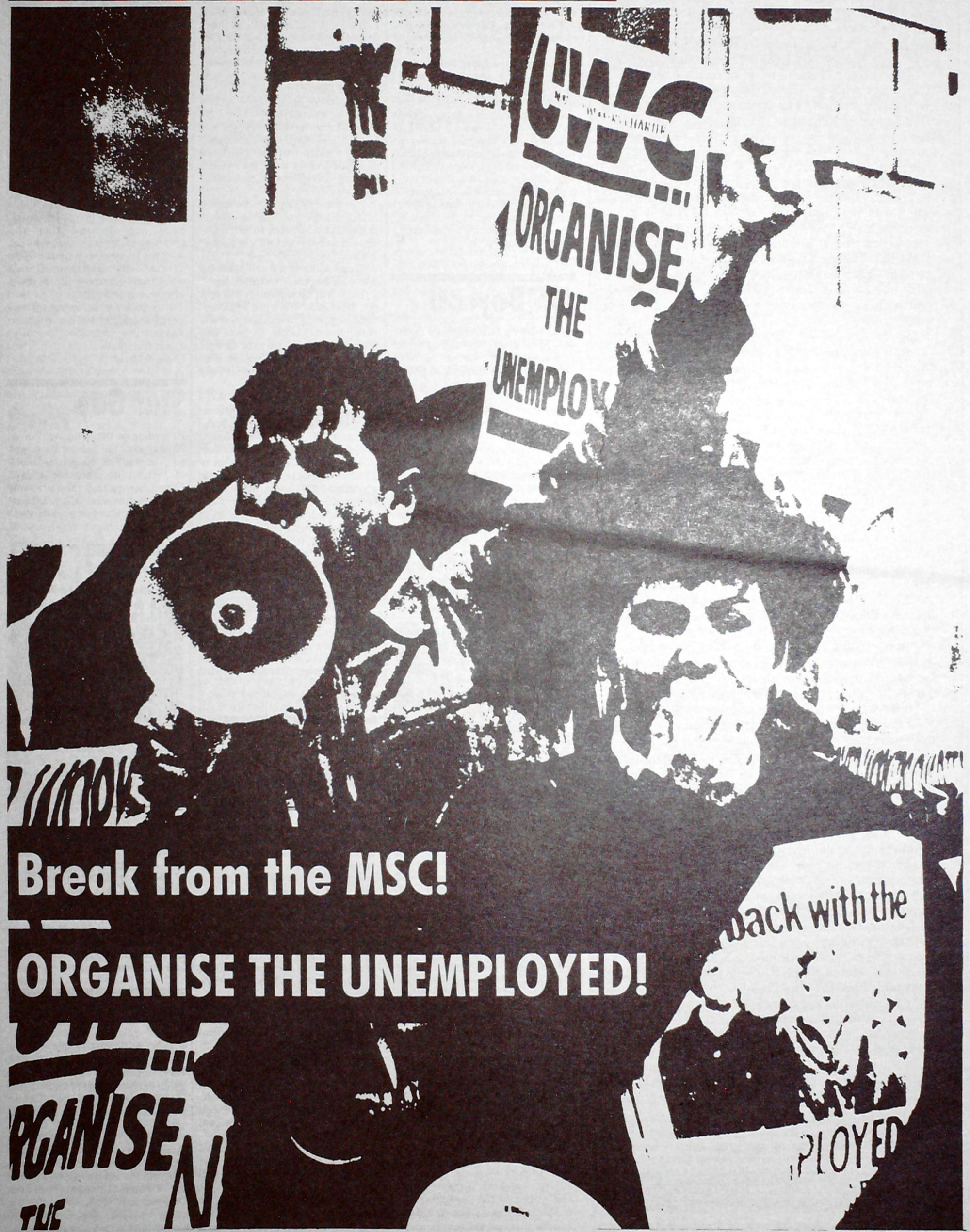


General Election  
Supplement

Issue 52 July 17 1987 30p

# The LENINIST

LSD Alliance p2  
Morning Star p4&5  
Ireland p6&7  
Mike Banda p11



**Break from the MSC!**

**ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED!**

**ORGANISE**

**THE**

back with the

UNEMPLOYED



IT IS important to dissect, to analyse and to understand the changing fortunes of the parties of bourgeois politics. But we have no interest in taking sides. As far as the interests of the working class are concerned the leaders of these parties can all go hang.

This is the communist viewpoint. We are not out to wield influence within the bourgeoisie but to wield influence against the bourgeoisie. We must, in other words, fight for working class political independence from the bourgeoisie and all its parties. This is a precondition for socialism.

Most in our communist movement would say they agree with us. The orthodoxy of some, however, is superficial. There are those, such as the CCGers and the Straight Leftists, who think that the only realistic path open for the working class is to support Labour – the bourgeois party of the working class, as Lenin said.

But there are others who have gone beyond the bourgeois politics of the official labour movement. They want to influence the bourgeois establishment. Who are we talking about? Why, Martin Jacques and his crew, naturally.

While CCGers and Straight Leftists take comfort from Labour's modest revival, Jacques must be in a fit of despair. The LSD Alliance did poorly, it is in crisis; the two Davids are at each other's throats.

Jacques and his right Eurocommunists put their political shirts on the tactical voting gamble. They thought the election would be a damn close run thing. They saw this as their opportunity to win the forthcoming 40th Congress of our Party. So, with the glare of TV lights and the flash of press cameras they launched the tactical voting ploy.

At the end of the day they were confident that, in spite of the eruption of protest it would cause in the Party, they would be the winners. The Labour Party would do badly. There would, they therefore calculated, be an evenly divided parliamentary opposition.

They did not think tactical voting would be taken up by what they call the left, which could be piously blamed for Thatcherism getting its third term by default. The 'left' Eurocommunists would, they reckoned, be easily trounced. They had never understood the *Marxism Today* analysis of Thatcherism, the argument would go. The right Euros would therefore take the 40th Congress on a wave of despair about Thatcher's victory and capture the post of general secretary for Jacques himself. At least, that was the theory.

Those who construct a political strategy based on the swings and roundabouts of bourgeois politics – whether it be the Labour Party or the LSD – deserve all they get. The marginal decline of the LSD vote and the marginal rise in Labour's has sent the entire Jacques project careering off the rails.

Has this healed the split in the camp of Eurocommunism? No, it could not. There will be countless more fallings out in this petty bourgeois cancer on communism. The argument about tactical voting still rages in Euro circles. But the 'left' Euros have the advantage for the moment and are playing with the idea of bringing the *Marxism Today* project under control.

The very attempt to do so could well see Martin Jacques carry out what he has always threatened – to do a Tony Chater. He will walk out of the Party taking his *Marxism Today* with him.

As far as we are concerned Jacques can do what he wants. But it has been the sacrifices and hard work of ordinary Party members which has financed *Marxism Today*. It is not *his* journal. It is ours.

The Editor

## LETTERS

### Pro-Tory?

In the article "General Election – Fight Whoever Wins" (*The Leninist*, Issue 51), Jack Conrad actually quotes Harold Macmillan in order to back up his arguments. What incredible theoretical bankruptcy! To use the sayings of this aristocrat, imperialist parasite who in his time waded knee-deep in the blood of the proletariat. What tailism! What sickening pro-Toryism! What stupidity!

How can our Party hope to be reformed in the white-hot furnaces of unwavering Marxism-Leninism, when such pathetic vestiges of spineless capitulation to bourgeois values are so evident?

I trust that this was merely a temporary lapse and that we can look forward to a swift return to your paper's usual standard of unflinching and remorseless commitment to the working class in their heroic struggle against the crushing iron heel of monopoly capitalism.

Lynne Mountford  
Catford

### JTS Boycott

After reading Jim Arnison's "Boycott JTS" article and the editorial of the *Morning Star* of 22 May 1987, I felt that the crucial point, that JTS is only the latest in a long list of slave labour schemes designed to harass the unemployed off the register, was sadly lacking. YTS, Community Programme, Restart etc. serve the same purpose as JTS – to victimise the unemployed. We should not view one scheme as worse than another (and therefore some as more acceptable than others). Unemployed workers must fight against all such schemes – and remember, that fight goes on regardless of which party holds office. After all, we remember the Youth Opportunities Programme brought in by the last Labour government.



The *Morning Star* is quite right to call for the TUC to give a lead opposing these measures, but what should unemployed workers do when the TUC doesn't and indeed joins the onslaught against us when its General Secretary talks of "supporting and building" these schemes?

Unemployed workers should lead their own fightback. An organisation modelled on the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the '20s and '30s is what we need. Organised, the unemployed would lead a mighty fightback.

Anne Jones  
East London UWC

### UWC Lobby

On September 8 this year, the Unemployed Workers Charter is planning to lobby the TUC's annual conference in Blackpool with two slogans: 'Break from the MSC! Organise the Unemployed!'

Although the TUC has decided

to boycott the JTS slave labour scheme, TUC representatives still sit on the Manpower Services Commission, the body that administers YTS and all the other con-trick 'training' schemes of the Tories. We, the unemployed, have got a right to expect better from those who lead the working class movement and we plan to demand our rights in September!

We will be taking one hundred unemployed people from inner London to Blackpool in two coaches and we are also hoping to get participation in the action from other areas of high unemployment. Each of the 100 unemployed will be a fighting representative of 40,000 others on the dole – UB 40,000 we will tell them!

In Blackpool on the day, we will hand in a petition of 10,000 signatures in support of our two main demands and we will hold a fringe meeting for delegates to explain our case.

We are writing to as many organisations in the workers' movement as we can to get sponsorship and support for our lobby. We need your help!

1. Sponsor the lobby and publicise it to your members and affiliates.
2. Each seat on the coach will cost the UWC £5. We need organisations like yours to sponsor as many unemployed people as you can afford at this price to make sure we can take as many unemployed as possible (employed supporters will be paying their own way).
3. Take extra copies of the UWC's petition calling on the TUC to 'Break from the MSC! Organise the Unemployed!'
4. Nominate two of your members or supporters to come with us to Blackpool. (Details of coach and accommodation arrangements will be available very soon). Send names and details to us as soon as possible.
5. Take bulk orders of the UWC's paper, *Unemployed Organiser*, first issue published in July. This includes detailed plans for the September 8 protest.

The Tories' brutal attacks on the unemployed must not go unanswered by the leadership of the working class movement. Support the UWC's lobby and help us build a fighting alternative for the unemployed!

Mark Fischer

### Swan song?

As a result of the conference of representatives of approximately 100 organisations of the unemployed which was held on 27th April 1987 in the House of Commons, it was agreed that every effort must be made to unite the unemployed nationally in their struggle for their right to work.

The national steering committee and the sponsors (MPs, MEPs and local organisers of the unemployed) urge all local organisations to carry out the suggestions of the conference:

1. that area standing committees of labour and unemployed organisations be set up to unite the unemployed at a local level;
2. that local authorities be forced to turn their attention to all the jobs that need to be done in their area, eg. housing, schools, hospitals, sports and recreation facilities, environmental needs, etc;
3. that the local mayor be asked to call a town's meeting of the unemployed and those concerned with unemployment, in order that pressure be brought to bear on the authorities responsible for taking

action to make it possible for the unemployed to do these useful jobs at proper rates of pay.

The national steering committee is determined that there should be local unity and efforts made to organise the unemployed, both at the local level, and nationally, on a non-sectarian basis. We want to assist in building regional organisations of unemployed workers with regional steering committees, all steering committees to have representation on a national steering committee. In this way we hope to encourage and assist the formation of a national organisation of the unemployed, which will support local and regional demonstrations of unemployed workers with their demands for real jobs at trade union rates of pay.

All this activity should lead up to a national demonstration of hundreds of thousands in London's Hyde Park, with marchers coming from all parts of Britain. The unemployed and those who support them should march on parliament and demand that the government make available at once the investment required to do all the work needed in Britain which would employ all of those who are out of work.

It is time for us to get off our knees and stand for our Right to Work.

Yours fraternally,  
Ernie Roberts

### Star Gay

According to the *Morning Star* of 28 May 1987 the Labour Party was so "shocked" at the prison record of "school governor for a day" Gary Cherney that they promptly gave him the sack – the role being too 'important' for a jailbird to play.



On this precedent VI Lenin, Bertrand Russell, George Lansbury, Harry Pollitt and even our own Mick Hicks, who all have done or are doing time, would be deemed 'unsuitable' for the post.

Come off it Labour Party, the reason Gary Cherney has been sacked is because he is an 'open' and 'practising' homosexual.

The screaming banner headlines of the *Sun* relish in pointing this out in true 'anti-pervert' style – it is what we expect, but for the *Morning Star* to allow the Labour Party to pull the wool over our eyes is another thing.

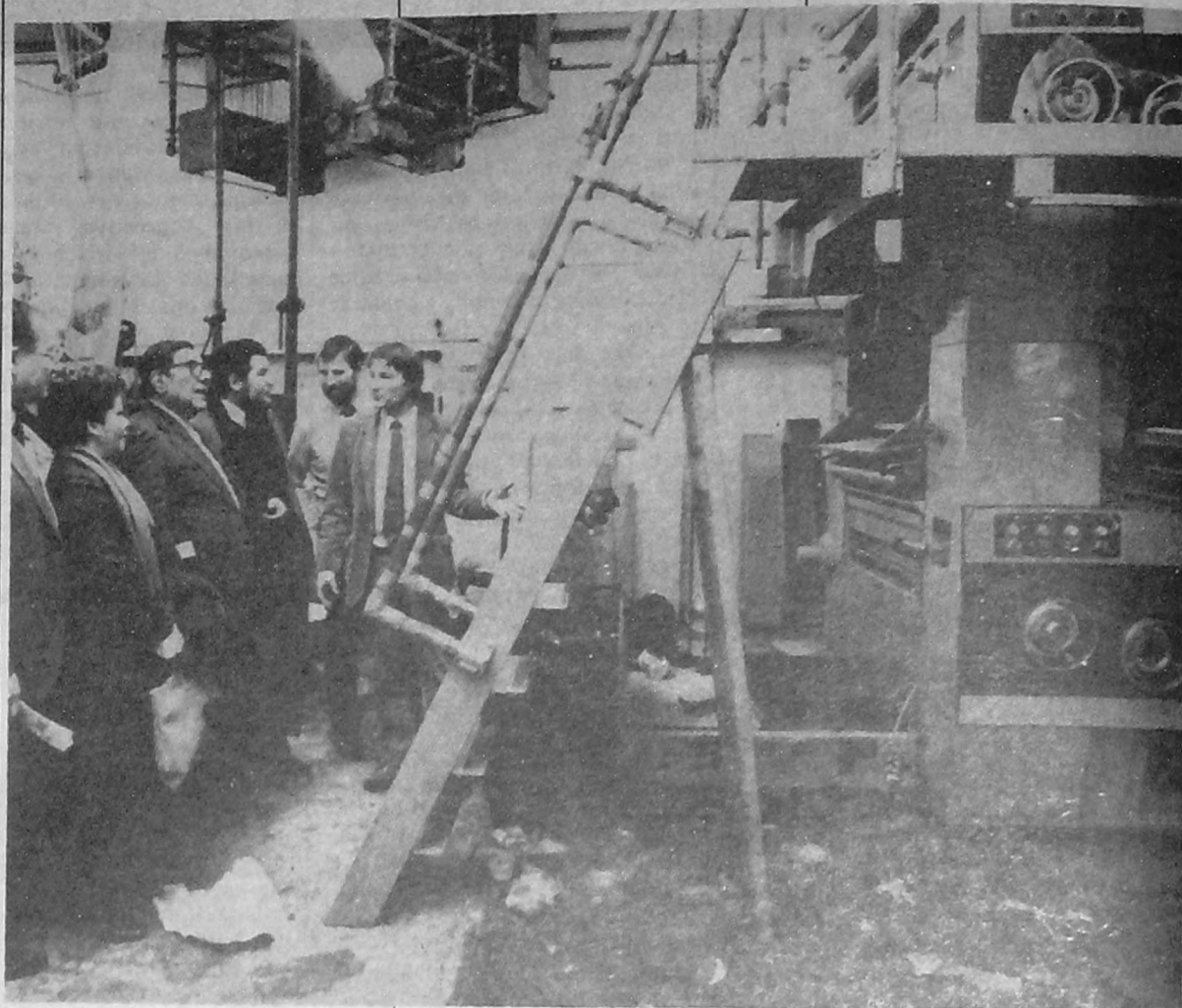
Martin James

### Iran

People of Iran, people of the world. At the end of April the barbaric regime of Khomeini once again executed tens of Iranian political prisoners whose only 'crime' was defending freedom, peace and justice and their loyalty to their people and revolutionary ideals. Among the executed prisoners was Masoud Ansari, a well known militant and the alternative member of the Central Committee of our organisation, who, since the autumn of 1986, was subjected to



The Morning Star has leased its press and sold its principles. Black uprisings in South Africa are okay, at home they are "horrible and cruel". The ANC would never say "it is right that the police investigate thoroughly" a neckless killing. The violence of the oppressed is often blind and messy. But this is no reason to attack it



# PPPS AGM

## THE GERBIL AND THE BUZZ-SAW

LET'S FACE FACTS, members of the Communist Campaign Group: *The Leninist* has won the argument. This year's AGMs of the Peoples' Press Printing Society (the cooperative which owns the *Morning Star*) illustrated in a particularly sharp way the truth of our warning that if you nail your flag to the mast of an opportunist like Tony Chater you would be on a slippery slope not only out of the CPGB, but to the right.

