

The LENINIST

Summer Offensive pp4-5
 State censorship pp6-7
 Brooke talks p8
 Obituary: Eric Heffer p9

Liverpool: Support Lesley Mahmood

Statement by the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB

THE WALTON by-election is of national importance. Kinnock knows it, we know it, the ruling class knows it. The issue is clear. Peter Kilfoyle is standing for Kinnock's party on a programme of attacking workers' jobs and council services, and doing everything to show the bosses that their system will be safe in Labour's hands.

That is why his campaign relies on busing in Labour MPs and trade union functionaries. That is why his campaign seeks to benefit from Alan Bleasdale's scurrilous and ludicrous anti-working class TV drama *GBH*. That is why his campaign is backed by *The Sun*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror* and other 'friends of the working class'.

Kilfoyle's opponent on the left is Lesley Mahmood, a supporter of Militant Tendency and the Broad Left. She has been expelled from the Labour Party in Liverpool, along with 600 other victims of witch-hunter general Kilfoyle. Her 'crime' is no crime for any class conscious worker: opposing the poll tax and mass redundancies.

Where Kilfoyle is the very model of a model Kinnockite careerist, Mahmood promises that she will be a workers' MP

on a workers' wage. Kilfoyle has the backing of Walworth Road and Labour councillors who have just voted for compulsory redundancies and privatisation. Mahmood has the backing of militant rank and file trade unionists, those who want to fight the Tory government and the effects of capitalist decline.

For partisans of the working class the choice is obvious: there can be no support for Kilfoyle or Kinnock's Labour Party. We must support Lesley Mahmood: a victory for the Broad Left will be a victory for struggle over passivity, a victory for those who call themselves socialists against the explicitly pro-capitalist politics of the Labour Party, a victory for the future against the past.

Mahmood's campaign wants and needs supporting trade union resolutions, donations and canvassers. It should get them. It should also get the support of all left wing groups and publications, along with all



Despite press hate campaigns - and Derek Hatton - Militant has been forced to fight

MPs who consider themselves socialists, including Terry Fields and David Nellist.

Those Trotskyites deep in the La-

bour Party who say Mahmood is splitting the Labour vote are right. It is possible that this might let in the Liberal Democrats. But the concern of real revolutionaries should not be the fortunes of the Labour Party, the bosses' "second eleven". Our concern is the interests of the working class and the struggle for socialism.

As communists we cannot give Mahmood and the Broad Left anything other than critical support. We want to see Mahmood elected in order to show those who support her that we need to go further, that we need a party of revolution, a Communist Party, not a Broad Left, not a 'socialist' Labour Party nor a 'real' Labour Party.

Militant is an organisation which says it is revolutionary and Marxist. In practice it is committed to reformism. It still believes that socialism can come through a Labour majority in parliament, it still

says "Labour to power on a socialist programme". Yet the fact of the matter is that Labour has never been a socialist party; that is why when it comes to power it always carries out the wishes of capitalism.

In Liverpool Militant has pushed its strategy as far as it can go. The effortless expulsions of its activists show the futility of its whole perspective. In spite of all its past protestations that the only way forward is to stay in the Labour Party and to subordinate everything to the hopeless attempt to change it, Militant has been forced by reality to break (whether temporarily or permanently remains to be seen) from its own programme.

Mahmood might call herself the candidate of the 'real' Labour Party. However in practice her decision to stand disproves the notion that Labour can be transformed into a socialist party. It points to the necessity of workers in Britain building a genuine alternative, not only to Kinnock's Labour Party but to capitalism itself. That party can only be the Communist Party, the party we are committed to reorganising.

Glasgow Central - Rhondda - Bethnal Green and Stepney - Brent East

Vote communist

Statement of the four prospective parliamentary candidates of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, issued on June 4:

THE COMMUNIST Party's decision to stand candidates in the forthcoming general election introduces a unique element into the charade that passes for 'democracy' in Britain. In four constituencies there will be the chance to vote for a genuine working class alternative to the true blue Tories of John Major and the pale pink 'Tories' under Neil Kinnock.

The working class of this country have been kicked from pillar to post for the past twelve years, first under Thatcher and now under her chosen successor, John Major. In the face of the onslaught on our democratic rights, our jobs and living standards, the Labour

Party has yet again proved itself worse than useless.

There is no reason for any worker who wants to defend their class to vote for the Labour Party. Labour has always been a bosses' "second eleven". But now, there is not even any reason to have illusions in the Labour Party. If elected, Kinnock promises more of the same type of punishment that the Tories have dished out to us.

A vote for Communist Party candidates is a different matter. We will enter parliament committed first and last to defending the interests of the working class. In contrast to the half-hearted pillow fight that presently constitutes debate in the House of Commons, our

MPs will waive parliamentary niceties to hammer the message home - *the profits of the bosses are the bosses' problem, we are here to defend the jobs, the living standards, the rights of our class!*

All Communist Party candidates, if elected, will take only the wages of the average worker in their constituency from the generous handouts that MPs regularly vote themselves. The rest will be used to strengthen the organisations of the working class.

Our MPs will enter parliament not as pompous 'legislators', but as a guerrilla unit in the enemy camp. Our main aim will be to use parliament as a platform from which to expose the hypoc-

ris, double-dealing and vicious anti-working class nature of this institution of 'democracy'. Through parliament, our MPs will work to build the fightback where it really matters - not in the dusty halls of Westminster, but in mass movements of ordinary workers.

Our election campaign will therefore be completely different to that of Labour, for whom the working class electorate is just a ticket to Westminster. Our campaign is for and with the working class. Our campaign aims to spread the politics of communism within the working class, and build the Communist Party our class needs if it is to get capitalism off its back.

A vote for the candidates of the

Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party is a vote for socialism, a vote for revolution, a vote for the future! We call on all workers to take a stand with the Communist Party! Vote CPGB and fightback!

Tam Dean Burn, prospective parliamentary candidate - Glasgow Central.

Mark Fischer, prospective parliamentary candidate - Rhondda.

Stan Kelsey, prospective parliamentary candidate - Bethnal Green and Stepney.

Anne Murphy, prospective parliamentary candidate - Brent East.



Central Organ of the
Provisional Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Great Britain

JIANG QING died on May 14 1991 at the age of 77. After serving nearly 15 years of a life sentence for attempting to 'usurp' the power of the party and state, she was reported as having taken her own life. However, in spite of the efforts of her accusers and detractors, the name of Jiang Qing will forever be associated with China, Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution.

Jiang Qing was an exceptional woman. Born in 1914 in the poverty stricken province of Shandong, she broke from the servile position expected of her sex at the age of 15. Against the wishes of the grandparents who brought her up, she joined a travelling theatre. This led to a career in the world of the arts and literature. Presented as a philistine in the west she was in truth, through her own efforts, highly cultured and highly educated. She acted in many films and plays, and studied at the Jinan college of experimental drama and the Lu Xun college of arts and literature in Yanan, some of China's most important cultural institutions.

Above all though, Jiang Qing was a revolutionary and a communist. She joined the Communist Party of China in 1933. When Japan launched its war of conquest in 1937 she fled Shanghai and made her way to the distant red base area in Shaanxi province, which Mao Zedong and his comrades had established after surviving the heroic Long March. In 1939 she married Mao, who gave her the name we know her by (she was born Li Shumeng).

Before 1966 she played a relatively obscure role in the politics of People's China, concentrating mainly on the arts. But during the course of that year Jiang Qing shot to prominence through her leading position on the Cultural Revolution Group. For ten years this made her a central figure in China's leadership.

After the 1949 revolution many in the Communist Party of China became increasingly perturbed by the bureaucratisation of the state, increasingly frustrated by the slow pace of progress and the erosion of the egalitarian spirit that characterised the protracted struggle for socialism and national liberation. First and foremost among them was Mao Zedong himself.

Unfortunately his politics were never fully Marxist. Although he was a brilliant leader and a profound thinker, Mao had in essence a petty bourgeois revolutionary world outlook. This led him to dangerous voluntarism and dangerous experimentalism. Jiang Qing too suffered from these faults.

In the late 1950s Mao's utopianism took the form of the disastrous so-called Great Leap Forward, an attempt to achieve 20 years of 'normal' economic growth in one mighty spasm of industrialisation. It was a great failure. As a result Mao found his power considerably curbed. In spite of the schism with Khrushchev and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, China was undoubtedly on the same road as the Soviet Union. It showed the same problems of alienation, corruption and conservatism: it was, after all, an example of the same socio-economic formation, bureaucratic socialism.

It was against this background that Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. Of course in many respects the Cultural Revolution was a factional power struggle. But to leave it there is to miss its true significance. As a factional power struggle the Cultural Revolution undoubtedly took an *unconventional* form.

The Cultural Revolution did not rely on the closed session of a congress or backroom manoeuvre. Nor did it rely on conveniently sudden illness or the midnight knock on the door, ie the classic methods of bureaucratic socialism. Mao was either too politically weak to do any of that or too imaginative. He turned to the mass, in particular the youth.

This is where Jiang Qing and the Cultural Revolution Group came in. Using Mao's existing great personal status, developing a personality cult of religious proportions to increase that status, they were able to mobilise a huge movement of tens of millions, spearheaded by the Red Guards. Sweeping aside the bureaucratic establishment, it launched itself against many of the genuine evils of bureaucratic socialism.

There were many wrongs, many crimes on the way. There was certainly chaos. Yet, in spite of the many examples of self-organisation from below, this was in essence a utopian movement launched from above (the army was always kept on the side lines, ready to keep order if necessary). Nevertheless in a real way it was a form of *political revolution*. That is the significance of the Cultural Revolution Jiang Qing led.

The Cultural Revolution shows that in the remaining socialist countries a *proletarian* political revolution can win certain sections of the state machine, can smash the headquarters of counter-revolution, can put an end to the "historic turn" to capitalism, can again open up the road to communism.

The Editor

Six month subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £8; Europe £11; Rest of World £13 (airmail £20.50). Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £16 (Institutions £26); Europe £22 (Institutions £32); Rest of World £26, airmail £41 (Institutions £36, airmail £46). Back issues: Issues 1-6 (theoretical journal) £1 each plus 25p p&p. Other issues 50p plus p&p. Cheques payable to November Publications Ltd. Printed by: Multiline Systems Ltd, 22-24 Powell Road, London E5 (081-985 3753). Published by: November Publications Ltd, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX (071-431 3135). Copyright June 1991 ISSN 0262-1649

LETTERS

Unity 1

At a time when unity of the Communist movement is more essential than ever, you seem determined to vilify all other trends but your own. Whilst I tend to agree with most of your arguments, you surely do not think that you have a monopoly of all Marxist wisdom. I have friends in all the communist parties and am prepared to discuss all issues on an equal basis with them. It therefore dismays me to read the confrontational attitudes you adopt to the rest of us.

Surely there must be some common ground which can link us, rather than the purist stance you take?

John Wigmore
Exeter

Unity 2

The smell of communist "unity", and "communist" revival is in the air. Not a sweet smell, more like the stench of decay, of drowning swimmers trying to hold hands. In Glasgow a communist unity meeting is called by the "Scottish Communist Unity Committee". In the north of England strange bedfellows, the New Communist Party (anti-British Road to Socialism) and the Communist Party of Britain (pro-British Road) organise joint meetings.

In *Changes* letter after letter (inspired mainly by Straight Leftists) pleads for a membership ballot over dropping the name "communist".

So what is all this all about? Just wallowing in nostalgia. These unitarians do not even understand the world, so what hope have they of changing it?

There is only one form of communist unity - on the principles of Marx, Engels and Lenin: in other words unity in action on the understanding of a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and the stepping on to the road through socialism to communism by the assumption of workers' power - the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The only group in Britain which seems to be attempting to achieve this unity is that led by the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Genuine Communists should support and join with it.

Reg Weston
Kent

No vanguard

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for both publishing your critique of *Open Polemic*, and the response from us.

However, I would wish to point out that not all of the editorial board are ex members of Proletarian or the NCP. I myself come from a background of the Trotskyist tradition and have moved from one organisation to another in an attempt to find the organisation I could consider ready to assume the role of the vanguard party. This goal was never achieved, all I did find was that the different organisations only had one thing in common - an absolute hate of their revolutionary comrades in other organisations.

The perpetual bickering and lack of a coherent strategy in building a proper vanguard party forced me to leave the 'organised' communist movement.

It is for those reasons I support the *Open Polemic* project, I believe that unless the myriad of so called vanguards start speaking to each other seriously and without the usual churlish behaviour then the communist goals in Britain will remain a pipe

dream. *Open Polemic* as a project is there as a vehicle for that polemic. It is not attempting to be the basis of yet another vanguard. I will willingly rejoin the organised communist movement once a single vanguard party with a coherent strategy has been formed, until that point I will continue to support *Open Polemic* for the reasons stated above.

Alistair Parker
Open Polemic

Elections

The most apt comment for the statement of your Provisional Central Committee (*The Leninist* No102) would be 'much the same as always' not 'only just beginning'.

The same slugging off of other groups which claim to be Marxist, the same critique of parliament and the same bubbling optimism for your own brand. It has led nowhere for the thirty-something years I have known the communist movement and it will lead nowhere.

For more years than I care to recall you have rubbished parliament and then stood candidates. The civil liberties that we enjoy were not given away by Cromwell, Walpole, Pitt, Peel and Major nor were they given away by their supporters. Our 'rights' were won by the Levellers turned off St George's Hill, Weybridge. By Diggers destroyed in Puritan England. By the people who died at Peterloo. By a woman being killed by the king's horse at Epsom. By thousands of unnamed, unsung, beaten, imprisoned and murdered people of these islands. Almost all of them would recognise that today we vote Labour with all of the reservations about the leadership. Any other action allows their enemies and our enemies to wear the mantle of democracy.

With your rejection of 'national roads to socialism' you have jumped back to the schism that led to Trotskyism and Stalinism and the latter you reject. The real analysis of the first 68 years of Soviet rule has to appreciate the debilitating, destructive effect of the overt and covert intervention, the problems of inheriting the Tsarist bureaucracy, the cost of supporting the cordon sanitaire for 35 years, and the human sacrifice necessary in amassing capital. To survive the Soviet government closed society down, they were besieged. Almost all experimenting stopped, they became unscientific until Gorbachev's group were elected by the old guard of Gromyko et al.

Six years ago the Soviet leadership decided that they were strong enough to no longer need a cordon sanitaire. They decided that they were strong enough to cope with any covert or overt intervention. They believed that whatever forces took to the streets of the Soviet Union the achievements were secure. Essentially they returned to the path of science, the path of uncertainty and leaps in the dark. Creativity and experimentation. At the same time they released from suspended animation the Soviet bloc.

Because it is science no-one knows the answers. The outcome can only be guessed at. It might be a return to capitalism, it might not include the CPSU. However one thing is certain, the CPSU opened the door to pioneering activity. Out of the chaos will come a society that has amongst its ingredients Marxism. As a consequence our future is brighter than ever before. All you have to do is become *scientific!*

Lawrence Finley
Surrey

'Stalinite'?

Paul Conlon (*The Leninist* No102) does no service to anti-imperialism by his ignorant diatribe against Trotsky.

Evidently he has not read Trotsky's letter to Rivera ('On the Sino Japanese War' 1937) only the part quoted by *Workers Press*, which serves as his cue to launch a sweeping attack on all shades of "Trotskyist" opinion, reinforced by a garbled and dishonest account of Trotsky's views. Certainly he has not read Trotsky's many other writings on China in which he consistently attacks the Stalinist policy of forcing the Chinese communists into a disastrous relationship with Chiang Kai-Shek.

