball and chain, weighing down the working class in its fight against the capitalist class.

More specifically, at this moment of ever increasing attacks on labour by capital, all that can be offered by Labourism in response is at worst cries of how "unfair" the capitalist class is, or at best, to undertake the most limited forms of industrial action such as work-to-rules, overtime bans, selective strikes, or even 24-hour all-out strikes. Suffice it to say that the increasingly acute class contradictions in the Britain of the 1980s demand revolutionary tactics in the workplace. Therefore, in place of the overtime ban should go the workplace occupation; in place of the selective industrial action should go the indefinite all-out strike or a general strike; and sabotage, along with workers' self defence, should become the norm. Recallable delegate based strike committees that have the active involvement of all workers within one industry, yet at the same time unite the working class as a class into a mass, militant movement, should also be fought for.

Indeed, as *The Leninist* has rightly said, the lessons provided by the National Minority Movement and National Unemployed Workers' Movement, are assuming even greater relevance to workers' struggles in the 1980s.

Some will say that the subjective consciousness of the mass of British workers is far behind the objective decline of the economy, the use of state force by the political representatives of capital and the heroic fight against this by the most conscious elements of our class. This, of course, is a correct proposition, but communists have always taken a materialist analysis of contemporary society — in direct contrast to subjectivism and idealism, and would relish going into the working class (more particularly the advanced sections) armed with revolutionary theory and the ability to unite this theory with practical work. In short, as Lenin said, the subjective consciousness of the working class is finite but the decline of the capitalist system is infinite.

Society develops as a result of processes within it — one or more developments that had gone before. Consequently, with changing society, so a change in the tactics of

struggle undertaken by workers is a burning necessity. For it is certainly the case that if workers don't understand what is needed to win purely economic struggles, they will never understand what is needed to win political struggles.

Thus, it is not a case of changing tactics of struggle for the sake of change but for "scientific reasons".

Martin Kaplan
Essex

Jarrow 86

Messrs Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer who create illusions in 'the next Labour government' under Messrs Kinnock, Hattersley and Healey objectively help to perpetuate the capitalist system despite all their socialist rhetoric. And that means, whether they like it or not, perpetuating unemployment. This goes for the *Morning Star*, the NCP, the 'hard liners' who hide behind *Straight Left*, and hosts of Trot and petty bourgeois lefts.

If those who talk about socialism are serious about getting rid of unemployment, then they should also fight to win workers away from Labourism. Those who do not do this, who seek a soft option in the Labour Party become, despite themselves, obstacles in the path of socialism.

Jarrow 86 is a crude Labourite stunt. While I welcome *The Leninist* setting up the Unemployed Workers Charter, it would be better to leave Jarrow 86 for the TV cameras. Unemployed workers, like myself, want nothing to do with it or Kinnock.

Roy Abbott
Newham

Old Bolshevik

I have just read the supplement in No. 38 and think it is masterly — it takes me back about 46 years. If it was not so tragic, I had to laugh at your comments re the CCG declining into an old age pensioner's club. I have already used the same phrase at my branch. Unfortunately it is so true — for my branch anyway. In earlier years the YCL would fill the gaps with trained comrades, but you have reported on that score: a sorry state. We should be recruiting for the YCL.

My only regret is that I am not twenty years younger, which means I can only fight for the theory, which you are clearly indicating.


Communists and non-communist need your leadership more than ever. The main need now is for the theory of dialectical and historical materialism and Marx's analysis of capitalist economy to be made clear; which the Party has neglected and rejected.

Please find enclosed a £5 cheque for the fund.

Martin Ross
Bradford

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

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3rd

SUMMER OFFENSIVE TRIUMPHS

UNLIKE all other tendencies and publications in and around our Communist Party of Great Britain we have no outside sources of finance.

We do not leach from the past, as *7 Days* does to the tune of £1,000 a week from a Party leadership which in turn asset strips in true Thatcherite fashion by 'selling the Party's family silver' ie buildings. Nor do we sell all possibility of political independence by accepting a situation where one half of our circulation goes to the socialist countries.

We rely on the self-sacrifice of our supporters. In light of this we are glad to report the results of our 3rd Summer Offensive. As our readers will know it came to an end on September 28.

From June 29 our comrades have attempted to fulfil the pledges they made of giving three weeks income to our paper. As we have emphasised the pledges comrades made were minimum targets and it did not mean suspending the regular dues of 10% of one's income to our paper. So how did our 3rd Summer Offensive go and what atmosphere did it generate?

Every encouragement was given to creating a spirit of socialist competition and enthusiastic self-sacrifice around the comrades. In this we were quite successful, at least compared with last year.

We held regular sales of personal possessions ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. We urged a scrimping on food and drink. We pleaded for money from friends and cajoled our readers mercilessly.

The results were impressive. The comrades attending our slap-up meal, laid on to celebrate the end of the Offensive, were told that the most successful participant had raised £600. She, along with two other comrades received mementos in recognition of their achieving 200%, 154% and 150% of their pledges.

Comrades were informed that

this year the average sum raised was £252. This was declared a splendid level of self-sacrifice — considering half of those participating in the Summer Offensive were wageless. Certainly it compares well to the £5 average of the Executive Committee's annual fund drive and shows our determination to build a serious communist organisation.

Nonetheless it was pointed out that as Leninists we are far from satisfied with it. After all, our bench mark is not the average supporter of *Marxism Today* or *Straight Left*. Our point of reference is making revolution in Britain and building a Bolshevik type organisation to do it.