The majority who lined up with Chater back in 1982, thinking that support for his *Morning Star* UDI was a short cut to beating the Euros have now forfeited any right they may once have had to call themselves principled communists. The *Morning Star* Management Committee has led them and its CCG sidekick into defending the most undemocratic, most dishonest and most uncommunitarian practices.

Indeed the method chosen by the Management Committee to handle those who disagreed with its line at this year's AGMs can only bring shame and infamy to the banner of communism through its outrageous bureaucratic heavy handedness.

That the vast majority of those attending the AGMs went along with, did not question and indeed applauded the Management Committee's methods just goes to show that those around the CCG are in danger of splitting the Communist Party to form a new 'party' not merely with the same name, rules and programme but with the same fear of genuine open and unrestricted debate. Those who will suffer from this will not be supporters of *The Leninist* but members of the CCG 'party'.

The future of the CCG 'party' as an anti-democratic, bureaucratic and right wing version of the NCP was fully revealed at this year's AGMs of the PPPS.

So how do things stand with the *Morning Star*? The picture which emerged is like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Marshall Chater is dispiritedly marching his army away from the class battle. His army is still sizeable but stragglers are constantly falling away and the winter of a third term for Thatcher is setting in.

Alongside shocking new evidence of the rightist nature of those who manage the *Star* and CCG, was a consistent picture of decline and disintegration from every part of the country.

Circulation of the paper itself is

down 1,000 on the same period last year. The much-vaunted, never fully explained, so-called 'survival plan' is, as we shall see, in absolute tatters.

Unsurprisingly, the attendance in the three meetings in Glasgow, Manchester and London was significantly down on previous years. In total, just 1,227 shareholders attended, compared with well over 3,000 at its peak a few years ago.

This reflects firstly the fact that this year's AGMs were boycotted by the supporters of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, so what was presented as the Euro threat had been removed. Not being willing to travel many miles simply to cast a vote in Chater's plebiscite, not being inspired by the rightist track being plodded by the *Morning Star*/CCG leadership, combined with a resentment at being so blatantly and undemocratically manipulated into being foot soldiers for Tony Chater, induced many, such as the leftist CCG group in South Wales, to stay at home this year.

While this was certainly the main factor it should also be noted that there has been a quiet but steady and significant haemorrhaging from the ranks of supporters of the *Star* and some elements are already toying with the idea of deserting the sinking ship.

### Rally

The Management Committee attempted to turn this year's AGMs into Labour Party electoral rallies. The AGM of a cooperative was thus held under the banner 'Clear Out the Tories! Vote Labour In!'.

Now, perhaps we are being a little pedantic, but as far as we are aware, at business meetings - which are what AGMs are supposed to be - the shareholders decide what they want to discuss by submitting motions. They have never had a 'theme' imposed on them from above before. Fun parks have 'themes', village fetes even, but surely not the democratic Annual General Meeting of the shareholders of "the only working class daily newspaper in Britain."

By announcing this 'theme' innovation, the hacks who run the *Star* were signalling their intention to ruthlessly exclude politics or debate from the meetings. They wanted to praise Kinnock, not engage in democratic debate. Thus in the run up to the AGM they set about systematically, and totally without a hint of scruple or ho-

nesty, disbarring resolutions and then amendments.

At least four resolutions and six amendments that we knew of bit the dust. The Management Committee treated its shareholders with such utter contempt, with such a cynical, bureaucratic disregard for any principle of democracy or openness in the workers movement, that it almost takes one's breath away.

For instance, the comrades at the *Star* actually ruled out of order a resolution which was almost identical in content to one they had allowed in previous years! The Proletarian sect has spent the last three years offering unity talks with the *Morning Star*. Stupid, we know, but as it was submitted in the name of a shareholder it should have been freely discussed and voted on. This year it was not. The Management Committee of the *Morning Star* disbarred the resolution, despite the fact that it had been discussed at previous AGMs!

Similar brutal treatment was meted out to the resolution submitted by Mark Lewis. This motion called on the *Star* to open its pages to "all ...groups and tendencies in the communist movement, ie *Straight Left (Communist), The Leninist and Marxism Today/Euro-communist*." It also called on the Management Committee to exert its influence to "avert any moves towards what would be a disastrous split in the Communist Party, especially those disguised under the banner of 'reconstituting' the Party"

In a tersely worded note to Lewis, Mary Rosser for the Management Committee claimed that the resolution was "out of order" because it urged the Management Committee to "exert its influence in an area which is outside the business of the Society and beyond its role as a committee."

What sickening hypocrisy! We ask the Management Committee, we ask all supporters of the *Morning Star*: Isn't the Communist Party part of the broad labour movement? Of course it is! Is the broad labour movement beyond the role of the Management Committee? Of course not!

Mike Hicks and other leading CCGers are correct when they say that the decline of our Party has had seriously detrimental effects on the broad labour movement. Surely then a split in the Communist Party is very much the 'business' of the PPPS, just as would be a split in the TUC, or the



Labour Party.

If the Management Committee considers it is beyond its brief, its representatives should explain its case to the shareholders. Let them judge whether or not the problems of the CPGB are outside the business of the *Morning Star*.

We all know why this resolution was ruled out of order. The opportunists who sit atop the Management Committee have aided and abetted an unprincipled split in our Party, a split supported in the columns of the *Morning Star*. Yet they are not even honest enough to answer criticism. Instead they hide their aims through bureaucratic ploys.

In this cynical manner the Management Committee succeeded in killing all but two of the resolutions and all of the amendments submitted to the AGM.

Even with most of the politics safely out of the way the Management Committee did not succeed in turning the AGMs into pliant rallies for Neil Kinnock. It could not hide the truth that the *Morning Star* and its politics are in crisis.

They faced shareholders with their so-called 'survival plan' in tatters. When this project of buying a £1.5 million press in order to print the paper out of crisis was first announced at the 1983 AGM, we made the simple point that the paper could never survive on the basis of substituting "commercial work" for its historic link with the Communist Party.

Now, four years later, the paper is in deeper financial trouble. As to the new press, it is there, but it is so expensive to run that the *Star* had to be printed by the SWP's press. In fact the Farringdon Road press is being leased to a capitalist firm, which promises it will in the future print the *Star* on its excess capacity. In other words, the 'survival plan' has been turned upside down and inside out. The predictions of *The Leninist* have proved correct. The Management Committee had to face shareholders with this record of decline and failure. It also had to defend itself against attacks on its shamefully chauvinist and opportunist politics.

### Low key affairs

Undoubtedly, the two sectional AGMs were low-key, boring affairs, which didn't even succeed on the level of rallies. In Glasgow and Manchester those *Morning Star* supporters who spoke simply presented variations on how

important it was that the Labour Party be elected on June 11 and, as almost every speaker put it, to "get out there" and sell more *Morning Stars*.

The minds of most at the AGM, however, were so encrusted in stodgy official labour movement reformist orthodoxy, so hide-bound by their leaders' brown-nosed adulation of the trade union bureaucracy, that they hate to even discuss politics, let alone communist politics. In Glasgow the attitude of the average CCGer to political debate was illustrated when the two resolutions came to be moved. The vast bulk of the hall simply rose to their feet and shuffled out. They had come and voted, and all that remained was to go quietly home. No controversy, no debate... London was a little different. Right at the start of the debate on the main report, Tom McCormack, a supporter of the Unemployed Workers' Charter, opened a whole can of worms when he denounced the *Star's* sympathetic interview with Gusty Spence, the Ulster Volunteer Force butcher. As Tom pointed out, the problems with the drop in circulation of the paper were not primarily technical but were related to such horrendous politics. As he put it, "how can I even think of selling that paper in my area, Kilburn, an area full of Irish workers?"

Other speakers on the main report mauled the Management Committee for its interview of the UVF murderer Spence, others for its lack of glasnost concerning the non-survival of the 'survival plan', for attempting to split the Party, for its uncritical backing of the Labour Party's election campaign, for its inability to stand independently of the TUC on the issue of unemployment, and so on. In other words, in London there was a real debate that pulled no punches in telling the Management Committee what communists thought of it!

Those CCGers who attempted to defend the *Star* found themselves having to retreat further and further to the right in order to do so. Few mentioned the fact that the 'survival plan' had been declared officially dead in the Management Committee's main report, or if they did, put a brave face on it by claiming the plan was "flexible".

Mary Davis simply carried on as if nothing had happened. The woman who will warrant a footnote in the history of the British revolution for her comment, almost majestic in its stupidity, that the *Morning Star* was "today's *Iskra*", concentrated her comments on... yes, jumble sales and 'getting out there'.

Other CCGers who followed her explained the criticisms of the *Star* in terms of the infiltration of the workers' movement by agents provocateurs and bewailed the lack of "unity... now, above all" (ie on the eve of a general election); they wanted to have a safe, back-slapping rally for the Labour Party.

Some however showed either the most subtle of senses of irony, or the most gross idiocy. In one breath they complained (quite rightly) about the gerrymandering and undemocratic practices all too rife in our Communist Party and with the next they speculated on how to disbar critics from future AGMs! The puzzled expressions of some in the audience pointed to the fact that for some CCGers there is perhaps still hope.

Mr (Modesty) Photis Lysandrou, a man who would put any principle in cold storage to become the general secretary of something, was reduced here to a blustering shadow of former years. He clumsily avoided all of the biting criticisms of the *Star* and attempted to deflect the storm into an attack on

the Executive Committee of the Communist Party.

The problem was, of course, that in contrast to previous years, the supporters of the Executive Committee simply were not there. Not to be put off, Photis desperately cast his eye around and spotted a lonely comrade Chris Myant, editor of the Party's dull *7 Days*, quietly making notes at the back of the hall.

Photis attempted to raise the hackles of the shareholders against the Euros, as in previous years, by shaking his fist and promising all sorts of dire consequences to comrade Myant and his ilk unless they repented; but the performance lacked credibility and raised only a feeble cheer. (He did, however, elicit groans of despair and heads-held-in-hands from some on the platform, notably Chater and George Wake, who saw their carefully laid plans to turn the AGM in London into a rally, as they had succeeded in doing in other areas, being screwed up by everybody, supporters and non-supporters alike).

In fact, Photis' performance this year was sadly lack-lustre. While bemoaning the "mischief" caused by the critics of the Management Committee in the meeting, he then went on to admit that at least one of their criticisms was justified when he clumsily conceded that the 'survival plan' was "not viable".

Tom Durkin was more erudite in his defence of the Management Committee, and consequently more explicit in prostration before Labourism in general and Kinnock in particular. Responding to the condemnation of the *Star's* uncritical support for Kinnock's platform coming from communists in the hall, Durkin laid it on the line: "If you say forget about Kinnock, you're saying forget about the whole Labour and trade union movement."

Durkin's cynical manipulation of the despair of many in the workers' movement would be bad enough coming from an out and out Labourite, but this man calls himself a leading communist.

When he states that Kinnock the scab, the cold-war hater of the Soviet Union, the backer of the state's attacks on gays, blacks and the miners, that this bastard is the "Labour and trade union movement", and to attack one is to attack the other, he in fact signals his own personal surrender as a principled working class politician. More than that, he and the political trend he is a spokesman for wave the white flag to Kinnock and the openly pro-capitalist right of the movement. It was sad, and sickening to watch.

Rattled by criticism the CCG tops were; but in danger of being outvoted they were not. In the end, the main report of the Management Committee, a report which admitted that the 'survival plan' for the paper was dead, a report that passed over in silence the back-door deals that have been struck at the *Star* in order to keep its head above water, was passed by 1,051 to 34.

Interestingly, all of the CCG speakers at the London meeting expressed their paranoia about divisions, even if their practical alternative was unity with Kinnock. This hysteria expressed their manifest fear of the future of the class battles of workers in Britain.

### Shame

The number of votes received for the resolutions that managed to sneak through to the floor of the AGMs should be the cause of intense shame to every CCGer with even a hint of revolutionary honour.

The first was moved by Alison Davies, a supporter of the left-cen-

trist grouping, Proletarian. While we had certain criticisms of it, the resolution did put forward something approaching a reasonably principled position on Sinn Fein and the attitude of communists towards Ireland. Because of this we urged critical support. Unfortunately, but very revealingly, it only managed to win a pathetic 144, with 960 shareholders actually voting against it!

Worse still was in store for the resolution submitted by Stan Keable on class war prisoners. This was a completely principled resolution which pulled no punches. It specifically denounced the *Star's* chauvinist reporting of the events surrounding the Broadwater Farm uprising, and in particular its claim that the killing of PC Blakelock was "horrible and cruel" and that "it is right that the police investigate thoroughly such a murder". This, the resolution correctly stated, was a "disgrace".

Those black and white youth framed for the 'murder' of Blakelock should be recognised, along with Irish republican prisoners and those miners still in jail, as class war prisoners.

This resolution, scandalously, received just 48 votes, with 1063 shareholders voting against!

Mary Rosser, for the Management Committee, in calling for a vote against the Keable resolution, naturally claimed that the *Star's* reporting of Broadwater Farm had been exemplary. To back this up she told us that Lord Gifford had been very impressed. The virtual absence of black faces in the audience was an eloquent indictment of the *Morning Star's* 'exemplary' reporting. One need not speculate about which way the black youth of Broadwater Farm community would have voted - but, of course, they were not there.

Rosser recommended that the meeting vote down the Keable resolution because "rioting" does not have anything to do with class politics.

Monstrously, the leaders of Proletarian went along with this and even played the 'red-baiters' by branding it as emanating from the "so-called *Leninist* newspaper".

Alison Davies, the Proles' metronome speaker at the PPPS AGMs - a woman rumoured to have such a fast and agile mind that she heckles from prepared notes - denounced the urban uprisings of black and unemployed youth in much the same vein as the Management Committee's Mary Rosser.

This provoked the wry comment from the mover of the Keable resolution: "So Proletarian and the Management Committee have at last found something to agree on! You're not so different after all: perhaps you should get together!"