In the letter to Rivera, Trotsky argues that the Chinese workers should participate in the war against Japan "without abandoning for a single moment their own programme and independent activity". In Conlon's hands this is portrayed as "lack of class understanding" and then as a "community of class interest theory". Yet even Conlon acknowledges that the workers should "fight against feudal-capitalist China and the Japanese imperialists, for an uninterrupted revolution through to socialism." In order to score a point against Trotskyism he has to invent the fiction of "unity with Chiang Kai-Shek."

China was not just feudal-capitalist but a semi-colony "which Japan is transforming under our very eyes into a colonial country" (Trotsky). Communist policy should be determined by concrete analysis, not by dogma. Hence, both Conlon and *Workers Press* are wrong to appeal to the China question to "prove" a point regarding the Gulf War. Not all by any means of those claiming to be Trotskyist adopted the policy of Victory to Iraq, only those he finds it convenient to select.

In my own view these slogans did compromise the political independence of the workers' movement, though not as much as resorting to linking up with pacifists to lobby the US embassy. By contrast, the Workers League (USA) and the International Communist Party here have put forward a class strategy to defeat imperialism, but you have chosen to ignore this (and also ignore their polemic against *The Leninist*). Perhaps a truthful account would not sit well with Conlon's resounding declarations about "Leninism unadulterated by the falsehoods of Trotsky", all delivered in the pompous and verbose style which in happier times might have earned him a job writing *Pravda* editorials.

All Conlon's anti-Trotskyist bigotry is just a smoke-screen for *The Leninist's* failure to explain its own origins as a tendency. It emerged only recently to challenge the Euro reformists. Where was the "Leninist" tendency or its precursors in the previous 50 years? Despite your present readiness to make occasional criticisms of Stalin your forbears as a Leninist tendency did not exist and your forbears as members of the Party you are now trying to raise from the dead were the loyal servants of 'official communism' (read Stalinist bureaucracy). Scratch a "provisional Leninist" and find a neo-Stalinite?

Mike Martin
Sheffield

Italian trip

I was fortunate enough to spend a long weekend in Venice over June 7-9 as representative of the CPGB Provisional Central Committee and guest of the Italian CNNA (anti-nuclear anti-imperialist coordination) at their 1,000 strong international conference "Against the Europe of the bosses. Let's build the Europe of the movements".

CNNA was set up in 1983 by Autonomia Operaia (Workers' Autonomy), which itself came from the merging of a diverse multitude of revolutionaries and militant activists whose organisations had disintegrated in ideological disarray, and who came together on the anti-Leninist principles of no common ideology and no centralised leadership - principles which

LETTERS

ensure that Autonomia cannot seriously approach the question of making revolution.

Nevertheless, the conference was a lively affair, with a mass of spirited young activists busy in the squatters movement, where Autonomia comrades have combined with immigrants to seize empty buildings, in campaigns around prisons as well as "workplace self-organisation outside the unions". *The Leninist* and the *International Information Bulletin* were widely distributed.

A week before the conference one of the squatted social centres was burnt down by fascists, killing one young activist, and the conference met under the cloud of a threatening letter sent to Autonomia's Radio Sherwood in Padua naming 19 individuals as targets, and promising action to damage the conference. Meanwhile, the Italian press was reporting the arrival of "terrorists" from England, Germany and elsewhere.

In the plenary meetings and the workshops, the emphasis of Autonomia was clearly on the "periphery" - the localities and neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities, the unemployed, and the 'Third World' or 'the South' on a world scale - as opposed to the industrial or urban working class of the cities or of the imperialist countries.

Paradoxically, it was the speakers invited from the revolutionary movements of the so-called Third World - from the Palestinian Intifada, from Mexico and Panama - as well as the present writer, who pointed the way forward. Indeed, the Tupac Amaru guerrillas of Peru and the Salvadorean FMLN speakers answered the pathetic pleas that "more solidarity" should be given to the hard pressed comrades in the so-called Third World by pointing to Lenin's view - that the best form of solidarity is to make revolution in your own country. Our Provisional Central Committee's call for reorganising the communist parties received an enthusiastic hearing in these quarters!

Later I travelled south to Naples to spend a day in discussion with the comrades of the National Political Committee of Marxist-Leninists. As the Italian Communist Party has liquidated itself and the communist trade union centre, the CGIL, is "being rocked in the arms of the bourgeoisie", comrades around the communist journal of "politics, economics, culture and ecology", *L'Ugluaglianza (Equality)*, have been striving since the spring of 1990 "not just to put together the fragments of the various expressions, more or less organised, of Marxism-Leninism existing in Italy, but of creating a new historical core of Marxist-Leninists that will be the centre of the revolutionary unity of the working class, and which, at the end of a political process of struggle, will announce the creation of its own class organisations" (*L'Ugluaglianza*, February 17 1991).

The NPC was elected at a preliminary conference of Marxist-Leninists in Rome in December 1990, and recognises the necessity of theoretical clarity, of "starting from the correct analysis of the historical reality we operate in." It also quite rightly emphasises that "the organisation of our class cannot simply be rhetorically proclaimed, but has to be operated now with initiatives of struggle ... for the working class to reunify, mature politically and reorganise to fulfil its historical role" (*Ibid*).

The NPC has set itself the task of working for "the reconstruction of the working class party and trade union". This confuses a matter of principle, the key task for Italian communists - the reorganising of a genuine Communist Party - with the tactical matter of how to deal with the trade union question. Mixing the two things together in the same phrase fails to single out the party question as the crucial one.

On the future of the Soviet Union the NPC comrades were somewhat more optimistic in the short term than ourselves, hoping that counterrevolution can be avoided through the act of the Soviet armed forces, which are "not bureaucratic". I argued that this ques-

tion has already been answered by history in Eastern Europe, and in the GDR in particular, where such hopes proved futile and the armed forces of bureaucratic socialism showed in practice that they were eminently suitable for the job of defending the new capitalist order.

Another point of difference was our attitudes towards the Gulf War, where the NPC comrades expressed the view that it was correct to take sides with Hussein once the war with US imperialism had begun.

The immediate future prospects for the NPC are clouded with the confusion being caused among Italian communists by the imminent 'left' split from what was the Communist Party, a 'communist' split which is currently stealing the media limelight.

While our views are not identical with the NPC, we are treading the same path.

Stan Kelsey
London

Living Marxism?

Thank you for the back issues of *The Leninist*, which I hugely enjoyed. It was refreshing to read lively, open, honest and substantial articles, which made me rethink many of my previous political positions. After reading the petty bourgeois lightweight drivel in *Living Marxism* (or, as you call it, *Living Comfortably*) it is good to see someone who understands the ABC of Marxism.

Incidentally, when the powers-that-be in the RCP decided that they were going to channel all their energy (and money) into *Living Comfortably*, we, in and around the RCP, were reassured that it would not be another *Marxism Today*. Some of us were not convinced. I remember somebody writing into *The Next Step* saying that *LM* could be a financial and political disaster, as *TNS* would be downgraded and the RCP would cease to intervene in political struggles. The Powers That Be insisted that this would not happen: *TNS* would continue to function as normal and there would not be a *Marxism Today* II. Look at what happened! Spot the mugs...

Eddie Ford
Cornwall

Arms

It should come as no surprise to you that Norma and I should express our approval of the article 'Arms and the Workers' in *The Leninist* No103. I remember Allen Hutt telling me of a march of the unemployed in 1936. When confronted with the police who were intending to break it up because it was within a mile of parliament, the front ranks suddenly melted away to reveal a phalanx of hefty workers armed with pick helves.

That day every policeman in Central London got beaten up. I suppose, however, that police riot techniques have got more sophisticated since then.

Allen, incidentally, was one of the best rifle shots in Britain, besides being a Cambridge historian, chief sub-editor of the *Daily Worker*, one time member of the CC of the CPGB, the British and later, the international, expert on newspaper typography, editor of *The Journalist*, the journal of the NUJ, for 28 years, the only typographer to be elected to the Royal Design Institute and equally fluent in English, French and Russian.

I notice that you said: "the South African Communist Party is urging the setting up and development of self defence units in the townships using legally obtainable weapons such as air

rifles and pistols".

This quotation is actually out of context. I enclose a copy of page 8 of a Supplement to *The Weekly Mail* May 10 to May 16 1991, giving the text of a statement signed by the secretaries of the ANC, the SACP and Cosatu (who are all ANC members), entitled 'We Pledge to Work for Peace'. This makes it clear that the organisations concerned want the security forces of the apartheid state to keep the peace, and the people must not be allowed to carry arms. It can be inferred that the call to the people to arm themselves is merely a threat to be carried out if the state does not act against violence to the satisfaction of the ANC.

In fact the ANC has suspended its armed struggle to support its attempts to conduct negotiations with the state, and to this end has even surrendered some of its arms caches. Chris Hani, the leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, has suggested that it and the South African Defence Force should be merged, in emulation, presumably, of what has happened in Zimbabwe and Namibia in the setting up of a unified military force.

Meanwhile the people in South Africa are getting armed in one way or another. The police there have said that there are 2½ million registered weapons, owned by white people mainly, and estimate another 700,000 are unregistered. There are 4½ million whites. Many people, mainly Inkatha members, are carrying culturally traditional weapons. AK47's are being smuggled in from Mozambique. Large industrial organisations are required to maintain armed security forces by law. The notorious third force, allegedly the state forces, is arming and training agents provocateurs and bussing them into flashpoints. The state is armed to the teeth with sophisticated and modern weapons manufactured locally. South Africa is an arms exporter. Experience in Iraq has shown that its artillery is the best in the world. The PAC and Azapo, both having stated that their aim is socialism, are continuing the armed struggle and are importing arms, but on a scale they do not reveal.

It seems to me that the present conflict in South Africa is going to be resolved by the force of arms, and not necessarily in favour of the forces of progress. Acts of violence, with people being killed, are a daily occurrence. Meanwhile those ancient and careerist uncles (interspersed with an occasional aunt) who, despite their devotion to negotiations, have been obliged to suspend them in the face of the continual violence, still hope for "the real possibility of a negotiated settlement to end apartheid" and flout the condemnation of secret meetings with the apartheid state demanded overwhelmingly at the ANC Consultative Conference last December.

They should join the Salvation Army. Maybe then they might get pie in the sky when they die. However a backlash at grassroots level in the ANC is growing. Let us hope that the floor in the forthcoming ANC National Conference in July, where a new NEC will be elected, will force through a more principled and militant policy. As for the SACP, it has stated that, after liberation, socialism will be attained through peaceful discussion, which the participants will doubtless conduct with the pie of office, shared with de Klerk and the Trans-Nationals, in their hands, if not on their faces.

I enclose a cheque for £30 in support of the Summer Offensive.

David Kitson
Zimbabwe

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

WRITE OR RING

If you wish to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist*, please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX, or phone 071-431 3135.

IN STRUGGLE

Ucatt's Peter Lenahan has been the subject of vicious press smears. Not only have his past brushes with the law been 'exposed', but apparently worse, he has been linked to the Communist Party of Britain - actually he remains a member of the Euro organisation. The campaign against Lenahan is part of a much wider campaign against Ucatt and all building workers. For years Ucatt was run by a right wing, pro-Kinnock mafia which used ballot rigging, corruption and sweetheart deals to keep their posts and keep in with the bosses. This cosy existence was thrown into crisis when in spite of the media, Lenahan and two other left wingers were elected to the Ucatt executive. The new Broad Left majority suspended general secretary, Albert Williams, because of his suspected involvement in ballot-rigging, and now talks of using industrial muscle to improve wages and conditions in the industry. Naturally this provoked the wrath of the bosses and their media. It also provoked the defection to the EETPU of 11 Ucatt officials. In return for cushy jobs they promised Eric Hammond 50,000 recruits. Thankfully, so far they have proved woefully unsuccessful. Ucatt remains solid in spite of media attack, the treachery of its own right wing and a kick-'em-when-they're-down attempt by John Edmonds and the GMB, which has given positions to other defecting Ucatt officials. Ucatt members must rebut attempts to undermine their union no matter what quarter they originate from. However, they should not take an uncritical attitude towards the Broad Left. After all, their suspended general secretary was himself once elected on a Broad Left slate. The present mess shows that the militant minority in Ucatt must fight for one union for all workers in the construction industry; a union in which all officials receive the pay of the average member, and are subject to regular election and instant recall. AL

Dessie Ellis was extradited to Britain on November 14 1990. This in spite of his hunger strike, a mass campaign in the Twenty-six Counties and the dropping of charges under the Explosive Substances Act. Instead he is being prosecuted under two new charges of conspiracy. It has been practice in the Twenty-six Counties that the accused person can be extradited only to face the charges laid down in the warrant. Clearly Dessie Ellis is being framed by the British state. That is why the Justice for Dessie Ellis Campaign has been set up to defend him.



Only successful class struggle can guarantee freeing Irish political prisoners

This needs to be a high profile campaign that takes the argument into the working class, fighting for his release in workplaces and trade unions. Having said this, it is a weakness that the Dessie Ellis Campaign takes as its model the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six type approach: an orientation to establishment figures and overemphasise on the Irish community. As we have argued many times, this leaves the basic reasons for his imprisonment - the British occupation of Ireland - unraised and unchallenged within the workers' movement. What is needed is a fight that links the war with the framing of Irish prisoners. Until this is done, there will be an unceasing chain of Birmingham Sixes, Dessie Ellises, Winchester Threes, etc. It is crucial that all partisans of the Irish struggle take up the fight to release Dessie, on an explicitly anti-imperialist basis. NC

Thameside estate, south-east London May 25. One thousand rally with the aim of stopping a British National Party demonstration, called supposedly against the Rev Al Sharpton, the US black nationalist leader. He had a high profile presence on the April 27 protest against the racist attacks in the area which culminated in the murder of Rolan Adams, a black 15 year old, by ten to fifteen thugs on February 21. In the event, the BNP's national mobilisation only mustered 150. Although the scum were forced to re-route, an opportunity to directly take them on was missed. There was friction between the separatist Black National Caucus and the SWP, the largest left group on the counter demonstration. But only local youth and Anti-Fascist Action were intent on attacking the fascists. The Met moved to protect their own with horse and riot squads, and ten anti-fascists were arrested. Exemplary action, however, is not sufficient. What is needed is united black and white Workers' Defence Corps and the sort of mass mobilisation which stopped Mosley and the blackshirts in 1936, and the sort of reformed Communist Party which will make that possible. SQ

Don't forget the Fund



The 8th Summer Offensive is now in full swing, but our £600 monthly fighting fund target still has to be achieved. The money is used to pay the larger part of our production costs, and these continue to rise. Helping us to meet the target will ensure the regular appearance of *The Leninist* in the period leading up to the general election. This is going to be a crucial time for presenting the communist alternative to the bourgeois parties, and building support for our 'Vote Communist' campaign, so don't hold back. The post for June has been encouraging so far, with £80 from our longstanding comrade DK and weekly £10 donations from comrade AS. Thanks also to comrades PH, JS and NC.

Vernon Douglas
Fund Organiser

8th Summer Offensive: 1991

OUR annual Summer Offensive is not simply about raising the funds necessary to maintain our organisation at its current level of activity and intervention. It is a reciprocal part of the fight to raise ourselves to the tasks that life itself is demanding of us - a successful Summer Offensive gives us the financial means to take the fight for our Party forward and by fighting to make it a success, we train our organisation politically and ideologically in Bolshevism.