That means taking on board all the most advanced lessons available from our world communist movement. Not least the Self-Sacrifice Campaigns run by the Communist Party of Turkey — *Worker's Voice*.

Operating in a poor country, organising often in exile amongst the lowest paid workers, this Party raised £100,000 within two months in 1985. This sum will undoubtedly be exceeded in the 1986 Offensive the CPT — *Worker's Voice* is now conducting.

It is this level of self-sacrifice we seek to emulate, not our EC's £100,000 fund drive which was declared a resounding success after it ended £9,958 down on 1985 with £71,607 and a mere £5 average.

Thus while we raised 2½ times as much this year, as compared to last year, and while this was done in a period one month shorter, it was from three times as many comrades. Naturally we are delighted at this indication of our rapid growth in numbers. But as we do and always have stressed quality over quantity we frankly admit that on one level we have suffered step back.

This cannot unfortunately be simply explained by the number of unemployed taking part this year. The fact is that the average we raised declined compared with last year

because of a dilution in commitment and a consequent lowering of the average raised.

We are not complacent about this. It is no good comparing our £252 average with the £5 average secured by the EC. That is why we will be aiming to double the average raised next year with the 4th Summer Offensive.

This level of self-sacrifice is essential if our plans for the future are to come to fruition. For as well as creating a substantial pool of finance to launch particular projects, financial self-sacrifice steels our comrades, tests their ability to unite theory with practice.

Those who easily mouth revolutionary rhetoric, those who pompously declare themselves communists, are put to the test. Our Summer Offensive therefore acts like a purge on all that is soft, decaying or pretentious in our ranks.

It can therefore be seen how our politics are clearly and intimately connected to finance. Those who wallow in the mire of social democratic and opportunist politics are incapable of understanding this.

They do not understand why we demand a high level of self-sacrifice, why we are prepared to part ways with those who do not meet our high standards.

From those who only wish to pressurise the Labour Party and reform the system it is understandable that our approach is met with incomprehension and even disbelief. But those who want real socialism, who say they seek to reforge the Communist Party into an instrument to lead the proletariat to state power there is no such excuse.

You should step forward now and prepare to take part in our 4th Summer Offensive in 1987. After all if we need a Bolshevik Party, we need a Bolshevik style of commitment to finance. Without it revolution will remain a dream.

Is Eurocommunism diverging? Well there seem to have emerged 'dry' and 'soggy' wings. Comrade Johnstone has clearly decided he is a 'dry'. His letter in *7 Days* (September 27) saw him ticking off Geraint John and Frankie Rickford for going 'soggy' on the 'royal family'. In their contributions to *7 Days* in its August 2 edition they suggested Eurocommunism should reconsider its attitude towards royalty because of its popularity. This, Monty warned, would hand over republicanism to the "ultra-left". The following week he found himself the subject of 'soggy' attack. Comrade Jim Youell, one of the leading 'soggies' in the Eastern District, dismissed comrade Johnstone's republicanism by favourably contrasting the monarchy to the "left in general and the Communist Party in particular". The former, unlike the latter, has apparently "modernised" and "democratised" itself. Because of this comrade Youell says: "We can learn a thing or two from our royal family". To prove it he suggests incorporating them as one of the institutions of a "socialist" (sic) Britain. When will the 'soggies' advocate bringing back the birch and hanging?

Another sign of division in the Eurocommunist camp was seen at the September meeting of the Party's Executive Committee. The EC declared: "Having considered the new factors that will apply in the next general election" it would stick with the old policy of standing as many candidates as possible. Against this a move was made to adopt a much more selective approach. Although it fell 1 vote for, 30 against and 1 abstention, there is a groundswell of opinion amongst the 'soggies' against standing more than a few candidates in parliamentary elections. If this is an example of 'soggyness' there can be no doubt that those who control the Camden borough committee are 'ultra-soggy' — despite having the largest membership in London, the May local elections did not see one CPGB candidate in Camden. In true liquidationist Straight Leftist fashion they miserably collapsed into the arms of the Labour Party.

Euro domination continues to have dire effects on our Party. As an indication of its effect the September EC has set a target(!) of 10,000 carded up members by March 1987. (This means aiming for a decrease in membership). In January the EC will consider a reduction in full-time staff and other cuts. As well as this the EC is going ahead with moves against the pro-*Morning Star* leadership of West Middlesex District Committee. They are writing to all Party members in the district and are insisting on EC speakers addressing all branches. Will re-organisation follow?

The Morning Star was not published on October 8, 1986. Why? Was it because the *Morning Star* is plagued with Fleet Street style 'industrial relations' problems? We are told printers on the paper have withdrawn from the joint union negotiating committee and stopped the paper because Chater wanted to use outside labour to make the plates for the paper. Is this true or false? *Morning Star* readers should demand the truth.

The old editorial board of *Marxism Today* had, over the years, been somewhat denuded by death (Allan Morton), resignation (Irene Brennan) or simple political removal (John Hoffman), till it was reduced to a mere eight comrades. So it was natural that comrade Jacques should go to the Executive Committee requesting an influx of new blood. Unfortunately the new editorial board represents only one trend in the Party and, worse, contains a fair smattering of non-Party members like David Edgar and Stuart Hall. In line with this shift to the right *Marxism Today* is pushing harder and harder to make any relationship with our Communist Party completely unnecessary. After much opposition on the EC it is no longer printed by Farleigh Press (owned by the CPGB) and the editor boasts it will soon be financially independent. Unless the liquidationist slide in our Party is stopped we will soon see the day when *Marxism Today*, like the *Morning Star*, declares UDI from the Party which gave it birth, financed it and promoted it.