He went on to demolish the arguments of the opportunists of the Management Committee and the Proletarian sectlet. As he pointed out, when the oppressed lash out against their oppressors, their violence lacks discipline and is all too often rather "messy". As an example of this, he cited the so-called 'necklace' killings in South Africa. And yet, what is the attitude of the ANC and the South African Communist Party to these actions by unorganised militant black youth?

Do they condemn them as "horrible and cruel"? Do we read in the pages of *Umsebenzi*, the SACP's illegal paper that "it is right" that the South African security forces "should investigate thoroughly such a murder"? Can anyone even imagine the ANC and SACP adopting such a horrendous position in South Africa today, he asked?

Communists, it was argued, must, despite our recognition of the ineffectual and blind nature of much of the violence of the

oppressed, stand unequivocally with the oppressed against the oppressors.

"Be consistent", he told the AGM. "If we support and refuse to condemn the violence of the oppressed in South Africa, we should also defend it when it comes 'home' to the imperialist heartland itself and we see it on the streets of Britain."

He finished by stating the stark choice facing CCGers and *Morning Star* supporters. Either they could vote for the Keable resolution and "take sides with the oppressed", whether they be in the north of Ireland, South Africa or on the streets of London; or they could vote against and take sides with Lord Gifford "and probably quite a few other peers of the realm. But if you do that, you won't be much of a communist."

Only 48 out of the 1,227 attending the AGMs had sufficient principle, had sufficient guts, to take a clear communist stand.

### Grim Indeed

The future for the *Morning Star* is grim indeed. The remorseless decline in the circulation of the paper will not be halted by the lame-brained and tired remedies presented as "initiatives" at any of the sectional meetings of the PPPS.

The real cause of the paper's lingering death has been its political demise as a revolutionary communist publication. The severing of the links with the Communist Party has merely accelerated a process already evident in its pages for many years.

The *Morning Star* must be judged coldly and harshly from the point of view of revolutionary proletarian politics. It is now wallowing in the Labourite swamp. Why do CCGers tolerate such a paper? The fact is that most of them get the paper they deserve. The average CCGer is woefully and stubbornly ignorant of basic Marxism, of events in world history and even of the history of our own world communist movement. They are self-justifying. Most of them lack even a spark of revolutionary will or determination and that is how the CCG leadership wants them to be.

Asked to justify why the *Morning Star* gives sympathetic write-ups to loyalist paramilitary butchers like Gusty Spence, why it lines up with the racists of the Metropolitan police who attack the youth of Broadwater Farm, why they are defending a programme, the *BRS*, that most of them voted against in 1978, they resort to the most lame excuses.

True there are some who come close to Leninism on issues such as Ireland. Unfortunately they lack the courage of their own convictions. While writers of *The Leninist* are attacked for being conspirators and secretive, merely for observing basic security measures, these comrades are living a lie.

They defend the *BRS* and refuse to debate with those in the Communist Party who have not sold their soul in order to get a sniff of what was imagined to be the 'big-time'. Even those with the most left pretensions, as in South Wales, fight shy of debating with us.

As to the run of the mill CCGer, when confronted with Leninist ideas most scuttle away as fast as their legs will carry them. They have nothing with which to protect themselves against the ideological mauling that our ideas give them.

When a few are foolhardy enough to try, the mismatched nature of the contest makes it as painful to watch as a wrestling match between a gerbil and a buzz-saw: our victory is as inevitable and as crushingly conclusive as that. The argument, CCGer, has been won.

Ian Mahoney

AS PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISTS we see it as a duty to strive for clarity and unity between communists on a world scale. *The Leninist* believes that the talks between ourselves and the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) are a step towards this.

This article results from a visit by a *Leninist* delegation to the Six Counties of northern Ireland during the early part of June. The main purpose of our trip was to engage in discussions with comrades from the IRSP, the results of which are summarised in the joint *Leninist/IRSP* statement. We also met with others representing a range of views. This we did in order to enrich our understanding of the situation in Ireland and the tasks of communists.

Ireland, as someone once said, is the key to the British revolution. Generation after generation of Irish men and women have proven that they are not content to lie back and take the privilege of being loyal subjects of the British crown. This periodically creates serious problems for British imperialism. It definitely has a serious problem now.

The partition of the country was designed to keep Ireland as a whole under British domination. It created an inherently sectarian statelet in the Six Counties as part of the United Kingdom and this provided for the indirect political domination of a twenty-six county Free State which was totally locked into Britain economically.

In the words of James Connolly, partition created a "carnival of reaction" north and south. Britain successfully divided Ireland and divided its working class. It did not, however, resolve the Irish crisis.

In its most recent form, this crisis resurfaced in the Six Counties in the late '60s, when a revolutionary situation exploded. British imperialism could no longer rule in the old way through the Unionist Party and the nationalist masses were not prepared to be ruled by British imperialism. Popular resistance evolved through street demonstrations, to 'no go' areas and finally into a protracted urban guerrilla campaign by the IRA and Inla. Internment, 'Ulsterisation', 'normalisation', 'criminalisation', shoot to kill, Diplock courts and more have all been tried but no British government has been able to halt the 'Troubles'.

The latest attempt has been the Hillsborough Accord between London and Dublin. This agreement is a weapon in the war against the nationalist people of the Six Counties. Its aim is to broaden the basis of support for the sectarian statelet internally, by drawing sections of the Catholic middle class into active collaboration with the imperial power, and externally puts the Twenty-six County statelet into a more 'up front' position in the repression of Irish republicans.

While we view the Accord as being counter-revolutionary in nature, we would not just leave it there. Britain's need to draw in another state to stamp down on dissent within the 'United Kingdom' is indicative of the fragility of its positions. The Accord has dangers for imperialism. By drawing in the Twenty-six Counties there is a danger that, far from bringing peace to the north, the south will be sucked into the revolutionary whirlpool of the north. The Twenty-six Counties risks not just getting its fingers burnt with the Six Counties but being set aflame as the revolutionary situation becomes national. But it is not simply a question of waiting and hoping.

### No communist leadership

The situation in Ireland today is full of potential. In the north there has been a revolutionary situation in existence for over 15 years. In the south the economy is tottering and savage attacks on the working class are inevitable. The revolution is burrowing away and can break out any time. What Ireland needs is a Communist Party to see it to victory. Without such a party Ireland's people can never truly be free.

Is the Communist Party of Ireland - our CPGB's fraternal party - putting itself at the head of the revolutionary masses? Unfortunately not. Indeed our delegation to the Six Counties saw precious little evidence of it at all. When we called at its offices in Belfast the CPI was, it seems, out for the day.

In the last week's run up to the general election, with every party in Belfast fighting to keep Gerry Adams in or kick him out, there was not even one CPI poster putting its position. To all intents and purposes the CPI does not have an existence in the nationalist community. As a revolutionary party it is liquidated. This does not mean the CPI is irrelevant. It loyally follows 'the Soviet line'

and has a strong position in the trade union bureaucracy. High office in the trade union movement and links with the Soviet Union bring a certain prestige. Seats on ECs and being seen as the agent, or at least the ambassador, of a superpower can bring influence. Does the CPI use its prestige and potential influence for the cause of the revolution? No, it stands against the forces of revolution.

In the north the overwhelming majority of trade unionists are dominated by loyalism - a semi-fascist ideology - so the CPI's success in trade unions might seem to indicate a complete capitulation before bigotry. But no, this is not the case. Nonetheless there has been a complete capitulation before opportunism.

To achieve high office in the trade union bureaucracy the leadership of the CPI has had to keep the question of Irish reunification and the national oppression suffered by the Catholic population in the north well and truly in the background. Yet in the midst of a revolutionary situation which revolves around the national question the CPI comrades' bread and butter economism can only lead to the most monstrous and treacherous conclusions.

There are frequent denunciations of the armed struggle of the IRA and Inla. Indeed the republican movement used to be branded 'fascist' by the CPI. Now those who are fighting British imperialism are lectured by the CPI that the most progressive thing they could do is to surrender and lay down their arms.

To call a liberation movement, even one with deep seated petty bourgeois prejudices, 'fascist' is not only unscientific, it plays the imperialist game. As to the CPI's call for a return to normal politics, this is the advice of trade union officialdom, not the fraternal assessment of a party led by dedicated proletarian revolutionaries.

Given the fact of its craven political cowardice, and that in nationalist areas like the Divis flats and Ballymurphy unemployment runs at around 80% (those in employment here are more often than not in jobs on building sites, in bars and the like, and therefore outside the unions), it is not really surprising that the CPI, ensconced in its cosy niche in the trade union bureaucracy, has little or no influence in the nationalist working class.

As this is the section of the working class which is fighting British imperialism, which has embraced revolutionary politics and sees its struggle as being synonymous with that of the South African blacks, the peoples of Nicaragua and Palestine, the lack of any sort of base among the nationalist population is a damning indictment of the CPI.

Fearful of the unrespectable nationalist workers, they court instead the respectability of the non-existent middle ground. To prove it, the CPI denounces IRA and UVF members alike as "aristocrats of the gun" who "murder workers' unity." (*Unity*, August 9 1986) If these economic comrades stuck their noses out of their trade union offices far enough they might just see that there is no workers' unity in the Six Counties and there never has been. Only through a revolutionary struggle led by communists can workers' unity be made into more than an empty slogan.

In the hands of the CPI comrades it certainly is an empty slogan. It is the incantation of this slogan which is used to achieve the ostrich-like feat of seeing no revolutionary situation in the Six Counties. The CPI trade union officials are tolerated by the Protestant workers but only because they act as trade union officials and pose no threat to their privileged position relative to Catholics, who suffer three times the unemployment of Protestants and, where they work, do so in the lowest grade jobs.

Like its British counterparts, our CPGB right opportunists around comrade McLennan and our CCG right opportunists around Tony Chater, our CPI comrades can only piously call for Britain to draw up a 'Bill of Rights', for Britain to bring economic prosperity and for Britain to then name the date for its withdrawal. Comrades will be forgiven for being sceptical as to the viability of this eminently reformist project. British Imperialism has no intention of creating a Cuba on its doorstep.

We saw with our own eyes that the CPI's brand of opportunism consigns it to manifest irrelevance in the revolutionary conditions of the north. Trying to walk the tightrope between the forces of loyalism and republicanism, it just winds up being squeezed wafer thin by both, of no relevance to either. You cannot unite workers by ignoring what divides them. The CPI's politics provides it with a hidey-hole from reality, not a platform from which to fight.

The revolutionary masses in the Six Counties think of Sinn Fein and the IRA as their

organisations. This is a fact. They protect them, support them and join them.

### Republicanism

The IRA has survived all that British imperialism has thrown against it because it swims in a sea of sympathy. Its actions against the British state and its lackeys provoke widespread admiration. As to Sinn Fein its green, white and orange propaganda messages dominate nationalist Belfast and Derry. Margaret Thatcher can hardly have been delighted at the news that Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams held his West Belfast seat in the June 11 elections. It again proved that, far from being a bunch of terrorist godfathers, the republican movement has a mass base the CPI can only dream of.

Would that we in Britain had as many fine young working class people out campaigning on the streets for revolutionary politics as Sinn Fein had in West Belfast alone during the general election. They covered every available wall and hoarding with Sinn Fein murals and slogans, they stopped cars in the middle of the road to hand out Sinn Fein leaflets and stickers to motorists and they put up Sinn Fein posters on just about every lamp post in the area.

But recognising that Sinn Fein has a mass base, that it has the active support of thousands of young workers, defending it against opportunist and imperialist attack alike does not lead us to take an uncritical attitude. We questioned the politics of Sinn Fein.

There can be no doubt that Sinn Fein is a revolutionary organisation. It is dedicated to destroying the existing state. But what does it want to put in its place? This is not a minor question. It is of fundamental importance for communists in Britain and of course in Ireland.

If you could tell the nature of a revolutionary movement by the sociological composition of its base then things would be simple. But they are not. It is not just the class nature of an organisation's supporters that decides its politics. It is its ideological outlook.

The discussions we had confirmed our view that the ideology of Sinn Fein is not proletarian. The republican movement of today is the direct successor of Tone, Emmett, Lalor and Pearce. They would quite rightly claim this tradition as their own.

It is indeed a heroic tradition. But it is a heroic *petty bourgeois* tradition. This is shown by the politics of Sinn Fein today. Sinn Fein fights for a Thirty-two County republic, but is unable to devise an all-Ireland revolutionary strategy. It supports a guerrilla war in the Six Counties and in effect only offers a version of the AES, a radical reformist programme, in the Twenty-six Counties. This only reinforces its 'ghettoisation' in the north.

True, Sinn Fein now talks of the socialist republic but in the same breath says 'labour must wait'. In other words, its socialism is of the petty bourgeois variety. It does not see the leadership of the working class as being a prerequisite for socialism. It does not understand that real socialism can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus ironically Sinn Fein's own politics, not the objective situation and not the commitment and talent of its members, is the biggest barrier to achieving its goal of national unity and even socialism. It is the product of a condition from which it is unable to break. Communists should regard it as a possible revolutionary ally, certainly not a substitute for a revolutionary communist party.

### What alternative?

Opportunist groups that pose as revolutionary leaderships quickly become exposed in the testing and volatile conditions of Ireland. The old Official Sinn Fein (now Workers Party) was long ago stripped of all mass support after opportunism led it into being one of the most pro-imperialist reformist organisations imaginable.

Although it can get TDs into the Dail in the Twenty-six Counties, its manifest irrelevance in the north, where the shit has really hit the fan, was proven by its pitiful vote on June 11. Its pious reformist day-dreams are a million miles from the reality of the war. It stands today as a dire warning to republicans against 'constitutional' illusions.

The pretensions of the Trotskyists too are withered under the unmerciful glare of reality in Ireland. All, from the once influential Peoples Democracy (affiliated to the United Secretariat of the 'Fourth International' - *Socialist Action* in Britain) through the economic SWP clone, the SWM, and *Irish Militant* to *Workers Power's* microscopic Irish

# THE CRI

## H-Block and

# support Irish political prisoners

## IRSP

### Joint statement of the Irish Republic and The Leninist

REPRESENTATIVES of the Irish Republic Leninist Editorial Board met in early June to discuss the current world situation and the tasks that particularly in Ireland.

Ireland is a weak-link of imperialism. British imperialism, which in the Six Counties class by fostering a working class aristocratic community.

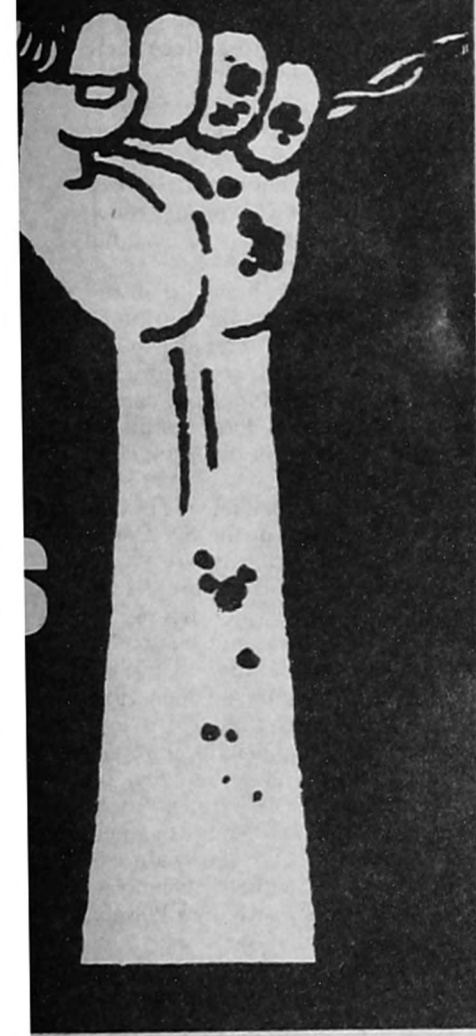
The drift towards imperialist general dangers but also full of possibilities for Leninist Editorial Board representatives emphasised that Ireland needs a genuine

General agreement was reached on the against opportunism and fight for the communist parties in all countries as the proletariat in its struggle for socialism. It was also agreed that the level of national liberation within the British working class stressed that this is both the duty of revolution and the Irish revolution.