This 8th Summer Offensive - set this year at £30,000 to be raised during the months of June and July - is no exception. It takes place in the context of intense media speculation concerning the timing of the next general election; of disorientation and panic in the ranks of the British bourgeoisie's preferred party of government, the Tories; and of the continued resurgence of the Labour Party, now firmly in the grip of the explicitly pro-capitalist Kinnock.

Faced with this, our Provisional Central Committee has taken the decision to stand four candidates in the General Election. Our comrades will stand in two London constituencies, and one each in Wales and Scotland (see the statement from candidates). After decades of wrecking activities by the opportunists, we are standing primarily to further our aim of reforging the CPGB. The campaign will emphatically underline the truth that the Communist Party is not 'dead', as the crowing bosses' media suggests: that it lives and is getting ready for business under its Provisional Central Committee.

Through our campaign, we will take that unequivocal propaganda message to hundreds of



thousands of workers. That said, our Party is fighting to win. We are taking the campaign seriously and making every effort to maximise our impact, despite our current feeble organisational structures.

This will entail a relatively massive exercise in propaganda, dwarfing anything we have attempted so far. This will be Party work on a genuinely mass base. It is a period in bourgeois political life when, in however secondary and indirect a way, the masses 'enter' politics.

To take maximum advantage of this, we will be producing between 300,000 to 500,000 individual pieces of Party propaganda, in the form of posters, papers, election addresses, stickers and, most significantly of all, the relaunch of a mass paper for the latter period of the election campaign - the *Daily Worker*. Thousands of communist work hours will be spent in the constituencies, making local contacts and taking the first steps in building a powerful communist organisation.

All of this will require money; at the most conservative estimate some £20,000 and probably considerably more. A substantial element of this year's Summer Offensive will therefore go towards providing the financial muscle necessary for this huge undertaking. This year's campaign will directly underpin the biggest propaganda offensive the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party has ever launched!

The tenor of this year's Offensive was set at its launch meeting on June 8 in Central London. Party members, supporters and sympathisers pledged an initial £19,525, some £4,000 more than last year's initial starting figure. Taken together with figures for comrades who had 'jumped the gun' and already paid money, this meeting actually saw £3,964 raised towards our £30,000 target - a brilliant start! With a number of comrades' pledges still to come in, we are confident of smashing through our £30,000 goal!

As comrades set about their individual targets, they might find it amusing to compare the verve and confidence with which our Party faces up to its tasks with the wretched Euro has-beens, 'organised' (a generous term) around the dismal rag *Changes*, (a motley crew who still have the temerity to occasionally call themselves 'the Communist Party').

In *Changes* of May 25, we read of the Euro leadership wishing to "express its appreciation to every individual and organisation that contributed" to their two month 'transformation appeal'. And their "impressive total"? Just £33,439! Especially not impressive if we take in to account two facts. Fact one, only £17,459 actually came in, the balance only exists in pledges. Fact

Youth and Revolution?

"Young communists gathered in North London at the weekend for two days of political discussion at the re-establishment congress of the Young Communist League." (*Morning Star*, May 28 1991)



The last gasps of the old YCL: that time the secretary was lucky, and got someone to hold the other end of the banner. Don't expect this much from the CPB's version

YOUTH IS rightly seen by communists as the barometer of the revolution. We do not make a fetish out of being under 30, indeed we value highly the experience and scope that Party veterans can bring to our ranks. Nevertheless, revolutionary organisations are organisations of the young. As Engels wrote: "is it not natural that youth should predominate in our Party, the revolutionary Party? We are the Party of the future, and the future belongs to youth. We are the Party of innovators, and it is always the youth that most eagerly follows the innovators."

Today, with a few honourable exceptions, our organisation and its periphery is composed of young workers, drawn to our revolutionary platform and our self-sacrificing struggle for the future. Our party is the party of the future and it is a party of youth. In contrast, the opportunist fragments of 'official communism' are made up of the old, those who have grown tired at the age of 40, and rene-

gades. What youth they have attracted, they have failed to train or retain - surely a damning indictment of their 'revolutionary' pretensions.

What are we to make then of the recent announcement that the Young Communist League has been "re-established" under the wing of the Communist Party of Britain, the *Morning Star*'s split? Quite frankly, not much: The "re-establishment" of the YCL is just as bogus as the CPB's claim to have "re-established" the Communist Party. It was, and remains, the youth section of an 'official communist' rump. The YCL remains to be re-established.

Three years ago, reviewing issue No2 of *Young Communist* - then more honestly the journal of the CPB Youth Section - we noted that it had two aims: "theoretical clarity" and the building of a "new YCL". The CPB Youth Section has achieved neither of these two objectives. Its journal has continued with the same tired rehashes of TUC/CPB 'official optimism'. A rigorous, icon-smashing hunt

for truth and scientific precision has been as absent from *Young Communist* as it has from the CPB's *Communist Review*.

There is nothing snide about reminding the comrades of the CPB Youth Section what they wrote in the very first issue of *Young Communist* in Spring 1988: "The YCL can only re-emerge when a properly representative re-establishment congress can be held with delegates from groups or branches from at least the main cities of Scotland, Wales and England ... *Young Communist* is now proud to open the debate on a new programme for the YCL, a Marxist-Leninist programme."

We ask the comrades, what actually was the character of the representation at your congress? Did your congress adopt a Marxist-Leninist programme? If so, where is it? Or is it the case that you, like the CPB itself, have become a little more modest in your aims nowadays? Comparing the *Morning Star* of May 28 1991 (cited above) with your declared objectives in 1988, it is obvious that in shame you are dishonestly trying to keep the truth close to your chest.

If the CPB's Youth Section has undergone any sort of growth over the last three years or so, it surely must be the best kept secret on the British left. In mid-March of 1988, some 50 Youth Section members met in Manchester as a rather low key event. Since then it's been downhill all the way. Far from growing, we have been told that it has lost numbers at a steady and unrelenting trickle, as has its 'parent' body, the CPB.

That is why the CPB Youth Section is keeping itself under wraps. Despite advertising their June 6 London

"Re-establishment Congress report back meeting" in the *Morning Star*, the organisers refused entrance to our supporters. No wonder. Just 12 people attended and we have seen report of no similar meetings organised in other parts of the country.

What about the "re-establishment congress" itself? The *Morning Star* describes it as the "culmination of three years work" by the Youth Section. There are no figures or evaluation given of this work, no suggestion that their organisation has grown, or that they are set to win new support. The *Morning Star* fails to even mention how many

delegates were present at the "re-establishment congress", let alone who they represented.

That means all the protestations about having "self critically evaluated" their "achievements and failures" and fearlessly "identified the problems and challenges which young communists face" are worthless. Of course, we are all well used to this type of vacuous rubbish. It was the characteristic style of the old McLennan leadership and the 'official' world communist movement, and it tells us precisely nothing.

Pious calls for "greater public work" are meaningless unless the CPB Youth Section can re-evaluate the past, and openly face up to the present. And, if the "re-established YCL" does by some chance move towards a communist approach on issues facing working class youth in Britain, it can only bring them into the sharpest conflict with their 'parents' in the CPB.

In the pages of this paper, we have comprehensively taken apart the claims of the CPB to represent the continuation of the revolutionary CPGB of 1920, and shown them to be utterly false. The organisation could not for one minute tolerate an active, revolutionary youth league. Opportunist organisations always have big problems with such youth. Witness, for example, the rebellion by the youth against the social democratic traitors after World War I, a revolt that Lenin did everything to encourage despite its many left pacifist illusions. As we wrote in 1988, if there are any elements in the youth section of the CPB with "any guts, they will fall out with the opportunists who dominate the CPB."

If we are to be generous, and why not, we hope that the younger elements of the CPB have moved to "re-establish the YCL" because of frustration with the glaring lack of practice, revolutionary or otherwise, of the leadership of the CPB since the 'party' was "re-established" back in 1988. It would be natural for the CPB youth to stand somewhat to the left of their elders ... and it would be natural for the CPB elders to move to crush their youth if that was the case. The elders of the CPB have proved through their bureaucratic practice that they are terrified of anything to the left of themselves. Lenin spoke of the need to combat the "sort of idiotic, philistine, Oblomov-like fear of the youth"

Eric Heffer: Labourism and back

The death of Eric Heffer has exposed all the contradictions in the Labour Party. His life and political career reflected those very same contradictions



From Labourism, through communism and back to Labourism - picking up the church on the way

IN HIS political lifetime, Eric Heffer - Labour MP for Walton from 1964 until his death at the age of 69 - completed a full circle. Starting off as a Labour Party member in his youth, he left to join the CPGB. He then found himself out of the CPGB, not least because of his opposition to its call in 1945 for a Labour-Tory coalition government, and in the ranks of the Socialist Workers Federation (of which I was London secretary in 1957). After concluding that the SWF was getting nowhere he abandoned it in order to rejoin the Labour Party.

In the obituaries written on Heffer, hardly any mention has been made of the period he spent in the ranks of the

SWF, and what has been written is a gross distortion of the facts, falsely alleging that during that period Heffer, as a member of the Socialist Workers Federation, was both a syndicalist and an anti-parliamentarian (*Workers Press*, No 265).

Heffer, while in the SWF, bitterly attacked both the Communist Party's peaceful parliamentary *British Road to Socialism* and the reformist Labour Party, at a time when the Trotskyite movement was its most ardent supporter. He also fought for the independent revolutionary party in opposition to the Trotskyite liquidation into the Labour Party. No wonder Heffer's short period here has to be distorted and

denigrated by those who refuse to face up to their own reactionary history. It was only when Heffer left revolutionary politics and entered the Labour Party as a left reformist that he became, in the eyes of Trotskyism, a progressive worthy of support.

Eric Heffer was a man who was politically guided more by Christian humanitarian feelings than by his intellect; his theoretical understanding of Marxism-Leninism was very limited, which was one of his great weaknesses. His other main fault was his naivety, which carried over into his political life. He was an idealist who considered that through force of argument and example, people, irrespective of their material

class interests, could be won to the cause of bettering the conditions of the workers, and eventually introducing socialism.

Despite his experience of serving in the reactionary Wilson government, and his experience of Kinno's right wing policies, Heffer continued to support both the Wilson government and the reactionary Labour Party, in the hope of their salvation. In fact, Heffer, as a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party, became the personification of the left reformist forces of Militant and other Trotskyite groups, who despite their lip service to socialism, continue to have, and to foster, illusions in Labour governments.

The Trotskyite press fails to politically expose the likes of Heffer, the left reformists, as a danger to the workers struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. The reason being that they themselves keep the workers tied to the capitalist system through acting as a left support for the bourgeois Labour Party. So they present him as "Eric Heffer; a good man fallen among Anglicans" (*Workers Press* June 8). It was precisely because Heffer was sincere in his illusions, that he was a greater danger to working class struggle, and more effective in gaining workers' support for Labourism, as his constituency voting proved, than the transparently careerist right wingers.

Socialism and the class struggle is not advanced by 'good men' who advocate pious dreams and support reaction in practice, in the hallowed environs of Westminster. Rather it is the struggle of ordinary workers. Although he gave lip service to the need for socialism and democracy from below, and gave his name to workers' struggles, at no time did he reject or expose the trappings and corruption of parliamentary politics; at no time did he declare for the democratic right of his constituents to recall him from parliament; at no time did he declare for living on the average worker's wage.

His socialism and democracy from below were not for working class power. They were conditional on the working class acting as a mere pressure group upon parliament, but not seriously interfering with bourgeois parliamentary democracy. This is typical of left reformism. As *Socialist Organiser*, correctly in our opinion, declares in its obituary: "Eric Heffer ... was the nearest thing to a Socialist Organiser MP" (No488).

Although pointing out the limitations of Heffer as an individual, at no point does the Trotskyite press expose the true reactionary role that such people play in practice in deceiving the working class and keeping it tied to the barbaric capitalist system. That Eric was a good, sincere but confused man does not excuse or expunge his objective role as a defender of the capitalist system, however much he made speeches condemning it.

In typically subjective defensive manner *Workers Power* declares he was "an opponent of capitalism and a battler for working class people, both before and after his election to parliament". Maybe verbally, yes, but not a word about his support for the Wilson government in which he served

as a minister, and to which he continued to declare his support even after being sacked. Sacked, let it be noted, not for any campaign in defence of the working class against this reactionary government which was planning drastic cuts in workers' living standards, but because of his opposition to Common Market entry, because it would infringe upon Britain's sovereignty!

After singing his praises, *Workers Power* regrets that he: "Unfortunately ... chose - the Socialist International - [that] betrayed the interests of the workers of the world just as much as much as the Labour Party betrays them in Britain." *Workers Power* considers it 'unfortunate' that he chose these reactionary bodies as a vehicle for his activities (and not *Workers Power?*), as if this was an accident.

The organisations Heffer worked in flowed from his politics. It's the same with the Trotskyites who, with their policy of support for Labour in and out of government, naturally join the Labour Party and support the betrayers of the working class, despite their verbal condemnation of its leaders.

As a cover for left reformism, *Workers Power* quotes Heffer, without criticism, saying that he "liked to place himself in the tradition of the German revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg". True, but what an insult to this genuine revolutionary fighter! And not a word from *Workers Power* to disabuse such a gross distortion of historical comparison.

Because Heffer was prepared to write for and support Trotskyite groups in their left reformist activities and policies, they are prepared to pull a veil over his true role as an opponent of revolutionary Marxist politics, and to criticise him merely for his limitations in believing that the Labour Party could be transformed into a genuine socialist party. In fact, Heffer was more honest than his Trotskyite friends in taking his support for Labourism to its logical conclusion of serving as a minister in Her Majesty's (capitalist) government.

No one can doubt Heffer's sincerity and genuine desire to see the betterment of his class, despite his confused and muddled left reformist policies; he hated the inequalities and poverty afflicting the workers. His opposition to Wilson, which lost him his government position, and his opposition to Kinno, which led to the loss of his party executive post, are evidence enough that he was not a personal climber.

The lesson to be learnt from Eric's life in politics, is that sincerity, honesty and goodness of heart are not enough. It is through men like Heffer, Lansbury and Co, that right wing Labourism, and ultimately capitalism, ensnare the left-moving workers into the trap of left reformism, so impeding the development of genuine anti-capitalist movements, and thereby preserving the very evil that these naive and pious people hated so much. Only a Communist Party firmly based upon the scientific theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism can advance the struggle and the day when capitalism is overthrown, and the evils capitalism inflicts upon the working class are abolished forever.

Paul Conlon



Communist Unity Convention: Hodgson on affiliation

The formation of the CPGB and its early years: documents, resolutions and manifestos



the duty of the branches to form communist groups in trade union branches, and to work inside the trade union movement in the same way. Now I confess that I cannot understand that. It seems to me to be a high example of confusion. Here you meet on the industrial field in the trade union certain trade union leaders.

You are fully aware that whether or not through sheer rascality, duplicity and corruption they are misleading the working class. You meet them there with the intention of destroying their influence, and of winning the confidence and trust of the rank and file to that end. That is exactly the kind of tactic that I believe in. But may I remind you that you meet these same people in the Labour Party, and that you meet them on a much larger field than you do in the trade unions? We are a political Party. We meet these same trade union leaders in the Labour Party on the wider and far more important political field. That is the view I take, comrades.

... Many of our comrades have done important work inside the trade unions by starting unofficial committees and reform movements. This was extremely important. They have done good work in that way, but those are the very comrades who refuse to say that you could act in exactly the same way inside the political movement of the workers, which is the Labour Party.