Flack and Finance

We have come in for a deal of flak for launching the Unemployed Workers Charter. Some call it sectarian, others a diversion. For these types everything must be subordinated to getting that scab Kinnock into No 10. Yet while these opportunists have attacked us, unemployed workers have few doubts that Kinnock will not deliver the goods. From them we have had a warm reception. We need to build on this sympathy, we need to transform it into hard political commitment to reforging our Communist Party. Despite slim resources we have launched the UWC, we now send free copies of *The Leninist* to all Unemployed Workers' Centres and we have purchased some expensive, but vital, equipment for our organisation. But we need more: more pages, more complementaries, more equipment. We are going forward, but not fast enough. There is a general election looming and *The Leninist* is determined to make the maximum possible impact for the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. That requires your help. At this point in the month we have received £569 towards our £600 monthly fighting fund. So let us make up the shortfall and exceed the target next month.

'Anything

she can do



WHILE Thatcher's poorly delivered anti-Soviet speech got her a predictable nine minute standing ovation at Bournemouth Neil Kinnock's PR men must think he successfully out-Thatched Thatcher at Blackpool.

He now has *Militant* cowed, the union bosses eating out of his hand and the opinion polls showing a narrow Labour lead over the Tories and the Alliance. To do it, all Kinnock has had to do is don the moral majority garb of the nutty right in the US bible belt, try to out do the Tories on law and order and chuck out old fashioned socialism and the red flag. What a small price for establishment approbation.

When he and Roy Hattersley came to head the party in 1983, it had just suffered a mauling at the polls that had seen the lowest vote per Labour candidate since the party was established in 1900.

The mood within Labourism was one of deep demoralisation and even, from some quarters, despair. The claim that the Labour Party was the 'natural' party of government was scotched by Thatcher's two general election victories.

Even its credibility as the alternative government had been well and truly dented by the formation of the SDP and the steady erosion of the material foundations of consensus politics.

We floated the idea in 1983 that the Labour Party was returning to its pre-1945 'party of crisis' role. In 1924 and 1929 this meant the Labour Party was placed in office by the bourgeoisie, despite its minority position in parliament, simply in order to sell deeply unpopular, economic and social measures to workers.

Workers who would not take similar measures from the Tories or Liberals would take austerity from a Labour government simply because they looked upon the Labour Party as 'their' party.

In the same way Labourites were given cabinet seats during World War I and II by a bourgeoisie determined to secure the loyalty of the working class to the British establishment while it was engaged in a life or death struggle with its imperialist rivals.

Has Kinnock delayed Labour's slide back into a party of crisis? No. In fact he has prepared the Labour Party for that very role.

He has tailored his party's promises in true Thatcherite style to suit an increasingly cash strapped British capitalism. In the same way he refused to abandon the state interference in

trade unions contained in the Thatcherite anti-union legislation.

For the same reasons of bourgeois respectability he sought to show the establishment that he was both as strong and trustworthy as Thatcher by earnestly declaring in his patriotic, moral majority, law and order 'key note' Blackpool speech that he was ready to die for his country. In an attempt to prove it he took the 'Bolshie' Labour left by the scruff of the neck and thumped it into line. Something the trade union bureaucracy has welcomed, as always, for the sake of winning the next general election and something the bosses media has at last recognised makes Labour fit to administer a crisis ridden British capitalism.

Quick march...left, rout, left rout

For the first time in years, delegates at the Labour Party conference pathetically allowed their leader to look like a future safe prime minister, by allowing him to walk all over them and their cherished beliefs. This is, of course, good news for the bosses and Kinnock, but for the working class in Britain...

The scale of the rout of the hapless left of the Labour Party in this year's conference, however predictable, should not be underestimated. Here are just some of the bland statistics that tell the story:

- In 1983, when conference decided to uphold the expulsion of the five members of the editorial board of *Militant*, the voting (most of it in the hands of trade union bureaucrats wielding block votes) was roughly three to one in favour. This year, the conference backed the expulsion of Derek Hatton and Tony Hulhearn of Liverpool City Council by a massive 18 to 1 majority (reflecting a drastic shift in the more democratic constituency votes).

- The left's marginalisation and irrelevance was illustrated by the subject that it decided to make its main hobby horse at conference — not the jailed and sacked miners, not the Tory anti-trade union laws and the Labour Party's promise to uphold them, not even unemployment — instead the Labour left put all its radical eggs into the anti-nuclear basket. And even with this tokenistic issue, Kinnock managed to fudge the final resolution so he can safely move to the right and junk conference policy as Thatcher falls back to making nuclear arms the main

plank of Tory election hopes.

- In the elections to the National Executive Committee of the party there was a marked step to the right. Eric Heffer, the respectable ex-Trotskyite, ex-Labour minister and ex-chair of the Labour Party, for example, was humiliatingly dumped from the leadership with his vote halved, indicating a collapse into Kinnockism by the conference.

Kinnock's victory over the left has been across the board (if given the permanent left-right battle in the party, temporary).

The so-called 'hard-left' from Tony Benn to Arthur Scargill no longer has mass rank and file pressure forcing it against the leadership. Without this pressure they simply do not have the politics to fight the right's onslaught and have been reduced to the role of disgruntled but impotent and often silent spectators. All the while they are derided and their former power and standing is stripped away by Kinnock: the former darling of the left.