It was decided to maintain contact between the Editorial Board.

# IRISH SIS

## magh



### Ireland needs its 'Iskra'

Workers Group, have a miserable, manifestly irrelevant, existence.

We did talk to members of a few of these groups. We did not find them impressive. They either want to be English (ie *Irish Militant* and the SWM) or to bask in the warmth of Gerry Adams' smile (ie PD). But as we have said the *The Leninist* delegation went over primarily to meet members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the discussions we had were extremely useful.

Initial links between our two organisations began on the basis of an exchange of views between ourselves and the IRSP during and after the attack on their movement by the breakaway Irish Peoples Liberation Organisation.

The IRSP had declared its intention to act on the resolution passed at its 1984 Ard Fheis (Congress) calling for the party to base itself on the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The IPLO was formed precisely with the aim of preventing this. It existed to liquidate the IRSP and Inla. We defended the IRSP's right to exist in the pages of *The Leninist*, we welcomed the IRSP's determination to maintain its orientation towards transforming itself into a communist party.

The fact that no other British left group sided with the IRSP against the IPLO split, or even defended them politically against the attempt to liquidate it, perhaps says more about the British left than about the IRSP.

The discussions we had with the IRSP were timely. The IRSP emerged from the Official republican movement in 1974 as a consequence of that organisation's capitulation to imperialism. Although its founding slogan was 'For National Liberation and Socialism' it showed little evidence of breaking from the petty bourgeois traditions of revolutionary republicanism from which it had emerged.

Its structures mirrored those of the republican movement, as did the way in which the republican socialist movement operated, especially in the Six Counties. The republican socialist movement found itself in the position of being the republican movement's younger and wilder brother.

Political crisis and physical attack have obviously taken their toll on the republican socialist movement. Elements in the movement have become atomised, others disillusioned and, worst of all, valuable comrades have been murdered. The IRSP has taken such a battering that its leadership now confronts the task of reestablishing, not just reorganising, the party.

Over the years, the leftward drift of Sinn Fein undermined the basis of the IRSP as the extreme wing of republicanism. This exacerbated the problems inherent in the IRSP. Crises plagued it, tore it, and it turned in on itself. But the IRSP has survived. It has emerged out of the most recent crisis with a determination to radically reassess the movement's past and present situation.

### For communism!

The question is, then: can the IRSP leadership do it? Can they transform the IRSP into a genuine communist party? Certainly, there is much baggage from the past to leave behind. Not least the lack of consistent revolutionary theory traditional to republicanism.

The movement has acted in a day-to-day fashion, lacking a scientific ideology with which to map out a line of march for the revolution. In place of organising on the basis of such a theory the republican socialist movement fell into organising around individual personalities, whether they be Harry Flynn, Gerard Steenson or whoever. In such a situ-

ation, with the movement based on essentially petty bourgeois ideology, it could not but fall into cliquism.

The end of the latest feud will not in and of itself give rise to the resolution of the political crisis of the IRSP. The likes of Flynn, Steenson and Brown were not the cause of the problems within the movement, merely a rather unpleasant symptom.

The cause, quite simply, was that the IRSP was not a communist party and was existing in a situation that ruthlessly exposed every ideological shortcoming, petty bourgeois hangover and organisational deficiency. The IRSP might have based itself on the writings of James Connolly but it had not assimilated or mastered the Marxist method. This was proved by the movement's lack of coherent theory and the consequent lack of direction. The comrades in the IRSP leadership have come to this conclusion too.

In discussion, the comrades from *The Leninist* explained their analysis of Ireland and its place in the world capitalist system as a medium developed capitalist country, the need for the revolutionary process in Ireland to be uninterrupted in its nature - ie the necessity of having a programme which fights to lead to national revolution uninterrupted from the tasks of democracy to those of socialism. The need for working class leadership of the struggle to free Ireland was thus emphasised.

With this in mind, the problem of the Protestant working class was discussed. Those who just cry 'workers' unity' (Workers Party, CPI, *Militant* etc) are just pissing in the wind. The Protestant proletariat is at the moment wedded to British imperialism through material privilege relative to its Catholic counterpart, as well as ideologically. But Protestant workers cannot be ignored. Some can be won to the revolution, but the Party must be able to devise ways to at least neutralise the mass of them. General agreement was reached on all these points.

The differences between republican and communist parties on a structural level also came under the microscope. Criticism was made not only of the domination of the military over the political, as has been the case in the past, but also of the organisational chasm between the two.

In the military this leads to directionless actions, as the IRSP is well aware, and within the party it produces reformist tendencies, the party being removed from the 'sharp end' of the revolutionary struggle. Although expressed in organisational forms, this is first and foremost a political problem: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted on too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation with the narrowest forms of political activity." From Lenin's *What is to be Done?* in 1902, this could equally apply to the situation caused by the past politics of the IRSP.

Some of the most interesting and thought provoking exchanges between our two organisations took place on the question of the structure of the party and how it is built. The comrades from *The Leninist* saw important parallels between the situation in Ireland today and that which faced Lenin in the early years of the twentieth century in Russia. Because of the *de facto* state of liquidation which the IRSP is in, small pockets of revolutionaries exist almost hermetically sealed around the country. The question is therefore posed: how are these revolutionaries to be forged into a revolutionary party which can take on and beat the forces of imperialism and reaction?

Because we saw strong parallels between the Russian and Irish situations it is our view that the IRSP comrades would gain great benefit from a creative application of Lenin's *What is to be Done?* to their conditions. In short, Ireland needs its *Iskra*, a polemical, propagandist paper aimed at advanced workers.

This, of course, is impossible without a theoretically advanced leadership using the paper as its main weapon. As Lenin wrote in the pamphlet, "no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity". The revolutionary party should be soundly Marxist-Leninist, essentially clandestine structurally, secure against state repression. This has not been the case with the IRSP in the past, neither when we look at the IRSP's old theoretical poverty nor when it comes to security. The Harry Kirkpatrick 'supergrass' trials were a case in point.

It is certain that other attacks orchestrated by Britain against the movement will occur. Existing modes of organisation only invite them. The republican socialist movement has

operated within structures which are essentially Fenian and not Bolshevik in their inspiration and has paid the price.

So what of the future? Lenin put forward the idea of the paper as a "collective organiser", forging and coordinating a body of professional revolutionaries from the leadership downwards, through the medium of the paper training a general staff for the proletarian army so that it can become the hegemon of the revolution.

The theoretical content of *Iskra* was central to this. Without it the Bolshevik Party would never have come into existence. From the beginning Lenin fought for theoretical clarity, fought to organise revolutionaries under the banner of orthodox Marxism. This not only necessitated ruthless exposure of all non-proletarian ideas through the paper, it demanded the building of the party from the top down through a highly centralised almost self-selected leadership.

This was vital because in Lenin's words "our Party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path."

Lenin's approach to organisation was not dictatorial for its own sake. Centralism was a necessity. Without it the Tsarist secret police would have had a field day. Building from the top downwards, rigid adherence to correct theory and the ideological destruction of all forms of opportunism were pre-conditions for the October Revolution.

Lenin's approach has great relevance to the IRSP, which is now in the process of reestablishment. Its features are just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement. We recommended, therefore, that the IRSP leadership take the same way out as Lenin.

The declaration of intent for communism has already been taken by the IRSP. Concretisation of this will be no easy task. It is a task, however, upon which the comrades are eager to embark.

### Solidarity

If the lack of effective revolutionary theory is a problem in Ireland, it is no less the case that effective revolutionary solidarity with the Irish revolution is a problem in Britain. Organisations such as the Troops Out Movement and the Labour Committee on Ireland limit themselves to chasing after Campaign Group Labour MPs for their 'much valued' signatures and do little else, apart from bureaucratically squeezing more active anti-imperialists off the scene by waving their ever-so-official credentials about.

Unfortunately, the 'sincere sympathy' of Ken Livingstone has not to date saved anyone from a British bullet. Sinn Fein's patronage of these dead hands is as misconceived as it is indicative of the contradictory nature of its politics.

What about the alternatives? The Irish Solidarity Movement now seems to exist only as some moth eaten banners gathering dust, having been ditched when the RCG scuttled off to 'pastures greener' outside the South African embassy.

Even before, it had been limited by the RCG's orientation to a fictitious 'coalition of the dispossessed'(?), not the working class. Generally it is the Irish Freedom Movement that turns out the only significant numbers of people on Irish demonstrations in Britain. For this they deserve respect. But it is no 'movement' in any real sense of the word. In the last analysis it is the RCP with a different hat on, with little to no independence from it.

So while *The Leninist* will continue to support all anti-imperialist initiatives put forward by these organisations, it is of little use, or even impossible, to work within them. The real alternative has still to be built. As well as a lot of hard slog on our part, the development of such a movement, of such anti-imperialist consciousness within the British working class, will be facilitated through cooperation between British and Irish communists, again something which was agreed on in our discussions with the IRSP (see joint statement).

It would be arrogant indeed to merely proclaim ourselves 'the solidarity movement'. As yet we have no basis for it in practice. But Leninist activity around Ireland, a priority, must be geared towards laying the basis for such a movement. We would urge all comrades, in the spirit of the joint statement, to assist in this task. It is one thing to talk a good revolution. Making one takes a little more.

Alan Merrik

### Republican Socialist Party Editorial Board

Republican Socialist Party and *The Leninist* 17 1987. Views were exchanged on the... this poses for communists,

Its people suffer under the heel of... counties has created a split in the working... racy based on the Protestant

crisis has brought about a situation full... communists in Ireland. Both *The Leninist* and the IRSP representatives... communist party.

need to take up ideological struggle... eation of genuinely revolutionary... vital weapon in the hands of the... and communism.

arity work for the Irish struggle for... rking class must be stepped up. It was... tionaries in Britain and necessary for

ween the IRSP and *The Leninist*

June 10 1987



## IRELAND

# THE OTHER SPENCE INTERVIEW

Asked to comment on the sweeping reforms of comrade Gorbachev, a supporter of the wacko sub-sect Proletarian was heard to remark: "Ah yes. Of course, all of this was anticipated in the first draft of Proletarian No 3." Interesting, especially so when you consider that, despite being advertised for nearly two years, Proletarian No 3 is yet to hit the streets. Perhaps it also contains accurate predictions on the winners of the boat race or the grand national, but in its present state (ie. unpublished), it's not much good to us, is it?

No wonder Proletarian voted against the resolution at the 1987 PPS AGM on class war prisoners: Keith Nealon, *Prole Numero Uno*, actually used to be a probation officer before devoting his life to the world revolution. (Horrendous puns about Proletarian's "cell structure" etc have been ruthlessly edited out).

Marxism Today, "the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party", recently saw fit to include in its pages an advert from the extreme right-wing Freedom Association, an organisation with a long history of strike-breaking and support for all manner of dubious causes from anti-abortionism to pro-capital punishment lobbies. Yet the advertising columns of Marxism Today, 7 Days and all Party publications remain closed to adverts from The Leninist, under an Executive Committee ruling of a few years ago. Is the EC of the Party saying they prefer the Freedom Association to us? We would like to know, comrades.

Mary Rosser stunned not a few shareholders at the recent PPS AGMs when she claimed that the Morning Star does recognise Sinn Fein as "part of the liberation movement in Ireland"! This despite the repeated implications by Roger Trask, the foreign editor, in his hatchet job interview with SF President Gerry Adams, that Sinn Fein was not a liberation movement. Applications for the job of foreign editor of the Morning Star should be addressed to ...

'Is there something going on that we don't know about, Part 204': Gerry Healy, the well-covered Godfather of British Trotskyism, was recently spotted in London's Collet's bookshop eagerly snapping up a copy of ... Moscow News! Hmmm...



PICTURE THIS, if you will. Your paper gives you a return plane ticket to Belfast and one of those funny little pocket sized tape recorders. You are told to interview someone with said tape recorder for said paper. Who would you choose?

Funnily enough, this is the situation that David Whitfield, *Morning Star* deputy editor, found himself in not so long ago. So who did he interview? David took himself off to the Shankill Road whereon are found the offices of the so-called Progressive Unionist Party and met a Mr Gusty Spence. The subsequent interview printed in the *Morning Star* of February 7 1987 gave a very favourable impression of the PUP and Gusty Spence.

So who is this Gusty Spence? At the risk of straining the patience of our 'regulars' to breaking point we will go over this again briefly. Gusty Spence is a leading light in the PUP. It has been described in *The Guardian* as a front for the Ulster Volunteer Force: an organisation which exists solely to terrorise, maim and murder Catholics.

Gusty did nearly 19 years in Long Kesh. He was convicted of the murder of a barman, it was alleged simply because he was a Catholic. Inside he was commander in chief of UVF prisoners. When released he joined the PUP. Comrades in Belfast inform us that he also rejoined Belfast brigade staff of the UVF.

While in Belfast we decided to do our own Spence interview. Not with Gusty, but Eddie. It just so happens that Eddie is brother to Gusty. He is not, however, a member of the PUP, UVF or any other loyalist paramilitary or paramilitary front.

He shares a name and a genealogy with Gusty. He does not share his politics. He did, however, share with us some fascinating insights into his brother's politics and into the politics of Ireland.

Although Eddie comes from a Protestant background, he has a Catholic wife and lives in a solidly republican part of Belfast. He is an active trade unionist and an ex-member of the CPGB, which he joined in 1956 shortly after coming to Britain looking for work. On his return home he joined the Communist Party of Ireland. Despite his later break with the CPI Eddie is still a committed communist.

**The Leninist: How 'progressive' is the PUP?**

Eddie Spence: In my view there is no such thing as a 'Progressive Unionist Party'. It's like someone saying that there is a progressive

*Not only can the Morning Star see no essential difference between loyalism and republicanism, it favourably interviewed Strasserite Gusty Spence. We talked to his brother*

wing in the Conservative Party. We all know that it's a reactionary party.

**The Leninist: Why did the PUP come into existence? What function does it serve?**

Eddie Spence: Unionist people from a middle class background used to come to working class areas like the Shankill and Sandy Row to canvass for votes. I remember the way they did it. They would get a big coal lorry and deck it in Ulster flags and Union Jacks, have a flute band in front and parade around the ward. But when people asked them their policies on housing and the like they couldn't answer, because they had no policies.

So, I think that working class Protestants just got fed up with this attitude. They termed the Unionist establishment the 'fur coat brigade'. Working class loyalists thought that they needed a voice. I think that's where the PUP came in. It presented itself as working class. But, of course, being in the framework of loyalism meant it was thoroughly reactionary, as far as I saw it anyway.

**The Leninist: Is the PUP trying to give a 'working class' face to reaction. Are there similarities between the PUP and Strasserism in the Nazi party?**

Eddie Spence: I would agree that the PUP is semi-fascist. My brother says you have to start somewhere, and that to go to ordinary working class Protestants to get them to form an alliance with the SDLP or Sinn Fein is just not on. He's right there. But there is a phenomenon among Protestant people: their talk of class politics never lasts long. All the bosses have to do is bang the drum, say that the Catholics are just about to take over, the Fenians are coming, and all talk of working class politics is dropped.