If you are going to have your communist groups inside trade union branches, why not inside the branches of the Labour Party? If you are going to operate inside the trade union movement, why not inside the Labour Party at its annual conferences? And why not try to help in such a way that when we go to the annual conferences we shall not find ourselves, as we did at Scarborough, a little group of a dozen - and the rest reactionists, or moderates, or blind men, because the best elements in the trade union movement had not sought to get elected as delegates to the Labour Party conference. I know there are objections to this policy. We are told, for example, that if you affiliate to the Labour Party, and work inside the Labour Party, you become identified with the policy of the Labour Party. I deny that. I believe the best way you can illustrate the fact that you are not with the general body of opinion inside the Labour Party is to get in there and illustrate it from inside.

I say that our comrades who work with the unofficial movement have done more in that way to illustrate the fact that they have a point of view which is entirely different from that of the official elements than they could possibly have done outside. You do not become identified with the policy of the Labour Party by becoming affiliated to it or working inside. On the contrary. But the most difficult argument to understand, to my mind, is the objection that by the by the Labour Party is going to take office; and that when it does, you will be identified with all the ruin that is going to come upon the Party once it takes office and assumes responsibilities which it cannot possibly fulfil.

I do not know whether the delegates are aware of it, but this matter has been dealt with by Lenin in his latest work of his. I say this because I know that those who will oppose this resolution ... from the point of view I am putting forward, have been accustomed in the past to refer to the example of the

Bolsheviks, and always to quote Lenin as their apostle and bludgeon us in that way. We are entitled to use the same kind of bludgeon, and I would remind you that Lenin considers this kind of objection to Labour Party affiliation as one of the "infant disorders of the Left Communists". We had a talk yesterday about parliamentary action. It is surprising to know that Lenin advises that we should take part in parliamentary action, that we should get our members into parliament, and that when they are in parliament they should support the Labour Party in downing Lloyd George and Churchill, and should try to get the Labour Party into office.

You should give them such support as the rope gives to the executed person. I mean to say that, after all, we have to be realists in this matter, not to live in a realm of theory but to get right down to the reality. Surely we understand that the British working class has not yet passed through the experience of having a Kerensky or a Scheidemann, and that the sooner it goes through that experience the better. We cannot assist it to go through that experience by a policy of aloofness from the working class movement. A realistic sizing up of the situation means that we must be in and out of the Labour movement all the time. But, of course, if you want to get a reputation for real revolutionary fervour, you must use words like these: "Let us march straight forward, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but keeping our revolutionary principles clear and unsullied."

That is the way you become a *Left Communist* because you leave your comrades behind. I make my plea this morning, in connection with the new Party, that it shall not indulge in such antics. After all, something important has happened in the world during the last few years, and that is the Russian revolution, and the experience of a proletarian revolution which you get from that; and we know that the Bolsheviks would never have won through to the triumph they have achieved by the policy of aloofness, dogmatism, and so forth which is at rock bottom the inspiration of the antagonism to affiliation to the Labour Party. A week or two before the outbreak of the October revolution the Bolsheviks were getting ready their list of candidates for the Duma. A fortnight, or it might have been three weeks or a month after, they abolished the Duma. That is the way to be flexible. That is the way to adapt yourself to circumstances. That is the way to fight scientifically. That is the way to use strategy and tactics in order to win through.

Of course I am talking like a Labour Fakir! "The only way in which you can win is by a frontal attack, never mind what kind of support you have got; if the battalions are small don't hesitate, go right in." I don't believe in that kind of thing; I think that the longest way round is sometimes the nearest way home. I now we are working against an enemy who is very insidious in his methods. He does not use frontal attacks but flanking movements of all kinds to undermine our position. I want us to use the same kind of thing. Now, comrades, we had from comrade Bell yesterday what, to my mind, was an extremely lucid exposition of the arguments for revolutionary parliamentary action. They were also very powerful and cogent arguments for affiliation to the Labour Party. Comrade Bell told us, and I thoroughly agree with it, that all spheres of life where working class opinion can be influenced are important. With that I steadfastly agree, but to say that, and with the next breath to advocate that we should keep outside the Labour Party, seems to me a contradiction.

Inside the Labour Party we can influence working class opinion. Inside the Labour Party we can use a lever by which we can ultimately destroy the influence of the treacherous leaders of the trade union movement on the political field.

■ Veteran communist Gladys Brooks, writing in the *Euros* Changes of May 11, 'congratulates' the 'new thinkers' who lead that organisation. She points out that given the precipitous decline in membership, "with one bound .. they have set us free from the agonising decision of choosing a new name ... Just a few more months of new thinking and the name problem solves itself - nowt left". Buy that woman a drink, someone.

■ A clear example of unemployment as a form of conscription comes from the Glasgow Herald of June 5th. The King's Own Scottish Borderers may escape the axe in the coming defence cuts because its Hamilton recruitment office is the busiest in Britain. Local youth unemployment has risen by over 30% in the last year and will increase further with more layoffs at Ravenscraig steel-works.

■ A recent editorial in the *Gorbachev-sycophant Morning Star* claimed that, in treading (or tumbling) down the path of perestroika, the Soviet Union had reaffirmed the socialist choice. Alas for these hacks, this appeared the same day that it was announced that 'Socialist' was dropped in favour of 'Sovereign' in the country's title. Read carefully: *Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics*. Get the picture?

■ In the days before it played Blitz to Marxism Today's *The Face with Living Marxism*, the Revolutionary Communist Party used to organise an annual summer school, Preparing for Power. Now that it has given up preparing for power, instead it is going Towards 2,000 (something the RCP, like everyone else, has no choice in). The TUC, too, has just launched a consultative document entitled - yes - 'Towards 2,000'. Mere coincidence, you think? Don't you believe it...

■ The June edition of *Living Marxism* in reviewing the 'stylish' men's magazine *Esquire* included the following observation: "Unfortunately, the pages are filled, as I found out browsing through my complimentary copy, with the same sort of stuff you get in most men's magazines - fashion, food, fads, famous people, sex and a few pseudo-political, semi-analytical articles, plus lots and lots of advertising". Funny, this sounds like quite an accurate description of LM itself. Perhaps Harry Steel, lead writer of *Straight Left* will oblige.

ON AUGUST 1 1920, the second day of the Communist Unity Convention, it was agreed to establish a Provisional Executive Committee. This was done by adding to the existing Joint Provisional Committee six members directly elected from the convention. After this and sending "warmest greetings" to the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, business turned to relations between the new Communist Party and the Labour Party. Where the vote for using parliament as a platform for revolutionary propaganda was a foregone conclusion this was a far more controversial issue because it divided the British Socialist Party and the Communist Unity Group, the two main organisations that came together to form the CPGB.

Two alternative propositions were put:

- A. That the Communist Party shall be affiliated to the Labour Party.
- B. That the Communist Party shall not be affiliated to the Labour Party.

These propositions were submitted in this form so that there should be no ambiguity. If the convention decided to go into the Labour Party, delegates could then discuss how far we should go in and what we should do when we got there. Proposition A was moved by comrade JF Hodgson of Grimsby BSP and Provisional Executive Committee member. The following is an edited version of his speech.

Mr Chairman and comrades, after the exhausting proceedings through which we have just passed, it is my very pleasant duty to introduce you to the real bone of contention, and I would like to say before I commence to speak on behalf of the BSP, which was and is not, that from the first in these unity proceedings and conferences, which have been almost as exhausting as our proceedings this morning, we have always maintained the point of view that the Party itself, when formed, should be allowed to decide on this very important matter.

We have never budged from that position, and when at last it was decided - as the executive's or party's delegates could not agree - it was decided to put the matter to the vote of a rank and file convention, it was on our proposal that that was done. Our friends on the other side accepted the proposal readily.

Now I say that because I want to add that, as far as we are concerned, we are very keen on this matter, but that whichever way the vote shall go, it is our intention, even though it be against us, it shall not be the means of reducing one jot the enthusiasm and energy which we intend to put into this new Party. I call for that spirit from those who differ from us, and I want to remind you that unless we have that spirit present among us in all our proceedings as a Party in the future, we are born to impotence and are likely to enter into disaster quite soon.

I hope that we shall settle this matter of the Labour Party ... settle it one way or the other. It has been said that it is perfectly easy talking here about the Labour Party itself, because most of the delegates have come to this conference with a mandate. Well, it applies to most of us; but at any rate I take this view, that we have had these discussions *ad nauseam*, and I suggest that we should try to steer clear of the old cut and dried arguments, and to see if we can strike out on a new line. We shall be assisted in that effort by certain things that have transpired quite lately.

For instance, there is Lenin's book on the *Infant disorders of the Left Communists*, an interesting work which sheds a flood of light upon the whole question. Also we have had - and I want to refer to this matter first - we have had from the Left Communists [in Britain represented by Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers' Socialist Federation - Ed] a clear declaration that their policy with regard to the Labour Party is distinct from their policy towards the trade unions. It appears that we are not to join the Labour Party because it is led by trade union leaders, who have a bourgeois outlook and whose mentality is that of the middle class. Therefore we are to have nothing to do with the Labour Party.

That is clear and distinct, and with regard to these same Labour leaders I would say more than that - I would say that these men are destined to play the part of your Scheidemanns and Noskes, [social democrat members of the German government responsible for ordering the shooting workers during the November Revolution - Ed] and the time will come when we shall have to deal with them in a no uncertain way. Not by voting, I say that. But, comrades and friends, this same declaration proceeds to say that it shall be

two, card carrying membership of the Euro organisation stood at 3,250 in mid-May.

Although this represents a disastrous fall, it is still significantly bigger than our membership. We give no secrets away by admitting this. In real terms, what this means is that for their 'transformation appeal', the Euros were able this year to wring about £10 per 'member' out of their dwindling ranks. In contrast, if our membership currently stood at a similar level, the leadership of our Party would this year have set as an initial minimum for the organisation's two month campaign a target just under £2 million!

These type of comparative statistics are impressive enough, we think. They have the merit of throwing into bold relief the difference between a genuine communist organisation and the commitment our politics can generate and the shambles that is 'official communism'. They have the demerit of being overly linear and mechanical, however.

When we are an organisation of thousands, our roots in the class and in society in general will be such that our campaign will be able to galvanise whole sections of the proletariat. Our Summer Offensive will not then simply be a Party centred drive, but a device also by which the advanced section of our class inspires, motivates and draws into action potentially millions of proletarians. Future sums for the Summer Offensive will not simply put the Euros to shame, but will start to resemble the GNP of small states!

Our Summer Offensives are a glowing example of communist discipline, communist morality and communist dedication. They are composed of the raw moral material that will reforge the Communist Party that our class needs. This Offensive, the eighth, will provide the sinews of war for the communist intervention into the forthcoming general election. We urge all readers to take a part, no matter how small, in this great effort.

- Victory to the 8th Summer Offensive!
- Forward to a reformed Communist Party!

Mark Fischer

(Lenin, CW, Vol6, p512) that can sometimes manifest itself even in the healthiest of revolutionary organisations, let alone the CPB.

It is in that spirit that we would "decidedly favour organisational independence of the Youth Section, not only because the opportunists fear such independence, but because of the very nature of the case. For unless it has complete independence, the youth will be unable either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism forward" (VI Lenin, CW, Vol 23, p165).

Our CPB youth - unless they are already old at the age of 25 - will quickly discover that the tired reformism of their 'party' holds little attraction for revolutionary minded youth. As evidence of this, they need simply to look at the final stages of the factional battle in the old Young Communist League.

In a letter to 7 Days (the now defunct Euro weekly newspaper) of December 5, 1987, Kenny Coyle, a leading CPB Youth Section member, took Euro Lorraine Douglas to task for her assertion that it was "intense factionalism" by Morning Star supporters that demoralised and finished off the old YCL. Coyle pointed out, quite rightly, that: "In fact, there were all too few Star supporters at that time. The bulk of the anti-Eurocommunist wing in the League were from the anti-Star group Straight Left".

And after Straight Left, he should have added, came supporters of The Leninist, with Morning Star supporters making up a very poor third. The character of the three different oppositionist groupings was very different.

The Straight Leftists' presence in the YCL was a vestigial one; since the Euros' takeover in 1979, they had maintained themselves by isolation in a handful of fossilised, inactive branches. The few Morning Star supporters in the organisation tended to be the most conservative and bureaucratically minded elements, whose politics were incapable of recruiting.

In contrast, from the day that a Leninist group emerged in the YCL in late 1982 we actually began to recruit from the leadership! Eloquent testimony to the impact of our politics was given by Euro Mark Perryman, then a rising Marxism Today star. He declared to delegates at the 1985 YCL Congress that they had before them a choice of two types of politics - and in one hand he brandished a copy of Marxism Today, in the other a copy of The Leninist.

Essentially, Perryman was correct. The CPB youth of today face similar alternatives. The challenge of genuine Leninism confronts the new 'YCL', just as it has confronted the old YCL. Unless it can face up to and meet this challenge, its fate will be the same.

Mark Fischer

Former member of the YCL General Council

Straight down the pan...

The self-liquidation of the Euro organisation has given a brief new lease of life to its Militant tendency, the Straight Leftists

THE COLLAPSE of the Euro organisation continues apace. Hardly a branch now functions, district committees seldom meet and membership is down to only a few thousand. But the crisis is more than one of numbers and the absence of activists. It is a crisis of the myriad factions that operate under the umbrella of the "Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain".

Many of the supporters of Marxism Today have not taken out 1991 cards. Those who remain are insisting that the 'party is over' and that all that is needed is a loose association. This, they say, can survive indefinitely on the fringes of British politics by living off the liquidated CPGB's estimated £2 million assets. The Nina Temple leadership do not want to go quite so far, and all sorts of arguments have broken out. They are prepared to take a 'twin track' approach but want to keep their full time positions and full time salaries. Nonetheless they want to break their formal connection with communism as soon as possible.

Laughably they now call themselves the 'Communist Party in transformation'; in transformation into the Democratic Left, they hope. Indeed, pre-empting the November congress that will decide the name issue, the Euros are using the Democratic Left logo on their publicity material, and have spent £5,000 on press adverts to establish the Friends of the Democratic Left.

Among the passive membership of the Euro organisation there exists a sullen resentment to all these 'New Times' goings on. Out of sentiment, lethargy or bloodmindedness there are many who want to 'keep the name', even if everything else changes. It is this "very serious situation" which has given a new (though no doubt brief) lease of life to the Euro's very own Militant Tendency, the Straight Leftist faction. It has just staged a coup by capturing their London district committee, something which "marked a significant turning point in the effort to save and review [sic] the Communist Party" (Communist May 1991).

Before we look at the nature of this coup it is worthwhile reminding readers of the genealogy of this rather odd, troglodyte faction.

During debate around the British Road to Socialism in 1977 the centrist opposition in the CPGB cleaved in two. Sid French, then the Surrey district secretary, was afraid that his factional activity would be exposed at the congress of that year and his power base taken away. Rather than conduct an open ideological struggle, rather than using the congress as a platform, he cut and ran. With some 700 followers he set up the New Communist Party.

This left Fergus Nicholson, the former national student organiser, as the most prominent opponent to the Euros. With his already well-oiled factional organisation and the swift launch of his 'Against the Split - Against the Euros' line, he soon established what was initially undisputed hegemony over the remaining centrist opposition.

Up to 1979, Nicholson pursued a policy of 'critical' support for the McLennan leadership 'against' the Euros. This support was apparently designed to first isolate, then destroy them. In fact, the leadership as a whole, McLennan included, continued its rightward shift. Under pressure to come up with results of some sort in the face of the consolidation of the NCP as a stable if undynamic sect, the turgid 'labour movement' Straight Left was launched.