The 'soft left' elements like Peter Hain, Ken Livingstone, David Blunkett and their friends grouped around the Labour Coordinating Committee and the newspaper *Tribune*, supported Kinnock, with it must be said the backing of *Marxism Today*, against their old chums in the 'hard left' in an effort to retain their influence over him and the party.

Now these cynical careerists, who ditched their radicalism with revealing quickness in order to be allowed to brown-nose it with Kinnock, are, along with *Marxism Today* and *7 Days*, whining that he has gone too far, that he is going over the top somewhat with his 'realism'.

Writing in an issue of *Tribune* last month, its editor Nigel Williamson expresses the 'soft left's' dismay at the contemptuous way that Kinnock and Hattersley have treated them despite their craven support. Williamson employs an apt metaphor for someone with such 'middle of the road' politics.

The softies, he explains, "were very much looking for a two way traffic with the Labour leadership". Kinnock could be forgiven for replying "Tough luck, sucker" (and such a statement from him would be characteristic). Instead of Williamson's "two way traffic", the realigners have found themselves acutely embarrassed as they find themselves splattered all over the central reservation as the Kinnock right wing juggernaut has picked up speed.

The Blackpool conference of the party was an emphatic underlining of the Kinnockite victory and the marginalisation of the left. With the defeat of the miners' strike and Thatcher's success in scoring one victory after another over the working class, the Labour leadership had little use for the radical cover provided by the left reformists of the Bennite, Scargillite, or *Militant* varieties.

Safe Labour

Now Kinnock can afford to present an eminently reasonable and eminently realistic (to the bourgeoisie) programme. He can afford to mock the left and their talk of socialism. And for the sake of respectability in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and its media he can afford to sacrifice the left on the altar of bourgeois respectability. This done he can then say he and his party would be just as safe, indeed better, for the system than the Tories or the Alliance.

Now the left, what Kinnock called his enemy within, has been tamed, if not decimated, what can we expect from a Labour Party if it managed to scrape home with a majority in 1987? Would it be a government of crisis? And what will the Labour left do in the meantime in the run up to the next general election?

Socialist Worker of October 4 had a tough time holding out against the lure of Labourism. It just about managed it though:

"Neil Kinnock has got a persuasive bandwagon running towards the next election. It would be tempting to jump on it.

"Socialists have to tell the truth and resist joining this bandwagon. We have to say where it is heading, even if the truth is unpopular and we are made to feel isolated.

"Only in this way can we prepare people to fight yet another series of sordid sellouts."

'Sellouts' is perhaps a predictable phrase to use. Yet given Labour's past record in government (and in opposition) workers should have absolutely no confidence in a future Labour regime. Instead of making the best of a bad show as *Militant* did, or latching onto the 'positive' features and painting them in 'socialist' colours like the *Morning Star*, workers must be warned about the inevitable 'sellout' after the election of the 'next Labour government'.

Fortunately many advanced workers already only support Kinnock's Labour Party because

they see it as the lesser of two evils and thus expect, in the final analysis, to be 'sold out'.

This working class realism is understandable not only given the Labour Party's past, but its promises. There are three basic elements to its short term economic policy: the creation of one million jobs in two years after coming to power, to cautiously reflate the economy and to take back just £3.6 billion in taxes from the huge amounts that Thatcher has handed over to the top 10% of the population. We can make some very simple points about this programme.

The creation of one million jobs — even if this were possible to do within Kinnock's two year timetable — would still leave at least three and half million on the dole. Frankly, however, even this timid promise simply does not stand up to scrutiny.

The Labour leadership plans to 'create jobs' basically by encouraging the nationalised industries to take on more workers. At the moment, the leaders of these sectors are saying 'no way'. But even if they can be persuaded or forced to play ball they are only being asked to make an undertaking to restore half the jobs cuts of the Tories. Unemployed workers could be forgiven for not getting too excited about Kinnock's promise.

Also, this promise of creating "one million jobs" will not presumably take place while all around remains static and unchanged. The British capitalist economy is predicted by many establishment economists to go soon into another trough of recession and that will see more workers thrown onto the scrapheap.

So even if the Kinnock job plan could be implemented, as fast as they 'created' new jobs in the nationalised industries, there would be, given the mechanisms of capitalism, other workers in different industries being thrown on the dole. "Creating a million jobs in two years" is therefore reliant on capitalist profitability, not Hattersley's pathetic jugglings on his Walworth Road computer. Labour's promise to the unemployed is obviously a neat cynical slogan with no real meaning, and this cannot help the unemployed in the real world.

The £3.5 billion tax take-back is of course, small in comparison with the bundles that the Tories have handed out to their friends in the middle class and above all the top echelons of the bourgeoisie. It is even significantly less than the Tories spent on trying to smash the miners' union. The rich will hardly have the pips squeezed out of them by the Labour Party.

Cautious reflation — even bourgeois studies of the economy have identified the crisis of British capitalism as a crisis of profitability.

Putting more money into circulation and extending the credit system even further is therefore unlikely to produce anything other than inflation. It will not have a significant impact on the health of the economy. Labour does not even make a pretence of hiding the fact that it wants 'pay restraint' as part of its precious "counter-inflation policy".

The Labour team for the next election also offer the bourgeoisie that they will outdo the Tories on law and order. Their promise to the powers that be is the commitment to continue the imprisonment of miners like Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland, whose only 'crime' was fighting for their jobs and their class. Kinnock also promises more police on the streets; no doubt to crush any new uprisings by black and white youth in areas like Brixton, Tottenham and Toxteth.