**The Leninist: We read a report in the Guardian, and comrades here confirm it, that the PUP is a political front for the UVF. Is there any truth in that?**

Eddie Spence: Well, I would imagine so. For example, recently a member of the UVF, who was regarded as one of the vilest sectarian murderers, was shot dead by republicans. He was shot just outside the offices of the PUP. That at least would seem to indicate to me that it is a front for the UVF.

**The Leninist: The Morning Star equates nationalism and loyalism as equally sectarian. Would you like to comment?**

Eddie Spence: Nationalism seems to me to be a progressive force because any opposition to the Six Counties state is in my eyes pro-

gressive. Loyalism is the opposite. It's reactionary. It's used by the bosses to divide the working class.

**The Leninist: Is there then a difference between say the violence of the IRA and the UVF?**

Eddie Spence: Of course there is a difference. The UVF is a sectarian, reactionary organisation. It is full of bigots. The best example of them is the Shankill Butchers, a UVF gang. They went round killing ordinary Catholics as if they were animals. Some were hacked to death, others had their genitals cut off, some were skinned alive. Comparing this to the IRA is just not on.

**The Leninist: But the Morning Star would say the IRA is the same as the UVF because the victims of IRA violence are Protestants.**

Eddie Spence: People try and talk of republican sectarianism. This is nonsense. The targets of IRA attacks are not ordinary Protestant folk but mainly members of the 'security forces'. They are, of course, nearly all Protestants. When the IRA plans an attack on them I'm sure you would agree that they wouldn't stop to think whether they were Protestants or Catholics?

The reason they are shooting them is because they are part of the British war machine. It just so happens that most are Protestants because the UDR is an anti-Catholic paramilitary organisation.

**The Leninist: What do you think of the Morning Star's and the CPI's approach to the PUP?**

Eddie Spence: For the *Morning Star* and the CPI to go to the PUP - I don't think that's right. I think the CPI and *Morning Star* should talk to real progressives. British communists ought to get themselves another paper. The *Morning Star* is of no use at all. As for the CPI, it talks a lot about repression in South Africa and Nicaragua. It does nothing about repression in its own country.

**The Leninist: When your brother was in jail he was claiming to be left wing. Why, when he came out, did he go back to the political wing of the UVF? Why couldn't he break from loyalism?**

Eddie Spence: When he was arrested in 1966 - and I'm not saying what he did and what he didn't do - he was charged with the murder of a Catholic barman. The magistrate completely absolved my brother of the crime. But the Unionist government at that time wanted to appear non-sectarian. So it brought into being for the first time what they call the Grand Jury. Gusty was arrested again, charged and found guilty.

When it comes down to it the state just uses the Protestant people like pawns - it wanted him out of the way.

Gusty learnt something from this. He told me as commander in chief of the UVF in Long Kesh he organised classes on the history of Ireland and also studied the Irish language, which is completely abhorrent to the average Protestant. But he never studied Marx. He called himself a 'christian socialist'.

I'm not saying that my brother didn't try and break from sectarianism but he never had the means. When Protestant workers see a truth that they don't want to see, they use all sorts of wrong ideas to close their eyes to it. That's what happened with Gusty.

He didn't study Marx. He didn't see that the only real alternative was Marxism. Somebody said to me that "if I'd have been your

brother, I'd have stayed in Long Kesh, because he was far more left wing in there".

He's gone back to the old ways of thinking. Loyalism, you know, is a reactionary thing. If you think you can change it from the inside you cannot break with sectarianism. If you flirt with loyalism you're bound to get reactionary.

**The Leninist: The CPI and the Morning Star excuse their flirting with loyalism by pointing to their work in the trade union movement. They say only the trade unions can unite the working class in the Six Counties.**

Eddie Spence: I work for unity in my union, the Transport Union. But you've got to remember that the Transport Union consists of about three quarters Protestants. Its worse in other unions. So, although Catholics make up around 40 percent of the population up here, the unions only have a very few as members.

The unions could do much more about Catholic unemployment. But then again, who is going to be the first Catholic to go into these Protestant-only factories? Whoever does is going to run a gauntlet. So it's no good looking at the unions to produce workers' unity.

**The Leninist: What about the 'Better Life for All Campaign' which the CPI and the Morning Star did their best to promote?**

Eddie Spence: Well, nobody could complain about the slogan. But it's the same as the Workers Party slogans about unity. If you ignore the division of Ireland, nothing can be done. Partition undermines all attempts to bring the working class together.

**The Leninist: In Britain we are told that the turmoil in the Six Counties is all to do with religion.**

Eddie Spence: No, the problem is Britain. Britain divided Ireland. It divided the working class. To maintain its domination of Ireland it has used religion to divide and rule. Protestants were given jobs and privileges by Britain, in return the Protestants give their loyalty. Protestants see their religion and their privileges as going together. In order to keep the Catholics down they allow themselves to be led by a fascist cleric like Paisley. Religion totally dominates the Protestant working class. It involves all their politicians. You can't get away from it.

A fellow in work asked me my religion. I said I was an atheist. "Yes", he said, "but are you a Protestant atheist or a Catholic atheist?" The nationalist population keep politics and religion separate. The Protestants are far more tied down by religion than Catholics.

**The Leninist: Although you come from a Protestant background, you are married to a Catholic and you live in a nationalist area. Could you live in a Protestant one?**

Eddie Spence: No, I'd get burnt out or worse. I've lived here years and never had any trouble. I couldn't go back. I don't think I'd survive long if I did.

**The Leninist: What about British troops? Do they protect you?**

Eddie Spence: No, I think they should withdraw now.

(When Eddie saw us to the door, a British Army armoured landrover slowly trundled alongside us, deliberately keeping pace with us as we walked down the road. "See them", shouted Eddie, "they're our army of occupation".)





Our fourth Summer Offensive is now in full swing. We contrast and compare our method of raising money with the opportunists'

# SUMMER OFFENSIVE DYNAMISM AND INVENTIVENESS

SOME 1,227 shareholders of the *Morning Star* attended the three meetings of the 1987 PPPS AGMs in Glasgow, Manchester and London. A recurring theme from all those who spoke in support of the paper at these meetings was what they saw as the vital importance of the *Star* to the working class movement in Britain: "Imagine life without the *Star*," one speaker asked the assembled faithful, and all but a very small minority of those present agreed that it was too horrible a prospect to even contemplate.

Speaker after speaker in all three meetings around the country underlined the publication's dire financial position and expressed their iron determination that 'their paper' would *not* go under, come hell or high water!

The total collection for the *Star* at these three meetings of people so totally committed to the paper's future was £897. For those of you without a pocket calculator to hand, that is an average of 73p each.

At the rally to launch *The Leninist* as a fortnightly, around 90 people attended. In a collection at the end of the meeting, these supporters and sympathisers of our paper raised a magnificent £632.09p. And that, in contrast, is an average of well over £7 a head.

Of course, it is easy to play with figures and averages in this way and draw all sorts of erroneous conclusions. For example, can we conclude from this brief analysis of

collection averages that Leninists are ten times more dedicated than Communist Campaign Group supporters? Of course, this would be wrong.

In fact, Leninists are a hundred, a thousand times more dedicated than the average CCGer. This fact is attested to both in the uncompromising political approach of our paper, and in the personal approach of our comrades to the responsibilities being a communist lays on our shoulders. Characteristically therefore, while CCGers and supporters of *7 Days* whine and wheedle and, if you're very lucky, can be persuaded to donate a fiver once in a blue moon, our comrades have thrown themselves into this year's Summer Offensive, determined that all previous targets will be smashed!

An innovation this year has been the fact that we have set an ambitious basic minimum target. Previously, we have set comrades the task of raising three, or four times their weekly income, a practice that led to widespread disparities in comrades' starting targets. This year, all comrades taking part in the Summer Offensive, employed and unemployed, will raise £400 as a minimum. Most comrades have set themselves targets well above the £400 minimum, the highest being £1,500.

This year's campaign is our fourth Summer Offensive and it is going to be our most successful yet. It started on June 1 and will finish with the end of July. Com-

rades have set about raising their targets with dynamism and inventiveness. We have had Summer Offensive parties, Summer Offensive sponsored bike rides to Brighton, Summer Offensive home-made wine sales, and Summer Offensive auctions of items ranging from a second edition of Lenin's *State and Revolution* through to job lots of toothbrushes and biro pens! These initiatives have complemented, but not of course replaced, the tightening of

Leninist belts a notch or two that is always a feature of these campaigns.

If you sat in any CCG or *Marxism Today* meeting anywhere in the country and suggested such an idea, you would be looked on, quite simply, as a 'nut-case'. You would be told that it just was not possible even for employed people to reach a target like that in such a short space of time! More than that, you would begin to be regarded with profound suspicion.

The soft reformist politics of the opportunists encourages them to take a 'laid back' lazy approach to organisation and to fund raising. After all, if you think the Labour Party is going to bring us socialism in Britain through a vote one day in the House of Commons, why invest so much time and effort, not to mention money, in building a Communist Party?

Therefore, if some bright spark piped up under AOB in a Euro dominated Party branch meeting somewhere, suggesting that it was possible to overcome the seemingly intractable financial problems that beset most branches and launch Party work on a firm financial footing by inaugurating a finance drive on something along the lines of *The Leninist's*, they would be in deep trouble: eyebrows would be raised and dark mutters would rustle through the room.

In fact today, no opportunist grouping could possibly launch, sustain or triumphantly complete a Summer Offensive like ours. Our ability to do so flows directly from the key feature that distinguishes us from every other tendency, group or faction in and around the CPGB: *We are revolutionaries, they are not.* Comrades under the ideological grip of opportunism, which in the vast majority of cases in Britain takes the form of an adaptation to Labourism, have lost the very *idea* of what a Communist Party is about. Their leaders know that calling on such comrades to make genuinely communist sacrifices for their Party is futile. Their politics simply do not allow them to see the *need* for it. Fund raising events in most Communist Party circles therefore become dispiriting, laborious affairs, which resemble a cross between a Church of England fete and a retirement party.

And no wonder. As an example of the calibre of apparatchik that the Party has lumbered itself with, take a man with whom *The Leninist* has had some dealings in the past - that despicable cop caller, Doug 'Chalmers of the Yard'.

This comrade's record while General Secretary of the Young

Communist League was one of total failure and underhanded factional plotting. Under him the YCL could not 'afford' to produce even one issue of its paper during the heroic and historic year long miners' Great Strike. His attitude towards opposition was a police attitude. He even called the police to eject twelve Hackney YCLers (seven of whom were black) from their own AGM, an action which besmirched the name of communism, brought our Party and the now quietly liquidated YCL into disrepute. He should never have been allowed within a mile of a Party position. Today he finds himself as an organiser for the Party in his native Scotland. This only testifies to the fact that whatever criteria the Party sets for choosing its fulltimers, integrity, merit and talent are certainly not among them.

Mark Perryman, a comrade who likes to be thought of as an 'up and coming' right Euro, writing in the pages of *News and Views*, criticised Party districts around the country for not even having the gumption to acquire relatively simple technical equipment like telephone answering machines. Back plods Chalmers with a gumptionless defence of this amateurishness. To paraphrase him, 'How can we possibly raise enough money to buy answering machines when the energies of the fulltimers are fully taken up raising enough funds to pay their own wages!'

So there you have his approach to fundraising! Comrade Chalmers spends his time raising money to help maintain himself. This is not the communist attitude. It is a bureaucratic attitude of mind-boggling ineptitude. Chalmers thus expresses in an almost pure form the self justifying nature of a parasitic bureaucrat. No wonder most Party members are so tardy in giving money when the leadership has so totally lost touch with communism.

There are no such problems in *The Leninist*. All comrades participating in the Offensive know that every level of our organisation is in the thick of the campaign. Every comrade knows that at the end of the day the large sums raised will be used selflessly for the cause of our class. That is why all our comrades have thrown themselves with such enthusiasm this year into the Summer Offensive. And that is why our Summer Offensive this year, the most ambitious we have ever set ourselves, *will triumph!*

Why not sponsor a comrade taking part in the Offensive this year? Send off for a sponsorship form. Also approach friends, workmates and contacts for sponsorship.

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# REVIEWS

Ron Bellamy and Ray  
Colvin edit a journal  
dedicated to split the  
CPGB, all in the name  
of defending a  
reformist programme.  
This is opportunism of  
the worst kind



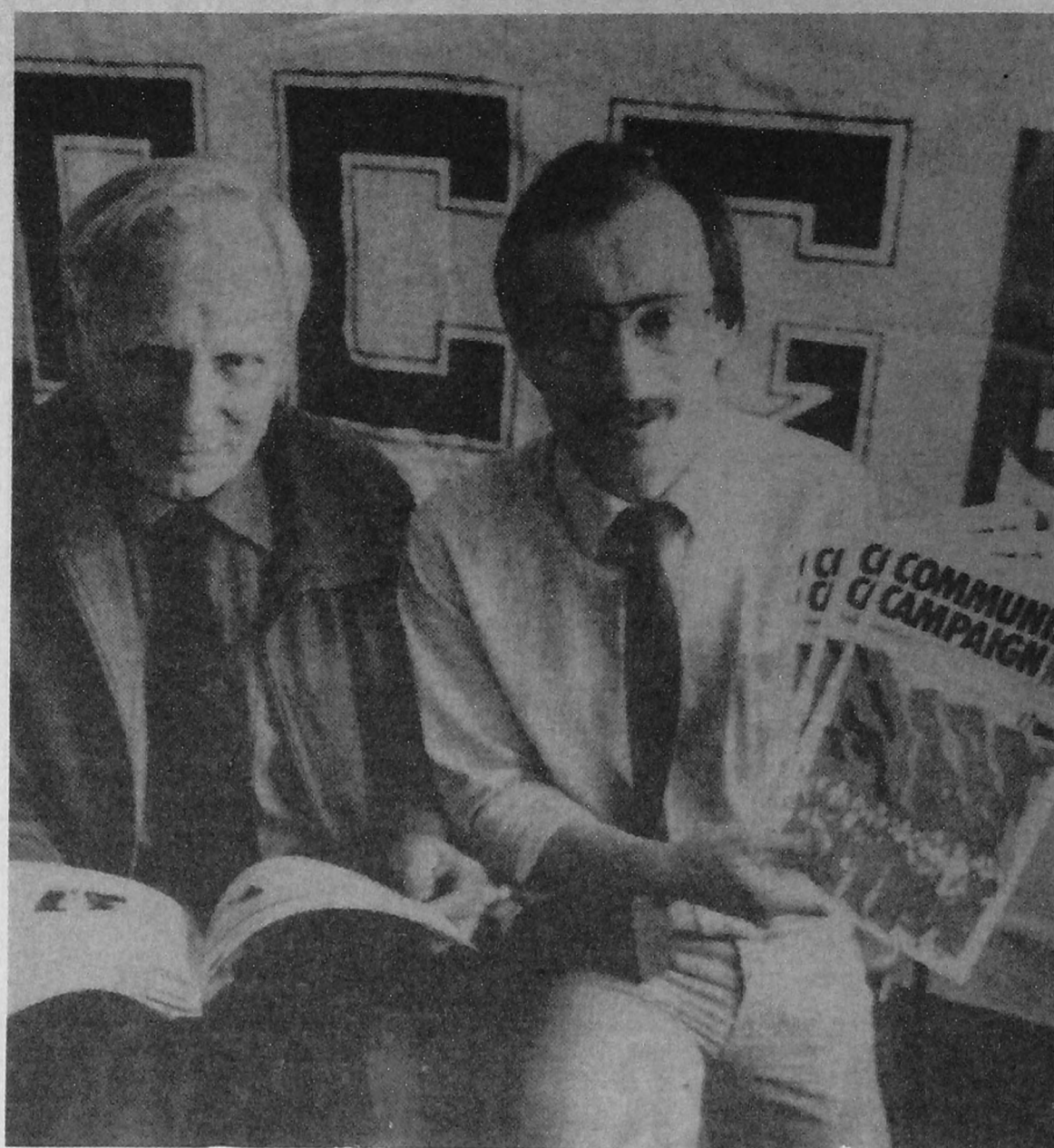
## Splitters, hacks and worse

Communist Campaign Group,  
*Communist Campaign Review* No  
4, Summer 1987, pp32, £1.00

AS NOVEMBER 1987 and the  
40th Congress of the Communist  
Party of Great Britain draws  
nearer, the CCG's non-theoretical  
non-discussion journal clumsily  
stumbles forward to bring out into  
the open its ill-conceived  
liquidationist plan to split the Party  
in two, all the while begging com-  
rades to accept that 'our split is not  
a split'.