Since then, the Straight Leftists have been left high and dry by developments, not least the subsequent Morning Star CPB split and the collapse of the Euro organisation as any sort of a party. Faced with this, the Straight Leftists have descended to quite breathtaking levels of self-deception, refusing to take any cognisance of the changing situation around them. In-

stead, they have fetishised the structures of what they dubbed 'the Party' as they remained; they emptied the struggle for the banner and soul of the Communist Party of any political content and made it instead a grim 'heads down and don't rock the boat' battle to cling on until - at last - they inherit it rather than win it. In London, finally, that strategy seems to be paying dividends ... but so what!

Predictably, there has been a wail of outrage from the more rabid Euros. Luis Santamaria, a particularly nasty specimen, who failed to get elected to the new district committee by three votes (as did Fergus Nicholson), announced the coup in the letters page of Changes (April 27). He dubbed the April London district congress as one which will be remembered as "the one where the hardliners took over and for little else". Santamaria, however, at least consoles himself with the fact that "they have gained control of a committee whose guaranteed life span is just seven months".

Always in the vanguard of Euro reaction, Mark

mon goal. This is much more difficult than the arithmetic suggests. It involves members and supporters of the old McLennan leadership sharing an agenda with their traditional ideological opponents, often branded as 'Stalinists' or 'Straight Leftists'.

In other words, they have come full circle to take up once again a dismally unsuccessful perspective that failed them nearly 12 years ago. The suggestion that the Euro organisation can be saved by some sort of alliance of Straight Leftism and yesterday's men like the ex-general secretary McLennan is farcical. Historically, the right opportunist trend around figures like McLennan have had little or no base in the rank and file. They ran the machine and relied on the Euros for ideas and numerical support. Now they no longer even exist in the 'superstructure' of the Party. They are now old and safely retired. In practice this trend is played out, finished.

The other prong of the Straight Leftists strategy to save what they still call the 'Communist Party' is even more bizarre. In essence, it is a repetition

of the Canutian calls that the old right opportunist leadership used to make - 'forget the crisis and turn outwards!'

Straight Leftists Graham Gorman and Stewart Kavanagh display similar self delusion. Writing in Communist, they claim now that "the attempt to make a quick, clean end of the CP has been defeated politically", it must now be "defeated practically" (January 1991). To this end they advocate the "mundane business" of visits to recard members, calling branch meetings, putting public activity on

the agenda, calling meetings of the surviving advisors, and so on.

Thus, the Straight Leftists have depoliticised the struggle to defend their 'party' to such an extent that elsewhere in the same issue they can actually claim that "there is no doubt that the large majority of the EC want a party"! Possibly, but what sort of party? For what? Organised in what way?

Liquidationism does not simply take the form of overt calls for the closing down of organisational structures. Liquidationism is a brand of opportunism whose logic leads to the liquidation of the vanguard party. The liquidation of the 'official' CPGB as the vanguard party has already happened. The Straight Leftists are merely squabbling over the bones. More, from their beginnings it is quite clear that politically they were in essence no less liquidationist than the Euros, with their worship of Soviet style 'official communism', opposition to independent communist electoral activity and obsessive desire to disappear up the backside of the Labour Party.

Since then the Straight Leftists have made no honest attempt to study the origins, the nature and solution to the crisis of living socialism and the 'official' world communist movement. And they still have a secret agenda to get into the Labour Party. Fundamentally, this failure is because they are part of the very same liquidationist disease as the Euros; most certainly they are not part of the cure.

The Straight Leftist depoliticised 'victory' in London is irrelevant to the fight to build a Communist Party in this country. In order to achieve it, they have in essence had to constitute themselves as the left wing of Euroism. Genuine communists in its ranks, tired of playing Professor Moriarty to the Euro's Sherlock Holmes, know where to find us. If they stay where they are, like the fictional detective and his criminal nemesis, their destruction is mutually assured.

Ian Mahoney



Straight Left: standard bearers for the Euros. But does anyone really care?

Perryman blows off in the next issue with his "congratulations" to Santamaria and a characteristically ugly and not very clever rant (May 11). The one interesting point Perryman does manage to raise concerns the "notorious silence" of London notables like Trevor Carter, Asquith Gibbs and Lou Lewis in the face of the Straight Leftist activity. "Why" he moans, "was it left up to a handful of branch delegates to mount an opposition to party conservatives and factionalists?"

Why indeed? Perhaps the answer is hinted at on the very same letters page by one Russel Tandy, a young Euro who with just 29 votes managed to scrape home in elections to the London committee. "The mainstream" of the Euros, he suggests, "now consists of those of us who are totally fed up with every fundamentalist position, and that includes intellectually arrogant 'new times' neo-Stalinists who pursue an ever more sectarian line using all the old methods to get their way, rather than honest political argument."

All good knockabout stuff, showing the disintegration of the Euro camp. Kate Hudson, the London district secretary tries to dodge the politics in the following issue by saying that the only criterion for judging the new district committee is "the amount of work it does to make our politics relevant to London's people" (Changes May 25 1991).

The Straight Leftists have basically constituted themselves as a nagging cold that the Euros are unable to shake off. Now they have control of London district, previously one of the biggest and most important in the country, what exciting initiatives and bold measures can we expect them to launch? We advise readers not to hold their breath.

In Communist, the Straight Leftists 'hard' face, this hopelessly myopic faction have consistently revealed the poverty of their perspectives. September 1990 saw an authoritative article arguing that: "The party, or at least, a substantial part of it, can be saved if those who want to be communists can work together to achieve their com-

Discussions on the CPGB draft programme:

Freedom of information

Knowledge is power and there can be no knowledge without free access to information. That the doings of the British state are so secretive reflects the purely formal nature of democracy in Britain



A frontline guardian of the nation's morals

THE BRITISH state has always had a reputation for secrecy. Today it can legitimately be said to be among the most secretive and clandestine of all western bourgeois democracies. This is the result of a long evolution, layer after layer of legislation and the growth of the hidden state.

In 1889 the first legislative steps were taken by the British parliament to create 'official secrets'. An Official Secrets Act was passed, in order to keep under wraps treaties made between Britain and Tsarist Russia. While this measure was seen as necessary in order to pursue the British bourgeoisie's imperialist ambitions, it was also vital in keeping the true designs of the state hidden from the mass of the people, who, if they knew the real intentions of their lords and masters might have been less than willing to be sacrificed in their bloody and barbaric wars.

In 1911, as imperialism openly tooled up for war, a second Official Secrets Act was rushed through parliament. This act made it a criminal offence for anybody employed under the auspices of the state to pass on any form of information at all about their jobs and the content of their work. Security was tightened still further around the activities of parliament, the armed forces, and British interests abroad. All possible loopholes were closed up as His Majesty's forces prepared to take on the Kaiser and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in what was to become the slaughter of the first imperialist world war.

There was no relaxation of any of these measures in the years to follow. The British state has remained shrouded in a cloak of the deepest secrecy throughout the 20th century, with a reform of the Official Secrets Act in 1989 making it even easier to convict those "criminals" who have passed on or received information about state

activities or the workings of government. Even the most trivial facts are deemed secret in the British secret state. For example, it is technically a crime to reveal the numbers of cups of tea drunk each day in the MI5 canteen. While this degree of camouflage and deception is in many ways absurd, what it shows us is the massive amount of information we are denied by the "democratic" British state.

Many controversies have erupted in recent years which have exposed to some extent the sinister nature of activities conducted within 'our' nation's corridors of power. Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, which criminalises the passing on or receipt of secret information, has been used to a greater extent than ever before in the last two decades. There are many well known cases, not least of which was the ABC case in the 1970s, in which a Labour government determined to put behind bars an investigative journalist, Duncan Campbell, for, among other things, interviewing an old ex-soldier about the activities of GCHQ in Cyprus in the 1920s. Despite the fact that it was found that the information within the interview was not in fact secret, Campbell was nevertheless convicted.

During the Falklands War, a senior Ministry of Defence official Clive Ponting caused intense embarrassment to the Thatcher government when he revealed the true circumstances surrounding the sinking of the Argentinian ship, the *Belgrano*.

He revealed that, at the time of the British attack, the *Belgrano* had in fact been outside the war zone, steaming away from the Falklands, and had not been any threat whatsoever to the British forces. Ponting too was prosecuted under Section 2 but escaped conviction through the use of a "moral duty" defence. Following this case the law was amended so as not to allow defences of this

type or any other with regard to the passing on or receipt of official information.

Besides the Official Secrets Act, there are over 100 separate statutes within British law which forbid the disclosure of information about any government agency. This all goes to show the massive, somewhat paranoid, security with which the British state surrounds itself. It is difficult to imagine how anything could get out, but when it does the state enacts all sorts of measures to make sure it does not happen again.

Under pressure

Let us move on now to look at the pressure groups in this area and their campaigns for freedom of information. While organisations such as Liberty (formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties), the Campaign for Freedom of Information, and Charter 88 all quite rightly lambast the magnitude of British state secrecy, their solutions are of no real use to the working class. For example, the Campaign for Freedom of Information proposes as its solution a bill, which it hopes will be introduced by the "next" Labour government. Its proposed bill is designed to eliminate all forms of secrecy, except for (note) national security, defence, international relations, the "public interest", criminal records etc, etc, etc ...

In other words, while the Freedom of Information Campaign calls for government accountability, it does not want to bother the state for any really important information - it does not really want genuine freedom of information. Its approach is typical of the liberal petty bourgeoisie in that it wants a nicer, more benevolent capitalism, one a little more generous with what it allows

the chattering classes to chatter about, while at no time upsetting the basic interests of the ruling class. In its own words - "we do wish to stress just how uncontroversial our proposed bill should be" (FOI, *I want to know what's in my file*).

The Freedom of Information Campaign insists that the "next" Labour government enacts its bill immediately. The logic behind this is revealing. Legislation needs to be passed before the corruption of power sets in, before - as Maurice Franklin, one of its leading members says - Labour discovers how nice it is to be able to hide its dirty doings. In saying this, Franklin shows that he and the Freedom of Information Campaign are haunted by the reality of the last Labour government, a government which furtively set up secret cabinet committees specifically to evade a similar Freedom of Information Bill proposed by Liberal MP Clement Freud. Above all, it shows that despite the record of Labour governments, such organisations are trapped in a Labourite mould, and want us to believe that the Kinnockite Labour Party is somehow fundamentally different to the other two main bourgeois parties.

Organisations such as the Freedom of Information Campaign look for inspiration to the United



States, France and Australia, which all have freedom of information legislation. While it is true that more information is generally available within these countries, the list of subjects that remain secret is long and by definition makes a mockery of claims that there is genuine freedom of information. For instance, under the US legislation nothing can be disclosed about defence, foreign policy, trade secrets, commercial and financial government information or law enforcement records. In order to obtain most other information on government agencies you have to make an application through the courts which can take, to say the least, a long time.

A further tightening up of security occurred in 1986 when the US Congress passed a major reform which extended the exemptions still further to protect government agencies such as the FBI and police departments from having to reveal any information about their activities or people that they have files on etc. Because of the many restrictions, little use is made of freedom of information by individuals in the United States. It is mostly used by businesses in order to obtain information on rivals.

In Australia and France there are similar problems. Foreign policy, defence etc, are classified under the heading 'contrary to the public interest', which can be more accurately interpreted as really meaning 'contrary to ruling class interests'.

So while the Freedom of Information Campaign might look to the US, France and Australia, communists must look elsewhere. We can learn a lot from looking at Lenin's criticisms of the Provisional government in the aftermath of the 1917 February Revolution - when freedom of information became a major political question.

Kerensky and the Provisional government

pontificated at length about the democratic new society they were going to bestow upon the working class and peasantry of Russia. They promised land, a just peace and openness to the peoples, while at the same time keeping under lock and key the Tsarist secret treaties with Britain and France (which promised Istanbul and other Ottoman territories to Russia if it continued to fight on their side). Kerensky and Co denied that the war was being conducted on the same basis and had the same aims as the Tsar. Instead, they insisted, that the war was in defence of the revolution, a just war for the people.

The refusal to publish and renounce these secret treaties, Lenin argued, proved the bourgeois nature of the Provisional government. It showed that its foreign policy was tied in with Britain and France and was therefore thoroughly reactionary. By concealing the treaties from the people of Russia, the Provisional government tried to deceive them as to the true reason behind the continuing toll of death and destruction, the continuing misery and hunger suffered by the mass of the population. As Lenin later said: "The contents of these treaties leave no room for doubt that they promise enormous profits to the capitalists, gained from robbing other countries; that is why they are always kept secret." He noted that: "There is not a republic in the world whose foreign policy is conducted in the open" and then he went on to add that it would be "foolish while the capitalist system exists to expect the capitalists to open up their ledgers" (CW, Vol 24, p259).

Thus today, as the rival imperialisms are beginning to manoeuvre for a new carve up of the world, there will be all sorts of secret deals for the robbery and redivision being made. Likewise, it would be foolish to expect the capitalists to make all this public by opening up their ledgers through freedom of information legislation.

Indeed it would be suicidal for them to make known their wheelings and dealings, their trade secrets, defence, or foreign policy either to their imperialist competitors or to the working class, who are expected to sacrifice their living standards, their own lives and the lives of their children for their rulers' so called legitimate national interests.

Thus, they shroud the true intentions behind their bloody battles in claims that their wars are wars to protect the world from fascism, wars to protect freedom! The most recent example of this of course was the Gulf War, where the population was expected to believe that the slaughter of Iraqi conscripts was all about preserving democracy in poor little Kuwait.

Poor little Kuwait! This was a state where democracy, even of the western bourgeois type, had never existed, let alone flourished in the way the bourgeois media pundits would have had us believe. It was, and still is, nothing but an autocratic puppet state, set up in the interests of western capitalism, where the mass of the people do not even have the vote, and where today the Palestinian people are subjected to cruel persecution and terror. Of course, while we know the real reasons of the capitalists, they, however, cannot and will not reveal what their class interests really are. That is why we should expect nothing genuinely approaching freedom of information via the talking shop of the bourgeoisie, parliament.

Their freedom

The freedom of information legislation passed in the United States, Australia and France was very much a sop to liberal opinion. Nevertheless it was a sign of strength. The fact that similar meagre rights to information are still refused in Britain obviously reflects a both Britain's weakness and the absence of a powerful movement from below. It is to this absence of a powerful movement from below that we should be directing ourselves, not to parliamentary lobbying and waiting around for the illusory miracle of a Kinnock-led Labour government.

While capitalism will not voluntarily expose its wheelings and dealings, that does not mean we simply wait for the revolution to solve the problem. The bosses' ability to keep their robber deals, agreements and treaties under wraps is of direct harm to the proletariat and as such must be challenged. We are the ones who feed their system, who make it work, who provide them with cannon fodder; we must therefore demand and ensure that the true motives of the system are exposed to public view and examination.

Lenin pointed out that this demand for the publication of all secret treaties, the demand for a completely open government, is by nature revolutionary; because while it can theoretically be met under capitalism it can only be guaranteed through proletarian revolution.

Therefore, we do demand this democratic right, we do demand that the capitalist state exposes itself and reveals the contents of the treaties, leaving no doubt as to its class nature.

While we demand that it throws off its veil of secrecy and gives us all the information it has on us as individuals and collectively, we understand that this is a demand which points society beyond capitalism and is itself a measure that can only but hasten the demise of capitalism. So for us the demand for freedom of information is a reform, but a reform for which we fight as part of our revolutionary fight to overthrow the capitalist state so as to achieve real democracy, openness and freedom.