He has already made public his self-confessed "reactionary" views on family and sexual questions. Against the rather gin sodden image of Margaret and Dennis, Neil and Glenys promise a real return to 'Victorian values'. Labour will finance "a proper anti-drugs drive", and see to it that there will be a continuation of Thatcher's privatisation programme to lever up British capitalism's declining profit rates under the guise of social ownership.

Of course at Bournemouth, Tebbit simply moved the law and order and moral majority goal posts further to the right and bashed Labour over its sudden conversion to Thatcherism. Centrally, the Tory leadership, not least Thatcher herself, layed into Labour over its plans for non-nuclear 'defence' of British imperialism and its interests. "It would undermine Nato" they taunted.

Now, as the Labour Party is 100% committed to Nato we can safely predict that in response to this Kinnock will follow the Tories to the right. Already Healey has indicated on TV a Labour government would take no notice of conference decisions. Certainly in office this is guaranteed.

When you put it like that, the 'next Labour government' doesn't seem the attractive prospect the *Morning Star*, *Straight Left* and the rest of the centrist and left reformist pack say it is, does it?

Left for dead

So then, what of the Labour left? When are they planning to unseat the smug right wing scab Kinnock and win the Labour Party to the socialist principles it is meant to stand for? At the moment, all that seems to activate the left is the struggle for its own survival.

For instance, in early October the latest unprincipled lash-up of dispirited lefties and Trotskyites in the Labour Party was unleashed on to the unsuspecting world. A new fortnightly *Labour Briefing* hit the streets (well the dark, damp and dusty Labour Party committee rooms, anyway).

It is designed to "organise a campaigning, fighting, hard left current in the Labour Party and the trade unions ... around an action programme which highlights the main issues in the run up to the next general election and which offers a way forward for the working class and the oppressed."

It becomes clear however, that *Labour Briefing* is simply another attempt of the Labour left to channel the energy and struggle of workers into their futile attempt to transform the "bourgeois workers' party" (Lenin) and thus justify their own existence. And so, the only 'Action Programme' they offer is this:

"Make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable to the party as a whole; ensure the election of the shadow cabinet by the whole party. Support the autonomous organisation of black people, women and youth within the party. Support the right of campaigns, currents, tendencies and journals to exist within the Labour Party and trade unions. End all witch-hunts."

'Support our right to exist!' they whine to advanced workers. Why exactly, the working class should overly bother with the congenial and sordid squabbling inside the Labour Party is not made clear. Surely workers have more than enough on their plate with the attacks on their jobs, their livelihoods, their rights and their families to get involved in the self-survival plans of the Labour left.

Only under communist leadership can the workers be given a fighting programme against the bosses. The *Labour Briefing* crowd tie up

hundreds, perhaps thousands of activists in the incestuous world of committee room politicking. This offers nothing to the workers in the fight against the bosses. That is why we seek to lever away the healthy elements around *Labour Briefing* and the other myriad groups and factions in the Labour Party who are serious about wanting socialism.

For the simple fact is that to achieve socialism in Britain we need a Communist Party to lead the working class in revolutionary struggle against capitalism not a struggle in the mire of Labourism. Nowhere on the planet has socialism been achieved by a Labourite type party; these parties have always stabbed the working class in the back, they are after all bourgeois workers' parties.

Real action

If the Labour left really wants to justify its own existence, then it ought to begin to make moves to join those fighting to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain. Having this perspective does not stop those who want to see socialism presenting a real fighting action programme to the working class in the here and now.

Indeed, fighting for the interests of the working class and providing leadership is a necessary precondition for reorganising the CPGB. We Leninists, unlike the Labour left, do not engage in organisational navel-gazing but fight to lead the most advanced workers.

We did this during the miners' Great Strike, pointing to the possibilities of transforming the Miners' Support Groups into Council of Action type bodies, why the hit squads should be raised to the level of the Workers' Defence Corps seen in the 1926 General Strike and why it was essential to fight for a united workers' offensive up to and including a general strike if the miners were to avoid defeat.

In the same way today we are at the forefront in fighting for workers' direct action against apartheid and its backers in the British ruling class and the struggle to organise the unemployed in a nationwide unemployed workers' movement.

This is the type of Action Programme that the workers need, not the divisionary wrangling to change the Labour Party that groups like *Militant*, *Labour Briefing* and others offer the working class.

An Action Programme like this does not deliver workers bound hand and foot to the bosses via Kinnock. This type of approach can make our class strong! It can give us the politics to win. This is the real alternative to the bosses' friend Kinnock, the bosses' Conservative Party and the bosses system.

Ian Mahoney

I can do better'





Dangerous old Heffer



Heffer: still backs Kinnock

Eric Heffer, *Labour's Future: Socialist or SDP Mark II?*, Verso, London, pp. 208, £3.95.

ERIC HEFFER, Labour MP for the Walton Division of Liverpool, has recently published a little book outlining his fears for the future of his Labour Party. *Labour's Future: Socialist or SDP Mark II?* hit the book stands just before the Labour Party conference. The decimation of Heffer's votes in the National Executive Committee elections perhaps ought to give him a clue as to Labour's immediate future at least.

Heffer is a dying breed. An out and out craven anti-Soviet opportunist. He used to ride shot gun for Tony Cliff and his proto SWP in their refusal to defend socialist Korea against US imperialism. Now he still, apparently without shame, employs the vocabulary of Marxism to cover his abject reformism.