Claiming that their perspective  
for "re-establishing the Party" is  
developing "in the context of the  
widest possible discussion" (p6),  
no dissenting views are expressed  
in this issue of the journal and  
articles are commissioned from the  
most narrow circle of Morning Star  
and CCG hacks. The writers are  
the two CCR editors Ray Colvin  
and Ron Bellamy; *Morning Star*  
deputy editor Dave Whitfield and  
editor Tony Chater (yes, at long  
last Chater has publicly associated  
himself with the CCG, presumably  
to assist in the impending split, but  
comrades would still be mistaken  
to think he will ever subordinate  
'his' paper to any new party); plus  
*Star* economist Mike Naughton  
and CCG Steering Committee  
member Ivan Beavis. The nearest  
thing to discussion is Joe Berry's  
letter taking up a point about the  
disbanding of pit and factory  
organisation in the Party in 1944,  
while Roy Myers' 'letter' attacking  
*Marxism Today* is plainly commis-  
sioned.

All the fire is reserved for "the  
revisionist groupings around  
*Marxism Today*" while studiously  
and dishonestly ignoring the other  
tendencies in and around the Party  
— *Straight Left*, *Proletarian* and  
*The Leninist*. Worse still is the con-  
cealment of differences within the  
CCG itself. For example, CCR  
readers are still blissfully unaware  
of the existence of the *Discussion  
Papers* published by South Wales  
CCG and reprinted in full in *The*



*Leninist* 47/48 (March 20). So  
much for the "widest possible dis-  
cussion"!

Lenin led the struggle for a Party  
by winning the allegiance of revolu-  
tionaries through open ideologi-  
cal struggle for communist  
revolutionary politics, conducted  
through a polemical paper — *Iskra*.  
The CCG wants to "re-establish"  
its own domination by stifling dis-  
cussion, hiding facts and appealing  
to loyalty to a ready-made and dis-  
credited reformist programme.  
First split, then start discussion! As  
happened with the New Com-  
munist Party, comrades will soon  
find the 'appropriate time for dis-  
cussion' is very short indeed.

Do you imagine, CCG com-  
rades, that a struggle to defend a  
reformist programme can possibly  
lead to the establishment of a re-  
volutionary party?

Ray Colvin, national organiser  
of the CCG, looks back fondly to  
the "traditional" (!) role of the CP  
as "the 'think tank' of the left  
within the progressive and labour  
movements" (p4) — a far cry from  
the "vanguard party of the working  
class" which Lenin championed.

This making light of the Party's  
role is confirmed by the CCG's talk  
of a "work in", in which com-  
munists can fulfil their leading role  
without being organised into a  
party. It is the working class, not  
the labour movement (read: labour  
bureaucracy) nor the "left" which  
requires CP leadership. For the  
class to conduct effective revolution-  
ary struggle a Communist Party is  
indispensable. There is no other  
way. But how does Tony Chater  
see it?

Having argued the need for a  
mass movement to be built up to  
defend the trade unions from  
destruction, he says "the disinte-  
gration of the Communist Party  
under its revisionist leadership  
creates difficulties in achieving this.  
But it will have to be done neverthe-  
less." (p12) (my emphasis — IF) In  
other words, for Chater, organis-  
ing communists into a party is an

optional extra. We can manage  
anyway. "Communists will have a  
key role to play as in the early  
'70s" (p12) — even without a  
Party!

In *The Leninist* 46 we pointed to  
the "Kautskyite revisionism" of  
the CCG, and that assessment is  
repeatedly reinforced in this issue  
with the idea that imperialism, the  
domination of finance capital and  
the parasitic nature of the imperi-  
alist economy, is a question of pol-  
icy.

On page 23 Dave Whitfield  
writes that "today the British rul-  
ing class has decided [my emphasis  
— IF] to confirm the dominance  
of finance capital over manufac-  
turing capital and make Britain  
into a centre for finance capital."  
On page 14 Ivan Beavis quotes  
CCG theoretician (?) Bernie Steer  
as follows: "Capitalism has now  
decided that its best interests are  
served by the introduction of a  
parasitic economy based on fi-  
nance capital and low-wage service  
industry." On page 19 Mike  
Naughton, having bemoaned the  
loss of manufacturing jobs, whines  
that "the predominance of finance  
capital can only exacerbate this  
trend".

The clear implication is that the  
working class, in fighting to save  
British capitalism with the CCG's  
Alternative Economic Strategy,  
must enter into alliance ('Broad  
Democratic Alliance?') with pro-  
gressive industrial monopoly capi-  
tal — which has the best interests of  
'the country' at heart and puts Brit-  
ish jobs and industry before nar-  
row self interest — against  
reactionary finance capital, which  
is greedy, self-seeking and unpatri-  
otic. What a fairy story!

The CCG hacks here display an  
astounding ignorance of the Leni-  
nism they claim to uphold. In his  
well known work *Imperialism, The  
Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin  
defines finance capital as "the bank  
capital of a few very big monopoli-  
st banks merged with [my em-  
phasis — IF] the capital of the

monopolist associations of indus-  
trialists" (*Collected Works*, Vol 22,  
p266) and includes as the second  
item in his list of five basic features  
of imperialism (p266) "...(2) the  
merging of bank capital with  
industrial capital, and the crea-  
tion, on the basis of this 'finance  
capital', of a financial oli-  
garchy;..." So finance capital in-  
cludes industrial capital, and its  
domination is not a recent "decis-  
ion" of the ruling class, not a pol-  
icy at all, but is of the essential  
nature of imperialism. So is the  
parasitic character of imperialist  
economy, to which Lenin devotes a  
chapter of his book. (CW Vol 22  
pp276-285)

It is precisely because the CCG  
scribes, just like Kautsky, regard  
imperialism as a bad policy that  
they can dream up an alternative  
policy, their beloved AES, to in-  
troduce a crisis-free, post-imperi-  
alist phase of capitalism in which  
greedy finance capital has been  
ousted from its dominant position.  
This has absolutely nothing to do  
with Leninism!

No wonder they don't see the  
need for a vanguard party of the  
working class! They don't see the  
need for revolution!

Progressive industrial capital is  
just a CCG dream. Wake up, com-  
rades!

Ray Colvin quite correctly calls  
for maximum participation in the  
forthcoming national congress, but  
this stands in sharp contrast to the  
CCG's widespread practice of ad-  
vising members of dissolved  
branches not to re-apply for Party  
membership.

This is designed to line up as  
many as possible outside the Party,  
ready and waiting for the split.

To these comrades we say, get  
back into the Party if you can, re-  
cruit new members to build the  
Party even if you are excluded.

Fight for Leninism before, dur-  
ing and after the congress. Reject  
the opportunist CCG split.

Ian Farrell



## Of babies and bathwater

**Communist Forum, Communist Forum nos 4 and 5, pp44, £1.40 and £1.50**

YOU MAY be aware that some time ago we had a degree of contact with a fragment of the crisis-ridden Workers Revolutionary Party. While others fought over its corpse and tried to cobble together their own Mickey Mouse 'Fourth International', one group around ex-general secretary Mike Banda broke with the WRP entirely. This was in an attempt to reassess their whole world view. In the course of this they met with *The Leninist*.

Our 'parting of the ways' centred around their theory of the 'irreversibility' of existing socialism, first put forward in print by Banda in his document, *What is Trotskyism?*, in *Communist Forum 4*. He writes that the "October Revolution was... a historical leap, in an objective process which was irreversible." (*Communist Forum 4*, p31) This conveniently ignores the overthrow of the Hungarian, Bavarian and Finnish soviet republics after 1917 and the dangers of reversibility today.

Did not Solidarnosc pose a serious threat of counterrevolution in Poland? In private, when pressed, Banda and his comrades would concede this along with threats of capitalist restoration in China, Czechoslovakia etc. But there came a point beyond which they would not question, and that was when one reached the borders of the USSR. The possibility of counterrevolution in the USSR was not to be considered.

Banda, of course, backs this up with what comes naturally - Healy style gobbledegook pseudo dialectics. Because the British revolution was irreversible, so is the Soviet one.

To try and reverse the Russian revolution would be like trying to put a baby back into the womb. Yes, believe it or not, this is what he said and continues to say.

Of course his analogy between the proletarian revolution in Russia and the bourgeois revolution in Britain is utterly mechanical. The two revolutions occurred in manifestly different world conditions and operated on the basis of very different laws.

When Cromwell came to power no world economy existed. It was the historical mission of the class he championed to create it. Therefore the revolution could be viewed as a fundamentally national affair.

Capitalism emerged fully formed, having grown alongside feudalism within the old social structures. It also emerged in the most developed country. The th-



Banda has swapped deification of Trotsky, but...

reat posed by feudal elements, internally and externally, was minimal.

Communism does not emerge fully formed. It comes into the world as an embryo in the form of socialism. October 1917 was the manifestation of a world proletarian revolution. It broke the weakest link of the imperialist chain, it was a backward country. There was, and is, no shortage of enemies of the revolution.

In the Soviet Union petty capitalism will grow, like mould spores, on whatever fertile ground it has access to. Why? Because what exists in the Soviet Union is a transitional society between capitalism and communism - formal socialism, because the features of the former still predominate. The economy is based on commodity production and the law of value operates - according to Marx the essential features of capitalism. The revolution of 1917 did not abolish capitalism, it smashed the bourgeoisie.

Lenin described the situation in Russia as being the dictatorship of the proletariat over state monopoly capitalism. Capitalism without capitalists. Lenin always said that for full socialism to be built, workers in the advanced capitalist countries must have their own Octobers.

Things have changed since Lenin's day - this cannot be doubted. But, in spite of the USSR's tremendous achievements, no amount of wishful thinking, distorted statistics or philosophical mysticism can change the fact that the USSR today is not fundamentally different from when Lenin was writing.

After nearly 70 years of progress, Gorbachev is championing what he calls the New Economic Mechanism - justifying his proposals for a so-called market socialism by using Lenin's writings on the NEP (New Economic Policy). We cannot afford to be complacent.

While the existence of socialism poses a threat to the capitalist market, this in turn poses a threat, economically and militarily, to existing socialism. Capitalism may be a crisis ridden, moribund system but it still has life in it. In fact as capitalism goes deeper into crisis it becomes more and more violent in its drive for new markets. The USSR operates as part of the world economy. It cannot but be affected by its dominant mode of production, ie capitalism.

Capitalism could be restored in the USSR through it being buried economically by the west or by straightforward military conquest. It is ridiculous and dangerous to

suppose, as Banda does, that the Soviet Union is militarily invulnerable. The armies of Napoleon and Hitler may have been turned back by the Russian winter; an ICBM does not feel the cold so.

There also exists another threat - perhaps more dangerous - internally. The economies of the socialist countries are still comparatively backward and characterised by commodity production. This means it is also ridiculous and dangerous to suppose, again as Banda does, that there is no internal threat of restoration. Indeed, with the working class not ruling directly and the capitalist consequences of Gorbachev's NEM still to be seen, any suggestion that we do not need to defend the gains of October because of the fallacious idea that they are irreversible is criminal.

What we have in the USSR is not irreversible socialism but reversible formal socialism. Full socialism and reaching the stage of irreversibility requires three things. 1. Revolutions in many more countries, above all in the advanced countries. 2. Using planning, not the market, to take huge strides forward in productivity compared to the highest level which the most advanced capitalist countries can achieve. 3. The exercise of direct rule by the working class.

For their own reasons leaders in the socialist countries look away from the task of fighting for the world revolution. Instead they look inwards. Moreover, in one socialist country after another we see liberalisation but not moves to enable the working class to rule directly, we see an orientation to a market economy but not democratising the plan.

This is a retreat. Of course there is nothing wrong in principle with retreating. What is wrong is calling a retreat a revolution.

Banda was the general secretary of a party which hated the Soviet Union but loved Khomeini's Iran, which connived at the murder of Iraqi communists, apparently for money, which set up Arthur Scargill for the gutter press because he dared to call Solidarnosc anti-socialist. Now he leads a micro sectlet bent on becoming a second rate apologist for Soviet reality - a move in the right direction, but not much of one.

Communism does not need apologists, it needs partisans guided by truly scientific theory. Banda has swapped deification of Trotsky for deification of the USSR.

Alan Merrick

## PARTY PIECES

There is a well known saying which goes as follows: When your enemies start praising you - ask yourself what you are doing wrong. Surely with praise for Gorbachev's "glasnost" and his "revolutionary (!?) programme of reconstruction and democratisation", coming from *Marxism Today*, Thatcher, the *Daily Mail* and the Trotskyite Gerry Healy those centrists who so effusively supported Brezhnev should at least be asking questions. No, all we get from the likes of the *New Worker*, the *Morning Star* and *Communist* is the same sort of 'diplomatic internationalist' praise for Gorbachev, they used to give to his predecessor (who has now been roundly slated). Surely when Gorbachev is said to have sympathy for the ideas of Nikita Khrushchev and Alexander Dubcek these political groupings ought to at least engage in some sort of open self-criticism of their previous positions.

The *Straight Leftist Communist* of June informs its readership that "comrades allowed their class-conscious solidarity with the Soviet Union to become pickled into an uncritical adulation of the socialist countries devoid of any understanding of its dialectics to the extent pro-Sovietism became a substitute for revolutionary politics." Who are they talking about? This, from a grouping that has praised every twist and turn, positive or negative, of Soviet policy, only joining in the criticism of past leaders' policies in harmony with the current Soviet leadership. We have yet to read any self criticism on this in the pages of *Communist* - or, for that matter, anything reminiscent of independent thought on the so-called Gorbachev revolution - from this group which has supposedly abandoned "uncritical adulation".

The same issue of *Communist* attacks the election policy of Ken Gill and Tony Chater, which "called on people to vote Labour in the election, with no mention of communist contests at all." This again is rich, coming as it does from a faction which in the 1983 general election deserted Communist Party candidates so as to work for Labour in the adjoining constituencies. More to the point, where was their mention of the Party campaign *this time round* in their 'over the counter' paper, *Straight Left*?

The French Communist Party continues its relentless decline. Its embarrassment at the hands of the Socialist Party and its electoral slump have taken their toll and it now looks ready to fall behind the semi-fascist Front National. Factionalism within the Party is rife, with a groundswell of support for the rightist *renouveaux*. Frustration in this camp at its inability to win control of the Party machine from right opportunists such as General Secretary Georges Marchais has brought about a rash of resignations by *renouveaux* from the Party. This year alone, three Central Committee members have resigned, the latest being *renouveaux* leading light, Pierre Juquin. Given comrade Martin Jacques' political deflation with the Alliance's defeat at the polls, and obvious frustration with our version of the Marchais type leader - comrade McLennan - could we see Jacques do a Juquin in the not too distant future?