Censorship

Genuine freedom of information not only means access to state secrets, it also means freedom from state censorship. Although the British state has confidently relied, and successfully for the most part, on the self-censorship of the media in camouflaging the interests of the ruling class, it has at times found it necessary to directly intervene and censor its own. This has particularly been the case in times of war and working class upsurge. One good example was during the General Strike of 1926 when, not content with banning the CPGB's *Workers Weekly* and arresting half our leadership, the BBC itself was turned into no more than a propaganda mouthpiece for the state under BBC director general, Lord Reith. All bourgeois criticism of the government's strategy of *smashing* the strike and *humiliating* the miners was denied airtime. Even the pious plea for social peace from the Archbishop of Canterbury was banned (as an act of 'revolutionary' daring it was reproduced in the TUC's paper the *British Worker*).

More recently, during the Falklands war, despite strict monitoring of all media coverage at source by members of the Ministry of Defence, the Thatcher government became uneasy and perturbed that some stories were getting through which showed Her Majesty's forces in an unfavourable light.

Among these were the reports of the battle for Goose Green. Despite MoD efforts to paint it in heroic colours, there was, according to journalists who actually witnessed it, a "needless massacre of Argentinians". Apparently British troops had been ordered to continue shooting even after the other side had laid down their arms (shades of the massacre on the road to Basra).

The fact that any such reports got through despite the efforts of the MoD prompted the government to review its approach. It used the all-party Commons Defence Committee as a springboard to tighten up all round. Hence the Gulf War saw a virtual blackout of real news. There was 24 hour TV coverage of 'expert' speculation, military briefings and carefully selected pictures of high tech destruction of inanimate objects. But no real news of the death of real people, let alone analysis of the real aims of the US, Britain and their imperialist allies. Thus, the government, as in the General Strike and World War II, gained effective control over the nation's mass media.

Ireland

Another example of direct political censorship was the 1988 broadcasting ban on Irish republicans - with the UVF and some other loyalist terror gangs thrown in just to be 'fair'. Prior to the ban the British government had relied, successfully for the most part, on the unofficial 'tap on the shoulder' in censoring "subversive" views on the war in Ireland. Direct legislative censorship was never deemed necessary as the self-censorship of the media was more than sufficient in denying the British public any form of truthful coverage of the Six Counties. Truthful coverage would be more than just an embarrassment to the British government - it would be a direct challenge to their state.

One attempt at such honest journalism was the ITV documentary 'Death on the Rock' which went some way to exposing the real facts about the gunning down of IRA volunteers in Gibraltar by the SAS and the subsequent cover-up at the official inquest. The Thatcher government convulsed in spasms of rage at the audacity of these reporters, who dared to challenge the government's version of events. Thatcher stormed; "trial by TV or guilt by accusation is the day that freedom dies" (quoted in *Speak no Evil*, Glasgow Media Group, 1990). According to her own dictum, democracy has obviously been dead a long time in Britain, and not only for those Irish people banged up in Her Majesty's prisons for just that "guilt by accusation".

In order to plug those few remaining loopholes from which truth or criticism might escape, the broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein and the IRA was quickly introduced. Despite the fact that it purported to be a ban of all "terrorist voices", it was obviously really aimed at the republican movement and those sympathetic to it. Not only were the voices of Sinn Fein and IRA silenced, but also those whose "words support or solicit or invite

support for such an organisation" (Broadcasting Ban 1988). Denying the "oxygen of publicity" to the "terrorists" has been made the order of the day since then, with journalists and broadcasters running scared for fear of being branded terrorist supporters themselves.

Meanwhile, the British working class remains largely uninformed or misinformed about the Irish war and the activities of the army, and the whole situation is presented as fundamentally irrational, with evil "gunmen" running around bumping off members of different religious denominations for no good reason other than wicked callousness and depravity.

We can see the use that is made of the tools of censorship by the British state. The dangers of giving them more of such weapons to use against us is very apparent.

Obscene censorship

Recent calls for the extension of the Obscene Publications Act by the likes of Clare Short and others in the Labour left and feminist camp should therefore be met by us with total opposition. They are calling on the government to ban "page three girls" as part of their campaign against pornography. They neglect to state that the Obscene Publications Act has been used not to ban degrading or oppressive images of women but mainly against those whom bourgeois society terms "sexual deviants", namely lesbians and gays. The recent employment of Section 28 in banning the "promotion" of homosexuality as anything positive or even acceptable is further proof of the way such censorship will be used by the bourgeoisie, as is the looming danger of Clause 25.

Furthermore, even if the state was to ban such material, which is undoubtedly degrading to women, does that mean the problem of sexism will go away? Of course not; it will simply find new forms of existing within present society.

The general oppression of women within bourgeois society finds reflection within the media in many different ways. Many more subtle images, for example in advertising, are equally as degrading, albeit in a more covert fashion. This does not mean that we call for the banning of all images which are degrading to women in the vain hope that it will eliminate women's oppression. Although we find such imagery offensive in the extreme, the way we must fight against it is on an ideological basis among the working class, not by any form of censorship. This ideological fight against pornography and oppressive imagery can take place on many different levels - in the workplace, on the streets, in the pages of our press. While we want to break the working class from sexist ideas, we are clear that it can only be done through political struggle in the fight against the system whose material basis perpetuates this ideology, not through any prudish decisions taken by people sitting in darkened rooms, deciding what is fit for us to see and hear.

We should take a strong stance against censorship generally. Not to fight it is to allow the bourgeoisie even more powerful tools to use against us and encourages an insidiously intolerant society, where it will not be the corrupt imagery of bourgeois society that the British state will be at pains to ban, but the views and ideas of those who aim to overthrow their system. In the censorship of sex in the film industry in Hollywood in the 1930s, bedroom scenes had to be filmed with both participants having one leg on the floor. It is no coincidence that such repressed Karma Sutra-esque antics paved the way to a bigoted society within which the McCarthyite witch-hunt of communists could flourish.

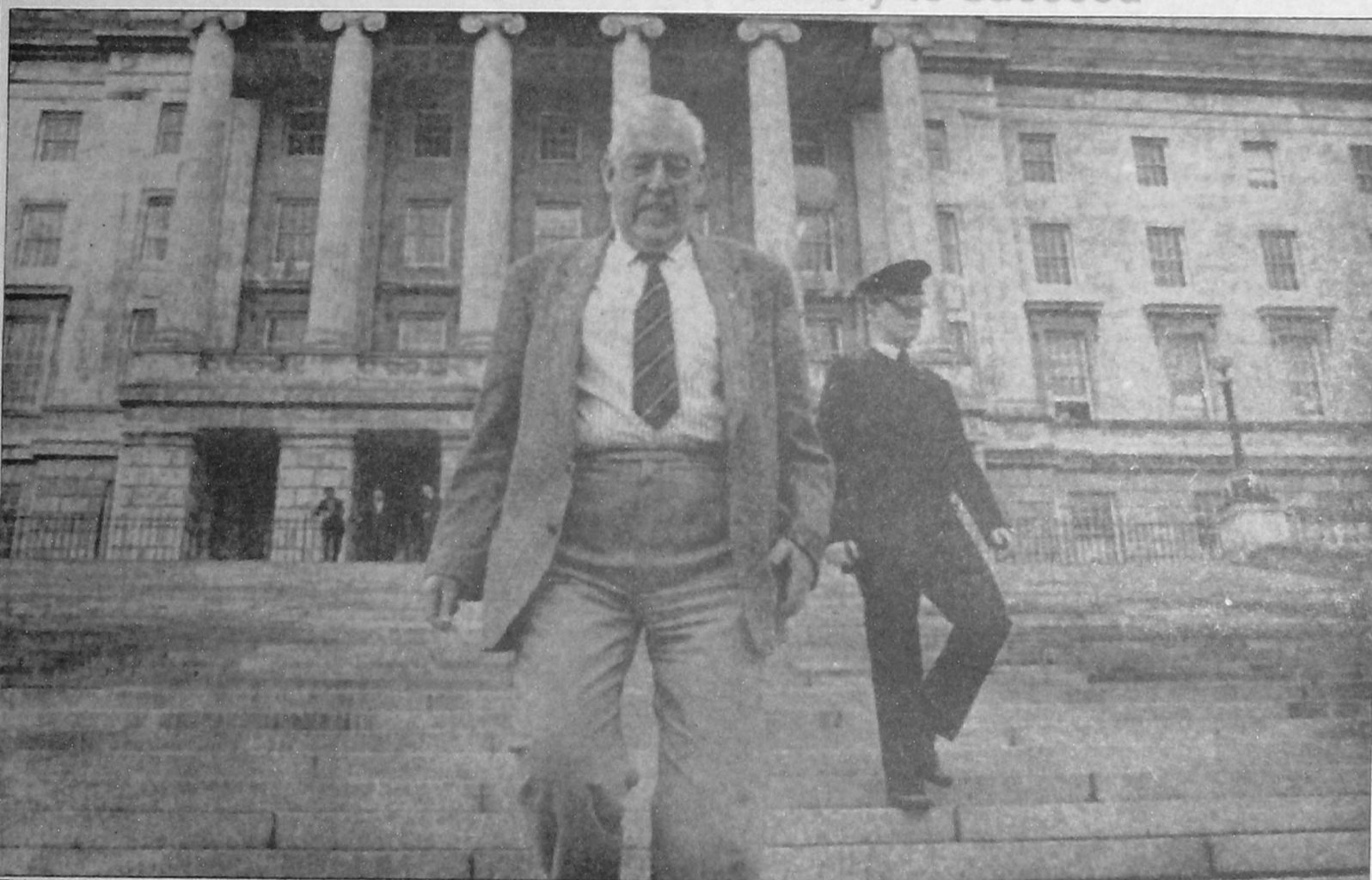
Give the bourgeois state the right to censor sexual matters and the next thing it will be doing is using this very weapon against the forces opposed to capitalism and its perverted values, not least socialists, supporters of women's liberation and communists.

We fight, therefore, as part of our struggle for socialism, as part of the struggle for real proletarian freedom and openness, for the complete abolition of all forms of censorship and secrecy, and genuine freedom of information. We look forward to a workers' state where there will be no state secrecy, where the affairs of state will be conducted openly before the eyes of the proletariat, in the interests of the proletariat.

In the words of Lenin: "According to the bourgeois conception there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments ... but ... our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion on everything and do everything consciously" (CW Vol 26 p256).

Brooke talks: Ireland's slice of the 'New World Order'

Definitively since the collapse of the Stormont parliament, Britain has been unable to rule the Six Counties in the old way. The latest initiative seems no more likely to succeed



Thieves plus den, or Ireland's saviours? Don't write in, it wasn't a serious question...

THE BRITISH were always lauded as the world's most experienced diplomats. Nobody seems to have told the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke's latest initiative has produced seemingly interminable wrangles from all participants, various unresolved 'stages' and some rather unbecoming petulance from both the Unionists and SDLP.

The Unionists, at the time of writing, are making one hell of a fuss over the scheduled London-Dublin meeting in July. Already they have put paid to Lord Carrington's chances of making world headlines one last time - apparently he's a closet Fenian. For their part the SDLP and the Alliance Party are left drumming their fingers as the British government desperately tries to scabble something together, other than a unanimous dislike for Sinn Fein. 'Stage two' is supposed to be in full swing and yet 'stage one' is not even off the ground.

It is tempting to see this as a rather irrelevant side show, with the script lifted from a Marx Brothers' movie. This, though, is not the case.

British imperialism has the initiative. It may be a lousy one, but this nevertheless remains the case. Internationally, imperialism is on the as-

pendency. With the collapse of the world socialist system, it has been able to embark on reshaping the Middle East, Central America, 'hotspots' in Africa and of course Eastern Europe. Pathetic or not, the Brooke talks are Ireland's slice of Bush's New World Order. Of course, there have been many other attempts in the past. This looks no more likely to succeed. But the fact still remains that Britain feels confident to attempt this, and consequently to marginalise Sinn Fein and the IRA.

This is given extra encouragement with European integration on the horizon. The erosion of economic and political barriers within the European Community carries within it both the seeds of crisis and possibilities for British imperialism's open wound of the Irish war. British imperialism is, above all, aware of the dangers of continued conflict in the Six Counties. The London-Dublin Accord was and is an attempt to draw in the Twenty-six Counties to suppress this. The Brooke talks involve a continuation of this, with the additional - and necessary - aim of healing the rift with the Unionists.

Ireland, north and south, is one of the most economically backward and peripheral parts of the European Community, along with Portugal and

Greece. All are likely to be further marginalised by further European integration. But Ireland, unlike the latter two, has had a war fought on its territory for the last 22 years - a war which remains a grim threat to both the state south of the border and British imperialism.

The implementation of the Single European Act and market will not resolve partition (the form of Ireland's continuing political crisis) or its economic crisis. It is almost certain to worsen the latter, as Irish capitalism becomes more open to competition from more dynamic capitalist powers and less able to put forward distinct countermeasures to EC competition.

The Brooke talks are an attempt to ward off some of the political implications of this future situation by cohering a reactionary united front against the republican movement, which remains a danger and Ireland-wide focus for discontent.

But the talks are also an example of the continuing political crisis of mainstream politics - both in the British and Twenty-six County states, and in the Six Counties. It expresses their inability to resolve the 'troubles'. The causes of this are structural to the imperialist domination of Ireland and of Irish capitalism.

Hence, whatever the tirades against 'gunmen' and 'gangsters', the stresses in Irish society are *objective* and cannot be negotiated away.

However, the ascendancy of world imperialism presents the ruling class with greater room for manoeuvre. We have long noted that the struggle in the Six Counties is at an impasse; that, although Britain cannot defeat the resistance of the IRA, neither has the IRA been able to develop the struggle from the present level. The increased isolation of national liberation forces worldwide will pressurise republicanism further. The offers from the Libyan government to the British against the IRA are an example of this, and can hardly have been welcomed in West Belfast.

Seen in this context, the Brooke talks are directed at Sinn Fein on two levels. Obviously, as has been attempted before, Brooke is trying to marginalise it from the decision making process, and attempt to bring together the currently disparate and hostile establishment forces against it.

Brooke also recognises that a military victory for imperialism is impossible. He has provoked outrage among elements of the ruling class by saying as much in the past (see 'It's official:

Britain can't win' in *The Leninist* November 23 1989). This is aimed to develop splits within Sinn Fein, by elements (real or imaginary) within its ranks which are disillusioned by the impasse of armed struggle and are turning to constitutional means.

Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, indicates the lack of direction of revolutionary republicanism at the current moment when interviewed in June's *Marxism Today*. He states that the "IRA itself is unable to defeat the British. But they have stopped us from increasing our support in all of Ireland". Such ambiguous statements on the armed struggle are combined with understandable political frustration. When queried on countermeasures to the Brooke talks, he responds that "we may not be able to take an initiative".

There is a distinct absence of a clear - communist - political perspective to provide the answer that the republican leadership lacks. The mid to late 80s saw a development of communistic trends within republicanism, and the possibilities of their development. Now, as on the international level, the revolutionary movement is in ideological retreat. It is within this context that British imperialism is seeking to press home the advantage.

Even if these political outflanking moves yield something to imperialism, the likes of Brooke cannot understand that it cannot resolve a situation which has produced 22 years of the Irish war. Ireland remains a divided and dominated nation; the Six County statelet exists only by virtue of the systematic repression of the nationalist people. This is what produced the revolts of 1968 and 1969. The essence of this has not changed. If anything it has developed further along the same road.