Thus, the Attlee government was "reformist"; Thatcher has carried out a "counterrevolution"; the right wing of the Labour Party is "revisionist", etc, etc. Of course there are those, not least in our own Communist Party, who are taken in by the rhetoric of petty bourgeois politicians like Heffer who clumsily misuse the scientific terms of Marxism in order to cover remaining in a reactionary party of imperialist war, strike breaking and broken promises.

Like all reformists, his central concern is the Labour Party, and in his cynical jottings he illustrates the futility of the left's plans to transform the Labour Party and the lies that they have to tell themselves in order to justify their hopeless fight. Heffer, like all others, has to rewrite the history of his pro-capitalist party:

"From the very beginning the party was based on the organised working class. The Independent Labour Party, Social Democratic Federation and the Fabians in their own ways introduced socialist ideas into the Labour Party whilst the unions gave it a mass base." (p.2)

Perhaps it seems a little like quibbling, but we really must make a few points about these lines. First, the idea that the Labour Party was based on the "organised working class". True. But then the "organised working class" is not some undifferentiated mass.

In fact the Labour Party was set up when the labour movement

bureaucracy 'outgrew' the patronage of the Liberal Party and needed a more coherent voice for its interests. Similarly, the Social Democratic Federation contributed socialist ideas to the party "in its own way" by quitting the Labour Representation Committee in disgust in 1901 after it refused to adopt socialism as one of its goals.

The hallowed Clause 4 that is supposed to embody the socialist ideals of the Party was only adopted in 1918, as a direct response and conscious alternative to Bolshevism and the Russian revolution and to head off the growing demands from the rank and file in the workers' movement to emulate the Russian's lead. Heffer gets around this one by claiming that the party has fought for socialism "especially since 1918" (sic).

Heffer's book therefore reflects all the cowardice, the inadequacy, the illusions and the refusal to see reality that affects all those who seek to make a counterrevolutionary organisation, the Labour Party, one which throughout its history has been fully and, when it comes to it, unconditionally committed to the interests of British imperialism, into an instrument for socialist change.

As we have said, Heffer covers his utopian perspective with some crude and it must be said crass misappropriation of Marxist terminology: he advocates a policy of "revolutionary reformism". This idiotic confusion is significant. The central contradiction in the workers' movement is between reform and revolution.

That contradiction was given an explicit organisational expression after 1914 when the centrist and right opportunist leaders of the Second International capitulated to the international bourgeoisie and supported the inter-imperialist carnage of World War I. Lenin and other revolutionaries concluded that the Second International was dead, broke with it and proclaimed the need for a new Third International.

Social democrats like Heffer look with nostalgia on the Second International before 1914:

"The distinction between reformist and revolutionary tendencies was less clear.

"For many people the question of revolution or reform was not posed in clear terms, and the changes likely to result from the actions of the socialist movement... seemed to guarantee that the world would be completely transformed. Given that that seemed certain, the question of means (legal or otherwise, violent or non-violent) lost much of its relevance."

The relevance may be lost on blundering reformists like Heffer, but workers should take very careful notice. The collapse of the Second International's opportunists into social chauvinism meant the deaths of millions of ordinary working men in the trenches. This bloody slaughter was supported by the Labour Party and its co-thinkers on both sides of the imperialist divide. Labour Party types in France, Italy, Russia, Austria and Germany, indeed in every country involved in the war, sided with their own bourgeoisie against their rivals.

Inter-imperialist rivalries are becoming more and more antagonistic. There is already a concerted anti-Soviet war drive led by the US which threatens a Star Wars first strike attack on the first country of socialism. The Labour Party has made pacifistic noises. But even now Kinnock promises greater conventional 'defence' spending to safeguard British imperialism. If workers remain tied to the Labour Party we have no chance of stopping a World War III. And that is what makes people like Heffer not just shambling reformist buffoons: it makes them positively dangerous.

Ian Mahoney

Debt and revolution

Harold Lever and Christopher Huhne, *Debt and Danger: The World Financial Crisis*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1985, pp.254, £2.95.

THIS is a frustrating book. The authors clearly know their subject very well. Lever (Lord Lever) was financial adviser to the Wilson and Callaghan governments, a senior member of the Labour cabinet, and a financier; Huhne is Economics Editor for *The Guardian*. They have produced a book with a wealth of useful information, well researched and very critical of the established order. But for all this, the book is fundamentally flawed.

The root of the problem is not hard to identify. For all their experience and all their critical perspective, these two eminently respectable commentators seek to offer advice on how to 'solve' the debt crisis.

For the authors, the origins of the debt crisis lie in the expansion of lending to developing countries in the years after the first oil price rise of 1973. They say that this was originally prompted by the need to cover balance of payments deficits, but "was soon much extended to cover virtually any borrowing that developing countries' governments saw fit to make."

Servicing of debts from the start was expected to be met through additional borrowing. This suited all concerned: the banks were happy to lend at profitable rates of interest to governments, on the grounds that the latter were reliable in the extreme. Borrowing governments were happy as there were few if any constraints on the volume of borrowing, and plenty of new loans to meet repayments.

Western governments were glad to let the banks get on with it to rid them of the responsibility.

The inexorable result of these policies was the debt crisis that is now upon us. Today, the net flow of resources is decidedly negative — that is, new loans to the developing countries are considerably less than the interest and capital repayments on existing loans. Debtors cannot repay without further borrowing, and so there is a spiralling of debt. This outcome, argue Lever and Huhne, was nothing if not predictable.