Marchais

## SO COME ON

Maintaining a press has proved frustratingly difficult for the official labour movement. Who can forget the sorry demise of George Lansbury's *Daily Herald* and its resurrection as the *Sun*? Few will be surprised if *News on Sunday* suffers the same fate. Even the 400,000 strong Labour Party can't afford to keep producing *Labour Weekly* and *New Socialist*. Although we have far more meager resources we would never dream of letting our paper go to the wall because of a cost cutting exercise. Why are we so different from the Labourites? Simple. We want to turn the world upsidedown. No revolutionary organisation can afford to be without a paper. It is our main weapon. We fight for the finances necessary to continue and expand our paper. *The Leninist* comes out because of this approach - an approach shared by our readers. Thanks to you we received £530 towards our £600 target in June. Our readers obviously don't suffer from the Labourite blues. But it is still nowhere near enough for us to realise our ambitious plans for the future. There are, as yet, very few people sponsoring Leninist comrades for their Summer Offensive targets. So come on all you steely-eyed Bolsheviks out there! We need more cash than you have given. You know the address.



WHILE SOME in the workers' movement are bemoaning their fate now that Thatcher has been re-elected for a third term, the Unemployed Workers Charter has been getting on with the job of fighting for the right to work for the four million who are in reality unemployed in Britain today. While others were banking on a Labour victory to bring them salvation, the UWC recognised that reliance on parliament would yield nothing; the whole of working class history proves that nothing is gained without militant struggle, militant organisation.

Unconvinced that a defeat for the Labour Party means a defeat for the working class, we are busily organising and mobilising the unemployed.

We were fighting before June 11 and we are fighting even harder now the election is just a fading memory. We have no choice - we must fight!

### The Election and the Four Million

The correctness of the slogan raised by the UWC for the general election - Fight Whoever Wins - was underlined in a pre-election meeting organised by East London UWC with the prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney, Dianne Abbott (now Dianne Abbott MP).

At least, the meeting *should* have been with Dianne Abbott. Unfortunately she failed to turn up or send apologies. This does not bode well for her pre-election commitment to fight, as far as her constituents, who suffer one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, are concerned. We have seen too many career politicians talking left only to go to the right once in the parliament - the best club in London, as the bastards call it. So, in an angry mood, our packed meeting - which included representatives of the CPSA and SCPS unions - went ahead.

Anne Jones, speaking for the East London UWC, regretted Abbott's non-attendance and pointed out that the reason might have something to do with the fact that she, like all the left of the Labour Party, was going along with Kinnoch and therefore wanted to do everything to appear respectable. Of course, the unemployed and the UWC are not respectable.

The UWC demands what the unemployed and their families need for a decent standard of life, not what the Labour Party thinks the system can afford.

Most at the meeting agreed that the Labour Party counted on the votes of the unemployed as 'natural' and 'safe' but that this should not be allowed to continue. What would a Labour government do for us that the Tories aren't doing already, was the universal feeling.

### The Civil Service dispute and the Four Million

The UWC has always stressed the need to join forces with workers in struggle. This is especially important with the civil service dispute. If the four million unemployed are not organised with the strikers, then the ruling class will try to organise them against the strikers. But the UWC won't let the bosses use the unemployed as strike-breakers.

The Tories and the mass media will try to drive a wedge between us. That is why displays of solidarity between unemployed workers and those in dispute are vital. Because of this a UWC contingent was organised for the CPSA/SCPS demonstration on June 8.

Marching through the teeming rain on a grey Monday morning around 700 demonstrators took to the London streets. Although most were CPSA/SCPS members many were there to show support and solidarity.

While the weather played its part, it cannot be blamed entirely for the dispirited mood of the march. The union leaderships have backed civil servants into a 'no win' situation causing many to simply become demoralised. (The broad left SCPS refuses to countenance all out action, the broad left *Militant* leadership will ballot for all out action but not fight for it).

Speaker after speaker at the rally at the end of the march was barracked by a resounding "All Out Action!" from union militants.

When it came time for the voice of the four million unemployed to be heard, the chanting turned to cheers. Mark Fischer, speaking on behalf of the UWC, slammed attempts to sow divisions between employed and unemployed workers and went on to declare that "When you come out and fight the bosses, when you take on those who ruthlessly attack the rights and living standards of our class, you're fighting for all unemployed workers too!"

Mark spoke immediately after John Ellis, the CPSA General Secretary, who had been almost drowned out by chants from the crowd for all-out action. The organisers had tried to ensure beforehand that the UWC would not call for stepping up the action, but we refused to be censored. To a huge cheer, Mark Fischer continued:

"We, the four million unemployed, have been betrayed by the TUC, betrayed by the so-called leaderships of the trade unions. We are tired now of the promises of politicians and trade union bureaucrats. We are going to fight in the here and now for what we need to lead decent, human lives. Employed workers need to do just the same! Forget about token actions, forget about pussy-footing around - to win you need all out action. *Go for it!*"

The UWC supports all out action by civil servants. We do not fear it, we welcome it. But we also call upon local government workers to agree to give unemployed workers emergency payments - if this is not done the unemployed will only be alienated from the employed. Together the civil servants and the reserve army of labour can win!

### Lobby for the Four Million

The UWC cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Official unemployment has only been brought down to three million through naked fiddling and cruel intimidation. Even if there were *only* three million unemployed that would be three million too many. Every man and woman should have the right to work. This is what is needed, this is what the UWC demands, this is what the UWC is fighting for.

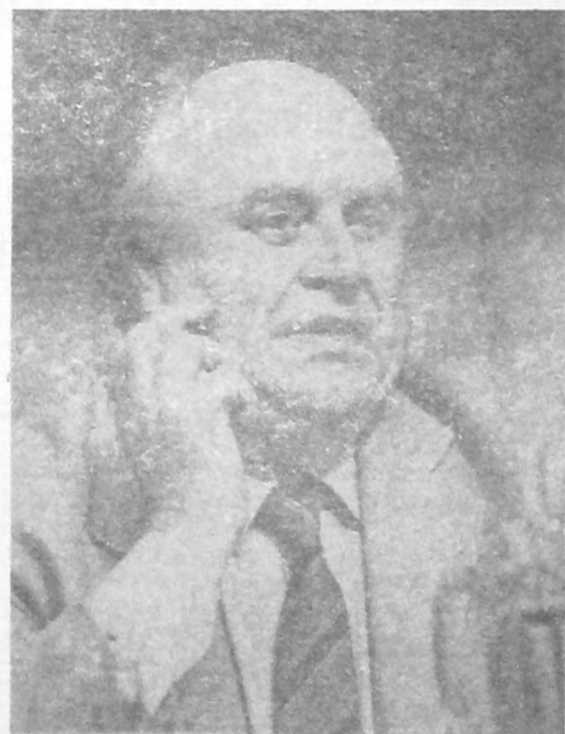
But while we can be justifiably



## UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CHARTER FIGHTING FOR THE FOUR MILLION



Civil Service workers are doing more for the unemployed by striking for themselves than Todd and Willis have ever done



pleased with our work, we can hardly claim to have stopped the state offensive against the unemployed. To do this requires a National Unemployed Workers' Movement. It requires the unity of unemployed and employed workers. That is why we are organising a Lobby for the Four Million at the TUC on September 8. We will be bringing 100 unemployed workers, each representing 40,000 of the unemployed - UB 40,000, we will tell them. They will Lobby the TUC for the Four Million. They will urge TUC delegates to support the UWC in two of its central demands - Break from the MSC - Organise the Unemployed.

For too long TUC tops like Willis and Todd have been good on the hot air about unemployment but no good fighting it. They seem

more concerned at keeping their three seats on the Manpower Services Commission than organising the 200,000 who suffer on its so-called training schemes. They say they will boycott the discredited JTS but not the MSC which will supervise it. This is hypocrisy. It is cooperating with the exploitation and harassment of the unemployed. They have bought their three seats with the blood and sweat of unemployed workers. They have sold us down the river.

This must not be allowed to continue. The TUC must break from the MSC. If it does not, then the UWC will go over its head to rank and file trade unionists. On behalf of the four million unemployed the UWC demands that the movement defends us and takes up the task of organising those out of work. That is why the UWC wants your sup-

port for the September 8 lobby.

We will need at least £1,000 to finance it - unemployed lobbyists will therefore rely on you. Collection sheets are now available. We are aiming for 10,000 signatures to sponsor our lobby.

Get your union and party organisation to be a sponsor and pay for the seats of individual unemployed workers.

We will soon be producing the first edition of our paper, *Unemployed Organiser*. We need you to sell it.

Above all, support our Lobby for the Four Million on September 8 in Blackpool.

Join the Unemployed Workers Charter. Write to UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX or phone (01) 431 3135

# Third Term Thatcherism

# LABOUR'S DEFEAT

# No Defeat for the Working Class



LABOUR was resoundingly defeated on June 11. That much is obvious and was easily predictable. Its vote was only 3.2% higher than the debacle of 1983 when support for Labour reached a post-World War II low. In the aftermath of that election Tony Benn called it a victory for socialism. In the same way today most of the left press is desperately scrabbling about trying to find light in the midst of Labour's gloom.

The Tories won the election but hurrah, hurrah, Labour won the moral argument. For the *Morning Star*, *Tribune*, *Socialist Action* and others Labour's campaign was absolutely brilliant. It certainly used all the gimmickry and razzamatazz associated with US presidential elections.

In fact Labour's whizz-kid PR men cynically created a Kinnoch personality cult in order to marginalise the Labour left. Did the pro-Labour left object? No way. It went along with it.

According to *7 Days*, it gave a "glimpse" of what "ought to become the norm for the left". (Will Martin Jacques be marketed in similar fashion – could he take the strain?) Not to be outdone *Socialist Organiser* in-

formed us that in the "campaign Neil Kinnoch spoke for millions of working class people." (Surely, in terms of voicing popular prejudice, so did Thatcher.)

Another reason for taking comfort is Thatcher's failure to replace Labour as the main opposition party. Before the general election, we are reminded, Thatcher was quoted as saying that the aim of her third term would be 'killing socialism'.

Apparently this was part of a grand design to reshape British politics along the lines of the US, where there is no Labour Party – only two virtually indistinguishable capitalist parties confronting each other. Because the LSD Alliance did not break the mould of British politics, because the Labour Party got 1.6 million more votes than 1983, Thatcher is supposed to have suffered a major set-back.

All these reassurances are of little use to the working class as it faces the prospect of the third term of Thatcherism. True, the Labour Party clawed back three percentage points and 20 MPs but there was a price to pay for Labour's very modest revival.

The Labour left was, with its consent, kept

well out of view. Arthur Scargill might object to this now – but he went along with it at the time. Why was there hardly a murmur of dissent from any of the so-called hard left of the Labour Party against Kinnock's campaign? They kept quiet because getting Kinnock into No 10 was seen to be above everything. The idea that Kinnock was the personification of the Labour Party was accepted along with the idea that being a left winger in the Labour Party was akin to having the plague.

The Labour left was therefore in no small measure responsible for Labour going into the 1987 election with policies well to the right of its 1983 manifesto. On almost every issue the Labour Party presented itself as a moderate version of the Tory Party, Kinnock as a caring version of Thatcher. This was the leitmotif, the essential message, which Mr Hugh (*Chariots of Fire*) Hudson projected in his much vaunted film.

Nonetheless, in spite of the Labour left being hidden away and in spite of Neil Kinnock's pre-election bravado that "Defeat is not on my agenda", Labour was defeated and defeated soundly.

## Explaining Labour's defeat

Why, after the horrors of two bouts of Thatcherism, did the Tories win in 1987? Why didn't Labour sweep the board? Most of the left press haven't a clue but they do have answers a-plenty.

It resulted from some sort of Thatcherite semi-fascist cultural revolution, imagine the editors of *Marxism Today*. The Political Committee of our CPGB goes along with this and puts it all down to "the continuing influence of Thatcherite ideology over sections of the workers". Others on a similar wave length have insisted the problem is more deep rooted. Labour has declined because there has been a profound change in the class composition of British society. The working class is dead, or at least an endangered species. It is confined to the decaying inner cities and the so-called 'Celtic fringe' of Britain.

It is hardly worth the space to answer such theories. Whatever else Thatcherism is it is not semi-fascism. The success of Thatcher, though, has catapulted opportunism to the right – and the further to the right they started, the further they have gone. *Marxism Today's* tactical voting for the LSD Alliance is a case in point. (The failure of the LSD Alliance has been a real set-back for the political ambitions of a certain M Jacques).

Anyway, over the last three general elections the Tory vote has not gone up in any significant way. In 1979 they got 13.6 million, this went down to 13.0 million in 1983 and, with a larger electorate, only increased to 13.7 million this June – the same vote the Tories secured in 1959 with an electorate some 7 million smaller. So much for the Thatcherite revolution!

As to the size of the Labour vote, it has declined over the last 40 years. But the Labour vote in no way points to the size of the working class. Suffice to say the working class has not collapsed.

It constitutes roughly 70% of the population and is as much a reality as capitalism itself. Capitalism would like to do without a working class, but it cannot. Theories about the end of the working class are not new. For example, in the early 1950s when the Labour vote was at an historic high we were told that we were all becoming middle class. In fact petty bourgeois academia has been announcing the death of the proletariat ever since the very dawn of capitalism.

Thatcher might have blooded the working class in her first two terms in office, but the working class is still on its feet. Its main mass organisations, the trade unions, are still intact despite anti-trade union laws, soaring unemployment and a radical restructuring of the economy.

## It was the Labour Party, not the working class, which was defeated on June 11

We say June 11 was a defeat for the Labour Party. If pressed, even the most bone headed Labour leftist would agree. But we also insist that a defeat for the Labour Party is not a defeat for the working class. This is something few would agree with, even the RCP's *ms* assessed June 11 as a defeat for the working class. "The outcome of the election" stated the June 19 edition "represents a setback for

the working class." (If this is the case, why did not the RCP call upon its supporters to vote Labour in constituencies where there was no Red Front candidate? We get no answer.)

So why do we insist the general election was not a defeat for the working class? Well basically because if we compare June 10 and June 12 there has been no change in the balance of class forces. Working class organisation is not in danger of being driven into the ground because of June 11. A third term for Thatcher is not the same as Adolf Hitler being invited to become German chancellor. There is no way we even can compare what happened on June 11 with the defeat of workers at Glasgow's Caterpillar factory, let alone the miners' Great Strike of 1984-5 or the 1926 General Strike.

Nor on the level of psychology do we see defeat. Few thought Labour would win. Working class morale has not taken a hammering – it is very low anyway. Are workers today suffering under a cloud of doom and despondency. No! At least not because of June 11. So while on occasion elections can be turning points in the method by which the ruling class rules, or important for the morale of the working class, 1987 was not.

But there are two other important reasons why we, it appears almost uniquely, do not feel the slightest tinge of despair about the results on June 11.

Firstly, the view that elections make history is not one we adhere to. It is a bourgeois theory. It is like suggesting that the succession of various kings and queens are the key events in a nation's history. Secondly, the idea that the Labour Party is synonymous with the working class is fundamentally incorrect. Let us present our case.

As Peter Wright's book shows, real power lies outside parliament. Decisions made in the Cabinet and in MI5, in the old boys' network and the big four banks, in the giant monopolies of finance capital and in the top brass of the armed forces, render democracy under capitalism a sham.

For this reason genuine communists have argued against the parliamentary system. We know full well that nothing can make parliament into an institution of socialism. Even if shorn of the geriatric House of Lords its structure, tradition and rigidity make it useless as a vehicle for revolution. No, if we are ever to see socialism, parliament and the rest of the bourgeois bureaucratic-military state will have to be shattered by revolution.

Elections reflect, they do not determine, the balance of class forces. June 11 was not and could not be a defeat for the working class.

## What sort of party is Labour? And using elections to prove it

The Labour Party is a workers' party, say our leftist friends. Indeed, as far they are concerned it is the mass party of the working class. This is only a half truth, and as we all know a half truth is also a half lie.