Twenty-two years ago contradictions in the Six Counties produced a situation where the conditions of the masses had worsened; where the oppressed masses were no longer prepared to be ruled in the old way; where the ruling class was unable to rule in the old way. In other words, a revolutionary situation.

Molotovs and sticks became mortars and Armalites. A mass revolt on the streets became a sustained guerilla war with mass support. War weary though the masses may now be, that support remains. It has hardened and ensures that Britain cannot win its war.

The Brooke talks are an attempt to resolve this within the context of British domination of the Six Counties - that is, they are counterrevolutionary. Yet they only do so by attempting to paper over the cracks, but without being able to deal with the structure. After all, it is this structure upon which British rule is based.

The talks have taken place with the background of numerous successful IRA operations; of the shoot-to-kill operation of IRA volunteers Peter Ryan, Lawrence McNally and Anthony Doris; of the murder by Britain's freelancers of Sinn Fein councillor Eddie Fullerton and of the frame-up of Danny Morrison. You can guarantee that the shrinking of the British army will not leave the Six Counties starved of squaddies.

The nationalist masses are unlikely to be impressed by cosy handshakes between establishment politicians of different hues while the British Army has the run of their communities. The division and domination of Ireland necessitates resistance.

In Britain, we must be open in our defence of that resistance. We have a side in the Irish war, one not represented around the table of the Brooke talks. It is with those who continue the struggle of the three IRA Volunteers murdered on June 3, with the fight of the Irish people; against British imperialism, whether it takes the form of the velvet glove of the Brooke talks or the iron fist of its armed forces, overt and covert. There is only one solution to the Irish 'problem': for the revolutionary defeat of British imperialism!

Alan Merrick



20th and 21st century socialism

Speech by comrade John Bridge on June 2 1991 at a meeting in London to launch the Eighth Summer Offensive

COMRADES, from the dawn of the 20th century, from 1905 to be precise, Russia, what we still call the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has been the world's revolutionary centre, that is, the country where the class struggle finds its highest expression. Today, in the twilight of the century, what is going on in the USSR remains of supreme importance.

That there was a Gulf War, that US imperialism is enjoying a bloody new lease of life, that the communist governments of Eastern Europe fell like dominoes, that 'official communism' has metamorphosed into social democracy, that all ideas of social progress now stand discredited and the world has plunged into a period of reaction - all this cannot be understood without reference to what is going on in the USSR, namely the crisis of bureaucratic socialism and the process of peaceful, democratic counter-revolution.

In the minds of the Soviet masses, their once shining and inspiring socialist state born of the October Revolution, has been turned into its opposite. Experience of being on the wrong end

of corruption, bureaucracy, shortages and gross inefficiency means that the grandsons and granddaughters of the workers who in 1917 seized the factories and ushered in Soviet power, regard the state and the Communist Party with undisguised contempt and hatred.

The politics of class have been overlaid and smothered by the politics of demagoguery, nation and religion. In the name of the future, the past has reasserted itself with a vengeance. It is more than the return of old street and city names. Across the board, reaction and the forces of darkness have the initiative and relentlessly, step by step, press on to their goal of restoring capitalism. What remains of socialism now hangs by a thread.

Why has all this happened? Is counterrevolution in the USSR inevitable?

We, like others, lack detailed information. The political picture in the USSR is confused, still opaque, extremely complex and constantly changing. Despite this, it is possible, indeed it is vital, given the world importance of events in the USSR, that we come forward with answers to these questions.

We can usefully make a start here by briefly examining some wrong answers. At the risk of oversimplification, on the opportunist left there were three approaches to the USSR that coalesced around Gorbachev and his so-called perestroika.

● First, those who more or less uncritically welcomed Gorbachev. Around this view rallied a very broad body of opinion. Not only Benn, 'official communism', the Euros, what has become the Communist Party of Britain and the Revolutionary Communist Group, but some of the major figures and groups of Trotskyism (for example Tariq Ali, Gerry Healy and his WRP).

There are of course some who have subsequently decided, in the revealing words of Eric Trevett, general secretary of the crisis-ridden New Communist Party, to stop being "mealy-mouthed" and reversed their previous support for Gorbachev. Nevertheless, while some might have backtracked, pro-Gorbachevism remains the dominant view in British society, including the ruling class, headed not so long ago by Margaret Thatcher. She took the lead in winning the imperialist world to see Gorbachev as

their man in the USSR. Thatcher and Co were quick to boast that Gorbachev's programme had to lead to the restoration of capitalism.

However, in spite of this and the evidence of what is actually going on in the USSR, the pro-Gorbachev left refused to hear, see or believe any evil about Gorbachev. Because of ideological weakness they wanted (and most still want) to believe that perestroika really was about a second revolution fully in the spirit of October, a peaceful revolution from above that would restructure the Soviet Union, enable democracy to flower and at last give socialism a human face.

The other two approaches had the virtue of being opposed to Gorbachev. Beyond that though they had nothing positive to offer.

● The second trend was that of classic Trotskyism. They opposed Gorbachev but welcomed Gorbachev. Why? Because he was supposed to have set the stage for the carrying through of Trotsky's political revolution. Unfortunately this trend criminally dismissed our warning that political revolution was not the only possibility, that there were other possibili-

ties, not least *counterrevolution*. Unlike the Trotskyites, we argued that socialism was by definition reversible, and that a concrete examination of the concrete world situation showed that counterrevolution had the initiative. As a matter of dogma, they denied that counterrevolution could be peaceful, that it could leave the state intact. Typical was *Militant*. Its editor declared that the danger of capitalist restoration was a chimera, that countries such as Poland remained workers' states even after the restoration of capitalism, because the state - what Lenin called a carryover from capitalism - had not been smashed!

● Now I want to turn to the third trend, which was perhaps even more blind than the other two. It couldn't see what all the fuss was about. Most prominent in this trend, were the Socialist Workers Party (which, while greeting counterrevolution as revolution, thought that all that had happened was that one form of capitalism had replaced another) and the Revolutionary Communist Party (which in all seriousness told its supporters that there was no possibility of the market being restored in the USSR).

Transparently, all these trends now stand totally discredited. As I speak, Gorbachev is awaiting permission to visit London in order to plead before the high priests of capitalism, the imperialist Group of Seven. Although he's unlikely to get it, he wants \$30 billion every year for five years, in order, he says, to enable him to smoothly, or at least relatively smoothly, complete his perestroika. He will no doubt get something, though; and the imperialists will get something as well.

They will demand their pound of flesh in the shape of political and economic reforms which specifically benefit them, with perhaps Cuba thrown in for good measure.

Those who dismissed our warning that Gorbachev was opening the door to counterrevolution now have before them the grim reality of Eastern Europe to chew on. Defying the Trotskyite dogma that, whatever the colour and make-up of a government, there could be no counterrevolution unless the state had been smashed, capitalism has been restored.

Far from the state being smashed, almost everywhere the state was peacefully transformed. As we feared, the socialist state *did* go from defending one set of property relations to defending another. Leading bureaucrats and functionaries did their best to join the proto-capitalist class and in certain countries they actually took the lead in the counterrevolutionary process.

Life also disproved the notion that the USSR had reached some sort of final stage of capitalist development, as the SWP had theorised from its origins; or that it was inherently undynamic, as the RCP, wayward child of the SWP, insisted in opposition. The USSR is in danger of *returning* to capitalism. No wonder it is a ferment of debate, demonstration, strike, movement and crisis. Certainly all that was solid in the USSR is, to paraphrase Marx, now melting in the floodtide of counterrevolution.

So how has the USSR reached the point where it's threatened by counterrevolution and disintegration? The crisis in the USSR is at root an expression of the contradiction between the conservative socio-political superstructure and the never stopping revolutionisation of the means of production: a revolutionisation epitomised today by the massive growth in computers and micro, robotic and bio technology.

Socialism, because it was victorious in mainly backward countries, had always had before it the task of catching up with the west. For many decades there was much, indeed brilliant, success here. No longer. For the last decade the gap stopped narrowing, instead it widened. As we predicted, something had to give. Either the working class would carry through a democratic reorganisation of society, or, because capitalism remained the *dominant mode of production on the planet*, the forces of reaction would restore the old order in the name of advancement.

How do things stand now? Our assessment is, as I think we've made clear, that the forces of counterrevolution continue to advance. Yet how can this be when there exists the undefeated Soviet working class, the class that made the October Revolution?

The working class in the Soviet Union is, objectively speaking, incomparably stronger than it was in 1917. That is a fact. Its numbers are ten, fifteen times greater than when it brought down the Tsar, Kerensky and capitalism. However, far from acting as a class for itself - possible in 1917 because of Bolshevik leadership - it exists merely as a class in itself.

To illustrate this we can do no better than take the Soviet miners. As we know, last year some of their new leaders were invited to Britain by our Trotskyites. Much to the glee of the bourgeois media they went on to establish links with fascists, join the anti-Scargill witch-hunt and support the yellow UDM.

Back in the USSR such false consciousness had similar results. In Siberia the miners look to Yeltsin for salvation. They stopped their anti-Gorbachev strike because of his pleas. In the Ukraine the miners are turning towards the ultra pro-capitalist nationalists. All this gives us a glimpse of the wider picture. It shows us the extent of the disorientation of the working class caused by bureaucratic socialism. It certainly shows that the working class does not operate in any sense in Soviet society as a class for itself.

What about the forces of capitalist restoration? All along the line they have the initiative and dominate political debate. That does not mean that counterrevolution exists as a monolithic bloc. Indeed, as we'll now explain, the very nature of counterrevolution in the USSR means it cannot operate as a monolithic bloc.

Broadly, the main contending counterrevolutionary forces in the USSR can be considered under the following headings.

● Firstly, the forces of nationalism - not only in Georgia, the Baltics, the Ukraine, etc, but also in Russia around renegade Communist Party careerists like Yeltsin; i.e. the most openly counterrevolutionary forces. These so-called democrats are far from homogeneous. Each proto-capitalist class is seeking to carve out a home market for itself. This is what lies behind the politics of nationalism.

Contradictions must result. Not only now, but above all in the future. Victory for the nationalists can only lead to the emergence of dominant and subordinate nations and thus conflict, clashes and wars. Nevertheless, even with their inherent divisions at the moment, these forces have the advantage. Yeltsin is running way out in front in the Russian presidential race and his almost certain success can only exacerbate the drift towards dual power and disintegration in the USSR. No wonder Gorbachev is prepared to consider the possibility of Yeltsin and the other nationalist leaders having places in some sort of a grand coalition government.

● The second category we can locate is the Gorbachevites themselves. Essentially, they are technocrats around the state. They differ from the nationalists, but not on means or ends. Speed is where they differ: not the desirability of restoring a normal market economy, but how quickly. They do, however, have an interest in the unity of the USSR, but have an extremely narrow social base. This has forced them into what we could call a centrist role. Gorbachev more and more resembles a Kerensky in reverse.

● Finally there are the conservatives. They're made up of sections of the army, the Communist Party leadership, the all-union bureaucracy, and the Soyuz group in parliament. Deliberately, the bourgeois media has thoroughly mixed up the terms left and right. Yeltsin is labelled a radical leftist by a *Daily Telegraph* which here champions right wing Toryism. Yet the fact of the matter is that the conservatives in the USSR can genuinely be called conservatives. They are not against capitalist restoration, only its disruptive effects. They have no separate programme from the Gorbachevites or, for that matter, from the nationalists.

Gorbachev and the nationalists differ on speed. Where Gorbachev wants to take five years to restore capitalism with the help of the G7 and \$150 billion in loans from the imperialists, the nationalists want to take 500 days to carry out the same programme.

Quantitative differences also divide the conservatives from the Gorbachevites. The conservatives want to carefully control and manage the restoration of capitalism. To do that they propose to march in front of the process ... with a red flag.

We say this in both meanings in which that metaphor is commonly used. They want to be like the man who had to walk in front of the early motor cars: they want to be in front of the counterrevolutionary process with a red flag to make sure it only goes ahead at walking pace. But secondly, they want to march in front of the restoration of capitalism with a red flag in order to give it a red coloration, make it reliant on the apparatchiks of the old order and thus safeguard - they hope - their power, patronage and privilege.

Because they try to give the process of counterrevolution a communist cover, we must

say that in a real sense the conservatives represent the force most dangerous to the working class.

Obviously working class militants who remain attached and loyal to communism are far more likely to follow this group than the Gorbachevites or the Yeltsinists. That is what makes them so dangerous, not that they are the most counterrevolutionary or most reactionary trend in the Soviet Union.

That 'honour' undoubtedly goes to the various nationalists.

Positive straws?

It is natural that some communists, both inside and outside the USSR, will wrongly decipher the often cryptic pronouncements of the conservatives and clutch at the straw of their pseudo-communist rhetoric. It is natural to want to detect a glimmer of light in the midst of a period of reaction, support some big force that is willing to fight back. Yet all the evidence before us shows that they won't fight back. Never forget Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and how easily counterrevolution triumphed.

Despite the existence of long established socialist property relations, powerful secret police and armies, and the well organised and entrenched conservative 'official communists', socialism ignominiously collapsed just as we feared it would.

Also we cannot but recall the honest communists in this country who were keen, to say the least, to cast the GDR in the role of the exception. Honecker and his comrades in the Socialist Unity Party did say that they weren't going to change the wallpaper merely because their neighbours had. But the wallpaper was never the problem. The wall was! People voted with their Trabants and 1989 saw the GDR predictably join the others. Honecker and the wall came crashing down.

Do the political methods, programme, psychology and social base of the conservatives in the USSR differ fundamentally from Honecker and his ilk throughout Eastern Europe? In other words is the USSR an exception? To this we have to say no. Let us explain why.

Bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe was an export version of the bureaucratic socialism that had evolved in the Soviet Union. But the crisis of socialism in Eastern Europe was not the crisis of 1940s Soviet type socialism. Eastern European socialism was never set in aspic. It was living socialism and, as such, holds up a mirror (a warning) of what is in store for the Soviet Union tomorrow. The economic paralysis, the turn to the market and the range of counterrevolutionary groupings (openly pro-capitalist 'democrats', 'reform communists', conservatives) we see today in the Soviet Union all existed yesterday in Eastern Europe.

The reason is hardly a mystery. Socialism in 1989 Eastern Europe displays a perfect correlation with the social-political 'spectral lines' of 1991 Soviet Union. Every objective test shows that they are both examples of bureaucratic socialism. Because the Soviet Union is the same sort of social formation, it should hardly surprise us that it is being affected by the same counterrevolutionary dynamic which operated in Eastern Europe. Thus there is every reason to fear that it could share the same fate.

Needless to say, there are differences of detail. True, Eastern European socialism did not grow organically from the class struggle and conditions of Eastern Europe. True, it was in many senses first set up as an extension of Soviet state power. True, this meant that counterrevolution could be presented as a struggle to join the advanced world and liberation from the clutches of the Asian bear.

Nevertheless that does not mean there exists some sort of a qualitatively different situation in the USSR. There is no political Maginot Line separating Eastern Europe and the USSR. Surely the very Eastern European type developments in the Baltics, Moldavia and Georgia more than confirm this. Moreover, it has to be recognised that the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe was a product of the *organically linked crisis* of the USSR and each country's particular national conditions. That is why long ago we began writing about the *general crisis of bureaucratic socialism*, as well as the crisis of bureaucratic socialism in this or that country or Soviet Republic.