The terms of the loans were such that repayment out of export earnings or out of existing resources was never feasible. Much of the money borrowed was not

productively used. Western governments' trade policies precluded an expansion of developing country exports to repay loans. Another villain of the piece as far as the authors is concerned is the International Monetary Fund, which "expects these countries to go on generating enormous (and in some cases growing) net transfers in order to meet their obligations, a prospect which is wholly implausible".

The result was inexorable, given the policies pursued, say the authors, who nonetheless maintain that these policies were in no sense the only ones available. What Lever and Huhne are saying in essence is that with a bit more foresight, and in particular with a bit of governmental intervention, the reckless expansion of credit could have been avoided.

The argument is pretty familiar — market forces and the profit motive were given too much of a free rein, and once unleashed they dragged the world financial system into a crisis. OPEC surpluses had to be transferred to deficit countries, but this should have been done in a controlled manner, and on terms that made repayment a feasible proposition.

The bankruptcy and myopia of this perspective is revealed when one looks at what the authors propose as their solution.

The book appeared in 1985, and it so happens that the kind of solution that they recommend is now being considered seriously by the US and the international financial community. "Regulated, official guarantees for commercial bank lending to the debtor countries would help to resolve both aspects of the debt problem. They would be adequate at least to ensure that the reverse transfers were ended and that debtor growth and imports could resume a normal path. They would thus also implicitly guarantee the worth of the outstanding debt of these countries and hence limit the need for guaranteed lending to pay the interest on the debt overhang."

The IMF, chief villain of the bleeding-heart liberal's worldview, has pulled precisely this kind of deal out of the hat for Mexico, the most fragile of the major debtors. Commercial banks have secured World Bank guarantees for their share of the \$6 billion deal.

The reason for the change of heart on the part of official institutions is not hard to work out. Commercial banks, large and small, wanted nothing to do with a further round of lending unless they could get proof that they would get paid this time.

Lever and Huhne see the role of official guarantees as creating a breathing space which will allow

banks to write off the necessary amount of debt. The solution turns out to be to get the banks to renounce their claims.

The commercial banks have yet to express a great deal of interest in this proposition.

On the contrary, there are other ideas in their heads that fit in rather more closely with their own self-interest. President Aquino of the Philippines went to the US recently to discuss the possibility of new loans. What she also discussed, and which whetted the appetites of US finance capital considerably more than the prospect of shelling out more in loans that aren't likely to be repaid, was a little number called "debt-equity swaps".

Existing debt, under such schemes, neither gets repaid nor written off, but converted into titles of ownership to real existing assets. Finance capital is laying claim in a direct manner to the productive assets in the debtor countries.

The International Finance Corporation, an off-shoot of the World Bank, is the most rapidly expanding of all the so-called aid bodies; its function is to promote private investment in developing countries. Recent expansion of its functions have included participation to raise the operations of developing country stock exchanges to the level of those of the imperialist countries, and to foster and promote debt-equity swaps.

The debt crisis was analysed in detail in *The Leninist* Nos 2-3. We identified it in terms of Marx's analysis of crisis, as a feature typical of the period preceding crisis, where the creation of fictitious capital, ie claims to capital that are not linked directly to productive assets, expands enormously in attempts, in the final analysis, to stave off crisis.

Debt-equity swaps are no solution in themselves, although they represent a further stretching of the credit system. They are likely, what is more, to deepen class contradictions within the debtor countries.

What Lever and Huhne fear most, pressure from below in debtor countries in favour of a default, is more likely rather than less in the face of wholesale take-over of industries by foreign capital.

Lever and Huhne may be losing sleep over such scenarios. Leninists, on the other hand, take a different view. Debt-equity swaps, like all other 'solutions', can only ease one contradiction at the expense of worsening others. It is the system, and not government policies, which generated the debt crisis. And it is the system, and not government policies, which will have to be changed if it is to be solved.

Brian Curran

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Marching for Kinnock

1986
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Jarrow 86 marchers - used by Kinnock

KINNOCK is cynically using the marchers on Jarrow 86 and all unemployed workers. He looks upon them as a cheap source of PR to be used against the Tories and to up Labour's ratings. Because he knows unemployment looks like being the main issue at the next general election he enthuses about the march, and his party desperately promotes it in order to cultivate the image of "the party of jobs".

No wonder his advisors are "alarmed" that despite Jarrow 86 their polls still show that half the electorate simply do not believe Labour would dramatically reduce unemployment. Is this because the stench of lies and broken promises from the last Labour government still lingers on?

Certainly many will not have forgotten it driving down the wages of the lowest paid, introducing YOPs (the forerunner of YTS) and presiding over a doubling of unemployment.

Of course, Kinnock is out to manage, not fight, the system which causes unemployment — just as all previous Labour governments have done. And as today that system is crisis ridden, all he can promise (not deliver) is one million jobs in two years. In other words he makes no bones about the continuation of mass unemployment.

To cover his tracks, he, along with *Marxism Today's* favourite

Swedish 'Marxist' Goran Therborn, offers class consensus along the lines of Sweden, Norway, Japan, Austria or Switzerland. Yet it is obvious to all who seriously look at these countries that, far from contradicting the general law of capitalist accumulation, their supposed low rates of unemployment are misleading, temporary or often simply a sham.

The truth is that only by organising production with socialist planning can unemployment be made a thing of the past. And this is only possible after the working class has seized power and built its own social order on the ruins of the capitalist state.