Yes, the Labour Party is a workers' party. But as Lenin pointed out it is led by "reactionaries, and the worst reactionaries at that, who act fully in the spirit of the bourgeoisie." Listening to Kinnock's pronouncements on law and order, the family, Ireland and the wonders of Japanese management style during the election campaign it is clear to see nothing has changed.

The Labour Party is still an organisation of the bourgeoisie, a bourgeois workers' party, which exists in order to systematically deceive the workers. This is the essence of the Labour Party. This explains its behaviour in and out of office.

Of all the publications of the various groupings, shades and tendencies in our communist movement, only *The Leninist* had a correct, principled and firmly pro-Party orientation in relation to the election on June 11.

Alone we pointed out that democracy under capitalism, with or without a Labour government, is a sham. Alone we stood on the programme of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, the programme of smashing parliament, even if there is a Labour majority, and smashing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie – even if it is hidden by a Labour government – replacing it with a dictatorship of the proletariat based on democratic organs of proletarian power, like soviets.

This did not mean we fell into the trap of dismissing parliament and elections as irrelevant. We know full well that elections can have psychological importance, moreover



Kinnock presents Labour as eminently respectable. For the moment he rules the roost but H

they can be used to expose the true nature of both bourgeois democracy and Labourism.

The victory of CPGB candidates in the early 1920s was not only an indication of working class militancy in those constituencies. It gave the entire class a boost. Likewise during the same period, when the Labour Party emerged for the first time as the largest parliamentary party this gave a feeling to workers that they were on their way. Of course they weren't – but they felt it.

Parliamentary elections create the illusion of popular democracy, not the reality. Because of this genuine communists have stood in elections in order to break illusions in parliament, not with the reformist idea of taking hold of it and using it. Those left reformists who think they can transform parliament invariably transform themselves into right reformists once they sniff ministerial office.

The proposals of the Labour left, the *Morning Star* and for that matter the Executive Committee of our CPGB for parliamentary reform and a reforming parliament are inevitably thoroughly utopian and often just plain silly. In terms of practical politics they are transparently unworkable. No wonder we can look back on a never ending line of left Labourites – lionised and backed by the opportunists – fighting to enter parliament in the name of the working class, only to become dyed in the wool moderates once there.

While this is certainly the general rule for those Labour leftists who manage to get into the House of Commons, it is an absolute rule for those Labour leftists who enter the cabinet. Tony Benn and Eric Heffer, for instance, are full of left rhetoric today, but when they were in government they acted in a manner little different from the run of the mill right wing Labour minister.

Because the left reformists project the state itself as an instrument which can be used for the purposes of socialism, the difference between them and communism is not one of different methods to achieve the same ends. We are after different ends. They foster illusions in the minds of the most militant sections of the working class about the nature of parliament and the state. Communists are out to smash the state, not transform it.

Unless the left reformists are politically defeated there can be no hope for socialism in Britain. Communists should therefore use elections in an effort to expose the socialist credentials of left reformism. This is exactly what our paper argued for.

This is particularly important in Britain, where one and a half centuries of imperialist plunder have made illusions in parliament and reformism particularly deep. Lenin was well aware of this problem. That is why he advocated that the young CPGB should apply to affiliate to the Labour Party and support Labour candidates in elections.

The Labour Party had just adopted its clause four. It was pretending it would introduce socialism. As this claim had never been tested in practice, many believed Labour was genuinely socialist. Lenin wanted the CPGB to help Labour into office in order to expose it, in order to break workers from it and in order to create the basis for a mass CPGB.

Lenin was quite clear – affiliation to the Labour Party, with the precondition of complete freedom of criticism, would help to expose the Labour leaders, as would their refusal to countenance it. As to supporting Labour in elections, with characteristic bluntness Lenin said this support was like a rope supporting a hanged man.

How the opportunists, like the Straight Leftists and the NCPers, have gutted Lenin's advice of its revolutionary content and turned it into dead doctrine to excuse their Labourphilia! They consider it the sacred duty of communists to defend the Labour Party, to love it and ignore the fact that its attacks on the working class are an inevitable result of its very nature.

Not surprisingly, following Labour's poor performance on June 11 these opportunist elements believe the key task for communists is to offer up remedies to enable the Labour Party to regain the vigour it had in the 1950s. New Communist Party General Secretary, Eric Trevett, blames the June 11 defeat on "the weakening of Labour links with the working class", and a refusal to identify with the mass industrial struggles. Along with the Straight Leftists and Tony Chater's *Morning Star*, he presents a typically centrist cure. If Kinnock were to stand by bold socialist policies Labour would stage a full recovery.

For us this goes to show just how tight is the grip of parliamentary cretinism over these frustrated centrist quacks. We on the other hand do not make a fetish about Labour parliamentary majorities and certainly do not consider it our task to give friendly advice to the Labour Party.

While the centrists consider the place for all communists to be in the Labour Party, we say it is in the Communist Party. Where they call for a Labour vote as a principle, we say it is a tactical question. Where they say only a Labour government offers a serious possibility for radical change in Britain, we say reforging our CPGB as an alternative to Labourism is what is required.

The centrist position has nothing to do with Leninism. Labour will never introduce socialism. We have seen many Labour governments and they have all been just as reactionary as the Tory ones. If Labour was led by a Benn, a Hatton or a Tariq Ali we might be correct to call for a tactical vote for Labour. But Kinnock did not even promise socialism. Many of those who voted Labour did so because they could see no viable alter-



ton and 'Militant' are not finished

native.  
Our task was therefore clear. We said: no vote for Labour. We put our efforts into emphasising the need to reforge the CPGB as an alternative to Labourism. We said: vote for CPGB candidates with your eyes open; organise the class to fight whoever wins the election.

*No viable alternative to Labour exists at present ... and most of the left are not even attempting to build one*

Elections are not the motor of history – it is the class struggle which performs that function. This is not to say elections are unimportant. They photograph, in blurred and distorted fashion, the class struggle, above all the state of the battle of ideas. This means they can be used as a rough measure to gauge the level of support which revolutionary politics commands.

What does June 11 tell us on this score? If we are to go by the result of the three working class organisations which fielded candidates against the Labour Party it is clear that there is no viable alternative yet in existence. Our Party only stood 19 candidates and although most of these were in areas of very many years of communist work, only 6,078 votes were obtained.

The results for the RCP's Red Front were pathetic. Nonetheless in comparison with our Party it did not do at all badly. Its 14 candidates got between them 3,198 votes. As to the WRP (*News Line*), in the throes of what it describes as a pre-revolutionary situation, and sometimes even a revolutionary situation, its five candidates won 794 votes! This should tell the WRP something about the subjective and objective conditions which prevail in Britain today. But those whom the gods wish to destroy ...

Clearly the support for revolutionary ideas is not strong – even if we considered the votes for the CPGB, Red Front and WRP represent only the tip of the iceberg of those who want socialist revolution in Britain – and we do believe that to be the case.

But how strong is the hold of Labourism over the minds of the working class? Will the fact that the Labour Party was defeated on June 11 produce a wave of demoralisation? We don't think so.

The working class is objectively strong but subjectively weak. As a class it consists of millions of individuals. It is organised into powerful trade unions. Yet the vast mass of the working class has no vision beyond bourgeois politics. Its leadership is conservative, cowardly and thoroughly Labourite. This does not put the working class in an ideal

position from which to fight back against the Thatcher third term. But the hold of Labourism is obviously not as strong as it once was and its hold is usually one of passive acceptance, not active involvement. This means working class morale is too low to be hit for six by the results of June 11.

Those who will suffer disorientation are not rank and file workers but the leaders and rank and file of the various left organisations. The reason for this is simple.

Most left organisations are tied to Labourism in a far more intimate way than the average Labour voter. Most do not even make a pretence at building an alternative to Labourism. For this reason it is these forces which will plunge into depression because of June 11. It is they – not the working class – which has been building up Kinnock's Labour Party into something it is not: a working class alternative to capitalism.

To these forces we must adopt a firm but patient approach. We must make it crystal clear that the working class is strong when it is engaged in collective struggle, not when the Labourites have a majority in the mother of parliaments.

We must also explain that Labour governments may result from working class strength, as when the miners forced Heath to go to the country in February 1974 asking 'who rules?' But once ensconced in plush Whitehall offices Labour's ministers do all in their power to defuse militancy in the working class.

Even in opposition the Labour front bench does everything in its power to distance itself from strike action and, on not a few occasions, everything in its power to knife working class resistance in the back, as was the case with the miners' Great Strike in 1984-5.

Unfortunately much of the left (including our centrists) regard this as essentially irrational behaviour. After all, such betrayals only result in working class disillusionment and the election of a Tory government, don't they? We must again explain that the Labour leadership acts in a perfectly rational way – in the interests of capitalist rationality. The reason for this can be seen when one understands what sort of party Labour actually is – a party of the bourgeoisie.

*The Tory majority*

Let us now turn to the Tories' 101 seat victory. How did they manage it? Well it was not Thatcher's personality, nor her policies. Her style does not endear itself to the masses. While die-hard Tories worship her, it is no exaggeration to say that she is not just disliked, she is loathed by the rest of the population. Thatcher comes over, especially on TV, as smarmy, patronising and cold. This and her policies have not just produced a loathing. It has produced hatred ... and they

hate her in a way that hardly has precedent.

Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald and Ted Heath were all, in comparison, loved by the working class. When the Brighton bomb went off the IRA was rubbished in working class pubs and clubs the length and breadth of the country. It was not that it had made an attempt on the life of the British PM. No, the IRA was criticised because of its failure, because it did not get 'that woman'.

This depth of feeling is not surprising. Thatcher's return to Victorian values oozes hostility and animosity against the working class. During the miners' Great Strike Thatcher took a most Victorian sadistical pleasure in blaming the miners and their families for the hunger and deprivation they suffered. Blacks, women and gays are likewise in true Victorian fashion blamed for the oppression they face. Her attitude towards the unemployed is equally sick and Victorian – she insists that it is their fault that they are unemployed.

This ideological approach plus the actual effect of the Thatcher years on trade union bargaining power, job security, democratic liberties and the prospects for youth, means Thatcher is not liked by the majority of the population. Nor is her party. Its massive majority was due to four major factors.

1. The mechanisms of the British first-past-the-post parliamentary system.
2. The battle of ideas has been won over the opposition parties.
3. Thatcher has built a solid constituency which openly supports capitalism.
4. There is a crisis of Labourism.

Let us deal first with the effects of the first-past-the-post system. What we have to say here is straightforward and can easily be agreed by all democrats. The Tories have no popular mandate. They only secured the support of 13.76 million people or 43% of those who voted – and only around 75% of the electorate did. What is more, 2.5 million people who were eligible did not put their names on the electoral register. The Tories do not enjoy the support of the majority of the population.

Now we shall turn to the second factor – the battle of ideas. This will take a bit longer simply because it is more contentious.

Although the Tories owe their parliamentary majority to a minority of the population and the first-past-the-post system, this should not be allowed to hide the fact that they were victorious in more ways than one. The pro-Labourite left might find comfort in Labour's show-biz campaign but not only did the Tories win the election, they also won the battle of ideas.

In a sense there were three Thatcherite parties vying for votes on June 11. *Marxism Today* quite rightly told us in its May issue that the politics of the Alliance "have a surprising amount in common with Labour". True, but then it would also be true to say that Alliance and Labour politics have a surprising amount in common with the Tories. Not surprisingly *Marxism Today* did not point this out.

They are all Thatcherite now. Her openly pro-capitalist approach to a whole range of issues – morality, industrial relations, defence, the economy, law and order – has, since 1979, gained hegemony over all the main establishment parties.

Why should this be? Capitalism, as we are repeatedly told, is in crisis. Strikes will become more bitter and drawn out, there will be resistance and revolts. This we have already seen. And we have seen them defeated. Under such conditions some think capitalism will be rejected simply because it is unpleasant. This utopian approach believes politics loyally follows the everyday experience of the workaday world. It does not.

Yes, capitalism in crisis creates the objective basis to fight for revolutionary solutions. But the working class needs confidence and a clear sighted strategy if it is to carry out its historical mission, and for that it needs a Communist Party. Only with the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party can the working class realise itself as a class and break free of the ideological confines of capitalism. This is ABC Leninism.

Without such a party – and we have no such party today – the working class can only operate as a class within the capitalist system and fall prey to demoralisation and ideas which offer pro-capitalist solutions to the crisis. This the Tories do more effectively than Labour.

In bourgeois political terms the Labour Party was wrong footed by the Tories on a

number of issues. The commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament made Labour appear naive compared with the hard nosed Tories. In a similar way Labour's promises on taxation, nuclear power and trade unions appeared dicey – at least to those voters whose political horizons do not go beyond the capitalist system.

Razzamatazz there was, yet Kinnock could not present the Labour Party as a real alternative to the Tories, simply because it is not. His commitment to the capitalist system meant that he, unlike previous Labour leaders at election times, did not promise any measures of far reaching reform, let alone socialism. Instead he promised the continuation of mass unemployment but less of it, scrapping nuclear weapons but increased spending on non-nuclear weapons, no new anti-trade union laws but the maintenance of the existing ones.

In a period of boom, Labour and Tory leaders could compete with each other in offering juicy reforms. But we are now in a period when stagnation, austerity and belt tightening are the order of the day. This is something demanded by the logic of capitalism, a logic which the Tories with Thatcher have embraced and a logic which Labour has gone along with – but with hesitation and uncertainty. Kinnock's attempt to outbid Thatcher in reaction did not and could not work. She kept upping the stakes.

But Labour has not just been wrong footed or out-bid by the Tories. Thatcher has created a relatively broad social grouping which openly supports capitalism, and this has coincided with a crisis of reformism.

Before turning to the question of reformism's crisis we will deal with what might be called the social basis for Thatcherism. The fact that the opposition parties are now 'Thatcherite' is not just related to the fact that capitalist ideas will tend to dominate in a capitalist society.

The ideas Thatcher puts forward have certain definite features. She champions the idea of the independent individual, and that the state is bad. It should be kept out of things as much as possible, she says. People should be allowed the widest possible choice and control over their lives through the operation of market forces.

There is of course a huge difference between the theory of the property owning democracy – people's capitalism – and the actual reality of four million unemployed, low pay and the massive increase in the power of the monopolies. But the notion of Thatcherite man and woman has a social reality. There is a broad social stratum, deliberately cultivated by the Thatcher government, which is loyal to openly capitalist ideas.

The Tory majority came from the votes of that minority which is doing well out of the capitalist system, those who have enjoyed steadily increasing incomes, bought their own homes and made a quick buck on selling a few shares during the Thatcher years. In other words, the affluent middle class and the upper echelons of the working class.

There has been a widening of the ownership of capital. This is a fact. Millions now possess stocks and shares. Millions more have bought their own council houses and seen their value appreciate beyond their wildest dreams. Most of those in work have enjoyed steadily rising incomes and those with skills in short supply have seen their wages double.

This has widened divisions in the working class. The divisions are not clearly defined, hard and fast. Nonetheless three main groups can be defined. On the top we have the upper echelon which votes Tory or perhaps Alliance. In the middle is a stratum which traditionally votes Labour but is shrinking as industry is restructured. Some rise from it as others fall into that section which has suffered the main burden of the Thatcher years – the unemployed, temporary workers, the de-skilled. They now constitute a massive reserve army of labour, the very bottom of which has been reduced to the level of a lumpen proletariat. This stratum does not bother to vote. It is unorganised and totally disaffected.

*The divisions in the Labour Party are endemic but there is now a crisis of Labourism*

British politics has become more polarised and more fluid. The Labour Party has been the chief victim – at least for the present. It has been the subject of sharp swings to the

