

Dump the Birch party

BAN THE BIRCH

The CWM was founded by Marxist-Leninists who resigned from the 'Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)' because there was no longer any possibility of working as Communists within that organization. Their decision has been proved correct; the 'CPB(M-L)' has become more and more counter-revolutionary.

The Chairman of 'CPB(M-L)' is Reg Birch, who was a member of the AUEW (Engineers Union) executive and TUC General Council. He was once a good trade union militant, but he gradually became a 'left' trade union bureaucrat, and his views and outlook have shaped those of 'CPB(M-L)' in such a big way that it is quite appropriate to refer to it as "the Birch party."

Apologist for union mis-leadership

At one time, the Birch party tailed behind the spontaneous struggles of the working class. But as Birch negotiated one sell-out after another, it became, in reality, an enemy even of many of those limited economic struggles.

This was clearly shown in "The Worker" (Birch's Beano) last month. A front page article gave the result of the engineering workers' strike as a great victory -- "Engineers Spearhead Workers' Advance", it was headed. Birch should try telling this to militant rank and file workers -- the vast majority of them think that the gains won were pathetic, and the way in which they were manipulated by their leadership instead of being able to argue and discuss the best way forward for themselves was disgusting.

These workers were fighting for a 35 hour week, to come into effect within 3 years, but they got a 39 hour week, in 2 years

time, and their unions have undertaken not to press for further reductions for another 2 years! A minimum wage of £80 was demanded, but only £73 was won! The poor gains of the strike and the way the union leaders conducted it have not assisted the engineering workers to build up their strength, combative spirit and self-confidence in struggle with their employers one bit. These are key objectives. Real communists must help their fellow workers to achieve them in economic struggles with capitalists!

Labour aristocrat

Obviously, Birch is completely out of touch with the workers he used to "represent," as well as with Marxism. He is what Lenin referred to as a "labour aristocrat" -- not a typical one, it's true, since he doesn't live in quite the style to which some of them are accustomed, but a labour aristocrat all the same.

Lenin said that the Labour aristocracy was a tiny section of the working class who were bribed by the capitalist class to serve their interests out of imperialist superprofits. Most of the top trade union leadership and many leading Labour party and 'Communist Party of Great Britain' members belong to this stratum.

Lenin didn't mean that capitalists come up to such people and said, "Here's a thousand pounds, now do so-and-so"; the bribery was generally more subtle and less conscious than that, and it has changed a bit since then in form. It now involves encouraging working class leaders to mix socially with members of the ruling

class, getting them more and more used to their values. In addition, these leaders pay themselves well out of union or party funds, getting expense accounts, etc.

Opponent of Leninism

It is no wonder, then, that Birch objects most strongly to the term "labour aristocracy;" it must strike him to the heart. Thus, in one of his latest offerings, "Congress 1979" (apparently a speech from the latest 'CPB(M-L)' conference), Birch says "Lenin's argument that workers in the industrial heartlands were bribed by imperialism's "super profits" and were elevated to the lofty

heights of a labour aristocracy, is the very antithesis of reality. This whole fallacy was a pathetic attempt to explain why the workers in Western Europe had not made revolution!"

Note how he distorts Lenin! Going by Birch's account, the uninformed reader would get the impression that Lenin held that all workers in Western Europe had been bribed, not, as Lenin actually said, a tiny minority!

Birch's organization is isolated internationally, regarding itself as the sole upholder of Marxism (!). At home and abroad, its leadership is isolated from the working class and from the real world.

A GREAT MARXIST-LENINIST

Reg Birch is worse than a national chauvinist. For him, Britain seems to be the centre of the world. He has often come out with gems like, "Shakespeare was the world's first Marxist playwright," and statements that the British working class is the most advanced in the world.

But he goes beyond that. In "London Murder" (a Birchite pamphlet), his party refers to London as the capital of the British working class. A special mention is often given to engineering works in the Park Royal area of London where Birch once worked. The engineers of the AUEW are always being given prominence as leaders of the working class (AUEW was Birch's union, of course), and Birch has stated that the organization of the Bolshevik Party was based on the AUEW rule book.

Thus, Britain is the centre of the world, the British working

class is the most advanced, London and the AUEW are the most important centres of the British working class and ... well, no-one can say that Reg doesn't have a certain modesty. He leaves it to his most devoted, unquestioning admirers to put him at the centre of all this. One of them replied when a member of the CWM suggested that Birch was a little weak on theory, "But Reg Birch is one of the greatest Marxist theoreticians of our time!"



Reg Birch