Unfortunately, socialist talking left Labour politicians are objectively little different from Kinnock. Why? Because those, like Scargill, Heffer and Hatton, who look to the capitalist state, its parliament, laws and democracy to bring socialism tie themselves to the very system they claim to oppose and therefore to the continuation of one of its inevitable features — unemployment.

That is why *The Leninist* — which stands for the smashing of the capitalist state — has established a militant campaign to end unemployment. The Unemployed Workers Charter does not look to the next general election and the dubious prospect of 'the next

Labour government' but action in the here and now.

It rightly says: March for work, not Kinnock. That is why our militants have agitated for the setting up of UWC groups in all the towns and cities the Jarrow 86 march passed through. Indeed they are fighting to lay the foundations of a mighty national unemployed workers movement run by the unemployed themselves (and that means with recallable and elected officers). Only such a movement can force concessions from the capitalists and their government, whether it be Tory, Alliance or Labour.

The unemployed have little faith in the Labour leaders who are manipulating the Jarrow 86 marchers; and certainly they voice no interest in being used as cannon fodder for the 'next Labour government'. They certainly want to go beyond the Unemployed Workers Centres, which are often nothing more than non-political tea and sympathy drop-ins run by government paid appointees. Because of this the way is clear for the day when the unemployed organise themselves and begin to fight for a really worthwhile future.

If you would like to get in touch with the Unemployed Workers' Charter then phone Mark Fischer on 01-431 3135, or write to BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX



UWC petition - one more nearer the Nov 2 10,000 target

Fighting unemployment

THE Unemployed Workers Charter is putting the case for a real fight against unemployment against the Jarrow 86 jamboree. In each of the 23 towns and cities Jarrow 86 is staging its elect Kinnock show, UWC supporters have been urging the unemployed to join the UWC and lay the foundations for a national unemployed workers movement. We spoke to Dave Rhys, a leading UWC activist, about Jarrow 86, the plans for the UWC and what sort of reception it was getting.

The Leninist: Firstly, tell us about the initial reaction the UWC got from the organisers of Jarrow 86.

Dave Rhys: They were very aggressive. On the very first day in Jarrow, as we were giving out leaflets around the march, Labour Party stewards made it quite clear that if we were going to be a regular feature on their march, then they would seriously consider kicking our heads in!

The Leninist: Did this deter you?

Dave Rhys: No. Of course not. In fact, we have actually been encouraged by their aggressive approach. The hacks who have organised this stuntish march realise that they are in fact offering nothing to the unemployed; that they are just using them to get a scab into Number 10 who will do nothing to end mass unemployment. That's why they have such a 'hands off — or you're going to get a pasting' attitude to us: they realise how weak and unconvincing their 'alternative' actually is.

The Leninist: What sort of a response have you got from unemployed workers themselves?

Dave Rhys: We have found a ready response to our propaganda: a

lot of unemployed workers, particularly the youth, are sick and tired of the promise of a job in the 'never never'. They want action now. That's why UWC exists, and that's why all the threats and the slanders and intimidations won't make us go away.

The Leninist: How would you say Jarrow 86 and the UWC differ in their approaches to unemployment?

Dave Rhys: The organisers of Jarrow 86 want to win the next general election for Kinnock, we want to end unemployment. Our approach therefore, is totally opposed to that of the Jarrow 86 organisers. They seem to just want to treat the unemployed as walk on/walk off extras in a glossy elect Kinnock production. As far as they are concerned, Kinnock is the 'star' and no one is allowed to interfere with his glory. By our existence and actions we have shown the Labour Party organisers of Jarrow 86 they can't get away with using the unemployed in this way.

Despite all the threats, we will organise the unemployed to end unemployment. Once the unemployed have confidence, they will be able to really shake Thatcher and brush aside the fake and feeble alternatives like Kinnock.

The Leninist: How has this manifested itself on the Jarrow 86 march?

Dave Rhys: Our differing approaches have been shown clearly in the attitude to workers in struggle. Jarrow 86 has no democracy. It is a Labour Party pre-election stunt. In contrast the UWC has, despite our very limited resources, gone out to link the struggles of the unemployed with that of employed workers. For

instance, we went out of our way to involve mechanics in the Durham NUM who were on strike as we were passing through their area. And it was the UWC which contacted striking bus workers in Middlesbrough. The Jarrow 86 organisers ignored them. It's been the same all the way down.

The Leninist: Jarrow 86 is a one off. As you say it aims to promote Neil Kinnock, not end unemployment. But what plans has the UWC got for the future?

Dave Rhys: Big plans. We want to link up the unemployed workers at present organised in Unemployed Workers' Centres. We want to get all unemployed workers organised and fighting. We want to transform the unemployed into a mighty auxiliary army of the workers' movement, which can be mobilised to fight alongside workers in struggle, like the miners or the printers. After all, when these workers fight for their jobs and rights, they are also fighting on behalf of unemployed workers like us.

We want to unite with them to end unemployment. A step towards this must be integrating the unemployed workers' organisations into the trade union movement. We want to see organisations, like local UWC groups, represented on trades councils and a national unemployed organisation with a seat on the TUC. The trade union movement must take up the challenge of unemployment. Its backing of YTS and other slave labour schemes must stop. It must support the organisation of a national unemployed workers movement. The unemployed are fed up with being treated as Labour Party pawns — we want to fight.

Support the UWC contingent on the Jarrow 86 demonstration in London on November 2. Fight for work not Kinnock! Rally with banners at 1.30pm Hyde Park.