We've always said national conditions had to determine the contours of each counterrevolution. Thus we had 'velvet', 'reformist', 'reu-

nification' and 'national salvation' counterrevolutions. That was only to be expected. But this should not stop us from seeing the wood for the trees, the general crisis in the face of the ever changing kaleidoscope of its specific manifestations.

In textbook fashion the general crisis of bureaucratic socialism progressively found expression from the *weakest links* of socialism to the centre. First Kampuchea and Afghanistan, then Poland and Hungary, then Czechoslovakia and the GDR, then Romania and Bulgaria, then Yugoslavia and Albania. Now we find the crisis devouring the world's revolutionary centre itself.

Everything we know about the countries that have gone down to counterrevolution - their history, their social and political structure - tells us that there is nothing fundamentally unique about them. That is why we fear the same counterrevolutionary danger faces not only the Soviet Union, but China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea as well.

There are those who, while formally accepting all this, still think that the USSR is different. Their argument rests on the undeniable fact that the socialist revolution in the USSR was made by the *working class* of the city and big factory, that it momentarily produced a Commune-like state and that its leaders were deeply committed to and well versed in the science of Marxism.

In contrast, the core of Eastern European socialism experienced revolution from above via the Soviet Army, while the revolutions from below in Albania, Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, Korea and Cuba in essence took place on the basis of rural insurrections.

The origins of the Soviet Union and of the other examples of socialism may have been different. However, as soon as it was born, the Soviet state quickly found itself subject to the deforming atavistic pull of the country's staggering backwardness.

The bureaucratic form of socialism that resulted began to choke the revolutionary spirit of October even while Lenin was alive. But where Lenin fought back with all his strength, Stalin justified it, accommodated to it, and then unconsciously fronted it.

Tragically, in this way, because of a combination of isolation and (connected) wrong political leadership, the bureaucratic deformation of the revolution became institutionalised, presented in theory as the norm and even the realisation of some sort of heaven on earth. Not surprisingly, the passivity and alienation of the masses that was already evident in the early 1920s, was compounded many times over.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that it was exactly this form of socialism that was exported to Eastern Europe and used as a model elsewhere. Not the bright red socialism of 1917 but the soiled bureaucratic socialism that consolidated itself in the 1930s. That is why Eastern Europe should act as a one minute to midnight warning to communists in the Soviet Union and throughout the world.

The Soviet Union of 1917 is like the Paris Commune of 1871. While it is a model for the future, it is also a thing of the past. However, the bureaucratic socialism that grew out of it now shows all the signs of the political disintegration that undermined socialism in Eastern Europe: bourgeois pundits who call it a Yugoslavia with nuclear weapons are not far off the mark.

Not only is the working class confused, but throughout the top echelons of Soviet society there has been a turn to what we in the west would call 'white collar crime' on a grand scale. It is not only every republic for itself. It is every bureaucrat and manager for himself as well. From union ministry to mine, from republic to plant, from collective farm to retail outlet there is a systematic and massive plundering of state funds and state goods.

These funds and goods are being syphoned off into the Russki mafiosa, into the so-called cooperative sector, into the new private companies being set up by friends and relatives of the administrative stratum. This more than just exacerbates the already chronic shortages and economic dislocation. It is a classic example of the primitive capital accumulation which is necessary if a new capitalist class is to emerge.

As a final refuge, some might simply dismiss all we say as doom-mongering pessimism. Such attempts say everything about our accusers, nothing about us. Our analysis is sober, scientific and completely partisan; i.e. it is Marxist. Communists are by definition optimistic. However, we can afford no illusions. Our optimism is based on facts, not wishful think-

ing. That is why we don't fear the truth. On the contrary, we seek out the truth and when we find it we look it straight in the face.

This means that while as a matter of principle we unconditionally defend living socialism, we also warn of the dangers it faces and argue for the practice that is needed to advance it. We do this today, we did it yesterday.

Thus, when others refused to see anything fundamentally wrong with Gorbachevism, we came to the conclusion that there was a crisis of bureaucratic socialism and it could only be positively resolved through some sort of a political revolution. Again, where others wanted to believe that with perestroika and so-called new political thinking capitalism and socialism could live happily ever after, we insisted that if we want a world of peace we would have to kill capitalism through the continuation and completion of the world revolution.

There is nothing pessimistic here. In fact our optimism knows no limits. For we were and remain absolutely convinced of the victory of our class and the cause of communism.

Remarkable socialism

World revolution moves forward according to a very complicated, chaotic route. In the short term it behaves in a completely unpredictable fashion. By its very nature therefore it can never proceed along a Euclidean straight line. There will be dramatic advances, but there will also be twists and turns, lulls, retreats and even defeats. Today we are undoubtedly living through a period of defeats, a period of reaction. But what is being defeated is more than this or that state; what is being defeated, it is claimed, is an idea. The bosses' media never loses an opportunity to tell us - and most of the world's population believes it - that socialism as any sort of superior alternative to capitalism has failed. If only it was all shallow propaganda and braggadocio. But it isn't.

It would appear that the world has fallen back behind its point of departure. Certainly, if we compare the despondency of nowadays with the high hopes exuded by late 19th century socialism, this would seem to be the case. Then there was a growing and widespread belief that capitalism had become an anachronism and that Marxism was the only theory capable of guiding humanity to real freedom.

Nowadays what remains of socialism is either in deep crisis or is deeply unattractive. The 'official communist' parties are making their final transformation into social democracy. Related to this, the working class has lost its sense of historical mission. Now at best it fights to better its slave position within existing society. As a result bourgeois ideology has gained a new confidence. The post-modernists of bourgeois academia have pronounced the death of all 'metatheory', sub-atomic physics is meant to prove the impossibility of economic planning, and now that green politics rules, woe to those who dare tamper with the natural (capitalist) order of things.

But has socialism failed? Is the future one of uninterrupted capitalism? No, socialism hasn't failed, neither as an alternative to capitalism nor as an idea. And no, the future is not one of uninterrupted capitalism. Why are we so confident?

For Marxists, socialism was never a utopian dream or a universal elixir that could work no matter what the conditions or circumstances. Socialism is the product of capitalism. It comes on to the historical agenda because capitalism has created the conditions for it by creating a world market, a world economy and a world working class. The working class, as capitalism's victim, gravedigger and successor, is the only force capable of taking hold of the baton of progress. As a world class with no interest in fettering the productive forces, only the working class can rationally organise the world economy, negate capitalism's contradictions and begin the transition to a classless society, communism.

Armed with this basic theoretical understanding, it is clear that socialism, if it is really to be socialism, i.e. a society in transition to communism, takes as its starting point the most advanced capitalist countries. But life is dialectical, not mechanical.

As it turned out, necessity flowed along the easiest, but most unexpected, course. The last general crisis of capitalism, which began in 1914, almost straight away produced revolution in a rash of countries, including advanced Ger-

many. Yet it was only in backward Russia that proletarian power survived. Hence, where historically the task of socialism is to move human society from advanced capitalism to communist abundance, living socialism was actually faced with the task of catching up with advanced capitalism.

That the Russian revolution was left and survived in isolation is not a failure of socialism as such. Rather it was an unexpected historical accident which came about due to the lack of experience in the revolutionary movement in other countries, the treachery of social democracy and the weakness of capitalism. That the Soviet Union survived over 70 years in any form at all is remarkable. That it is in crisis today is not proof of socialism's failure but of its resilience, tenacity and ability to stand up against overwhelming odds.

The remarkable nature of socialism can be appreciated even more if we remember just how backward pre-revolutionary Russia really was; how even its miserable levels of production were thrown back by the triple disasters of World War I, civil war and epidemic. One writer has estimated that as a result of all that, Lenin's Russia had a productive level roughly on a par with Cromwell's England. This one statistic tells us more about Gorbachev's turn to the market than all the bourgeois triumphalism, 'end of history' theorising, and claims that socialism has failed, put together.

In 1917 neither Lenin nor any of his co-leaders of the Bolshevik Party entertained any ideas whatsoever about Russia becoming a fully rounded socialist society through its own efforts. For Lenin, Russia was the spark that would ignite the world revolution. Once the flame took hold elsewhere Russia would assume a role more fitting to its economic level. It would go from the vanguard to the rearguard of the world revolution.

Of course it didn't happen. The Soviet republic was left isolated and unaided in its desperate efforts to rebuild and then develop itself. When the world revolution regained momentum towards the end of World War II it did not lessen the burden carried by the Soviet Union. The burden increased. The revolutions that succeeded did so mainly in equally backward or even more backward countries.

Taking all this into account, when we quote Marx on the need to criticise with "unmerciful thoroughness, the inadequacies, the weaknesses and paltriness of our first efforts" we have every reason to expect our second efforts to be far less weak and paltry.

Ironically, it is because of capitalism's very successes that we can say this. Through its dynamism, capitalism gives birth to the conditions and forces for its own destruction. At the heart of this lies the contradiction within capitalism between the social nature of production and the private nature of appropriation. The daily tally of 'giant fish eats not-quite-so-giant fish' takeovers shows this has now reached unheard of heights.

While monopoly capitalism might still be producing more and more commodities, might still be bringing forth all sorts of new technologies, all sorts of advances in the productive forces, it finds it harder and harder to contain the forces that it itself creates. Monopoly capitalism means less capitalists and more workers; monopoly capitalism means the over-production of commodities amidst the growth of pauperisation; monopoly capitalism means the growth of inter-imperialist contradictions; monopoly capitalism means the certainty of the most devastating new general crisis.

Such a general crisis would not only send production reeling backwards as we saw in 1929, when 40-60% of the GNPs of the most advanced capitalist countries were wiped out almost overnight. It would, through the resulting danger of an inter-imperialist World War III, threaten to destroy 7,000 years of human civilisation.

The only alternative is socialism. Our task is to win the masses to fight for this alternative. It is a future worth fighting for, worth dying for. The socialism of the 21st century has nothing grey or bureaucratic about it. Given the proletarianisation of the world, the modern levels of production and technique, we can be sure that the new revolutions and socialism of the 21st century will have a very different appearance and form to the crippled socialism of the 20th century.

Socialism of the 21st century will be democratic, rational, humane and advanced. With computers and the electronic revolution the working day can be dramatically cut. This is the material basis for abundance; where real mass

participatory democracy can work, where the culture of the future can grow, and an ever increasing living standard - the central aim of socialism - can be guaranteed.

This is the future that necessarily and inevitably emerges from the womb of capitalism. It is to this vision that we must win the working class masses. We must lift eyes that are still trapped on the past. We must expose as a lie the criminal idea that the Soviet Union represented some sort of 'developed socialism'. We must show what sort of future the workers can have if they fight in a communist way, if they organise themselves as the alternative ruling class. This is the biggest service we in Britain can do to what remains of socialism in the world today. This is the biggest tribute we can pay to the great October Revolution.

General election

A milestone in the struggle to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain will undoubtedly be the next general election, presumably in 1992. But whenever it comes it will comprehensively, unmercifully and brutally expose the opportunists' liquidationism, tailism and total lack of initiative. It will also, and most importantly, show in the form of the four candidates we propose to stand, that there are the beginnings of a real communist alternative in Britain.

What a contrast this makes to the 'official communist' Euros, CPB and NCP. Long gone are the days when the Euros spoke about standing in the "maximum" number of seats. So intent are they on turning outwards that they have lost all form, all coherence, and any excuse for an independent existence. The Euros will not stand any candidates. As well as calling for votes for Kinnock's Labour Party they will urge 'tactical voting' for the petty bourgeois Greens and bourgeois Liberal Democrats. By turning inwards the other 'official communists' achieve similar results. It appears that the CPB won't stand candidates either. Most likely instead it will issue a blanket call for a Labour vote. The NCP will certainly call for a Labour vote everywhere; after all, it is awaiting the day when Neil Kinnock gives the nod to its affiliation dreams.

Incidentally we note that while the NCP wants everyone to vote Labour in elections to Westminster, in Strasbourg elections it urges boycott. According to its leadership, elections to the European parliament foster illusions that the European Community can do something positive. Its reasoning says everything about its parliamentary cretinism when it comes to Britain.

We Leninists have never had any illusions in the Westminster, Strasbourg or any bourgeois parliament. We stand candidates for the bourgeois parliament in order to overcome the illusions the working class has. We are for the real democracy of workers' councils. Roll on the day when the bourgeois parliament is no more.

Here we follow the tradition of our comrade William Morris, who is falsely claimed by the Euros. Morris was a great revolutionary, a friend of the Marx family and an enemy of opportunism. He certainly had no time for the reformist 'socialism' now presented by the Euros as something brand new. In his brilliant futuristic book *News from Nowhere* he describes how the communist society of the future had turned the old parliament in to a dung collecting station. A fitting fate.

Labour: party and government

Now let us turn to the Labour Party itself. The question on every lip is: can the Labour Party win? Well, looking at the Sunday papers today, what do we see? A six percent lead in the opinion polls. In other words the 1990s Labour Party, unlike the 1980s Labour Party, is in a position where it can win a general election. The Labour Party never died. Labour's forward march was never halted by changes in population structure.

Without coalition politics, without dumping its Labourite ideology, the Labour Party has risen again and can now tell its supporters to prepare for government. It is not only the editors of coffee table 'Marxist' journals who declared that this was impossible. So did the TV and press pollsters who with a tip and a tap on

their computers showed us that Labour could never overturn a Tory Party which has enjoyed three general election victories in a row, along with almost unprecedented parliamentary majorities.

Politics cannot be reduced to statistics. Tory election victories did not rely on Thatcherite ideological hegemony nor on a decline in the number of manual workers. The Tories were less popular in the 1980s than they were in the 1950s or 1960s. Then, their percentage of the popular vote hovered around the 50% mark; throughout the 1980s it hovered around the 40% mark. The politics of the 1980s was not the rise in popularity of the Tories, it was the crisis of the Labour Party.

Its crisis tells us why Thatcher won a hat trick, why she enjoyed such thumping majorities. As a secondary reaction to the last Labour government's vicious attacks on the organised working class, the trade union bureaucracy went along with Bennite moves to push the Labour Party to the left. It was either that or mass defection of activists to the left. There was a price to pay, however: mass defection on the right.

The SDP grew not only on the basis of the defection of a handful of MPs. It grew on the basis of hiving off Labour's so-called moderate voters. As a result, in its first years the SDP, in alliance with the Liberals, found itself ahead of both Tory and Labour parties in opinion poll ratings. Even if this did not hold up when put to the test of actual general elections, it did spoil the chances of the Labour Party (which, as far as the bourgeoisie was concerned, was still burdened with the utopian left reformist politics of Bennism).

Here we find the 'secret' of the failure of the Labour Party and the success of the Tory party over three successive general elections. Yet Labour is no longer in crisis. Again it is a safe alternative party of government. Its recovery is the main feature of bourgeois politics today. It is true that Labour's lead over the Tories could be eroded over the course of a general election campaign. As it seems at the moment though, the chances are that Labour will end up as at least the largest party in the House of Commons, and therefore the party whose leader Elizabeth Windsor will invite to the palace.

Even if Labour fails to get a majority, and only manages to form some sort of interim government, I would put money on it that within six months it will go to the country again. Then it will get the 'mandate' and working majority it wants.

We say all this in the full knowledge that it is rather speculative. Nevertheless such speculation is excusable. We speculate about the possibility of a Labour victory and a Labour government because we want to warn the working class about this danger. Workers, Labour will attack you! The Labour Party is not your friend, it is your enemy, it is a tool in the hands of the boss class.

Throughout the 1980s we fought those who told us to wait for the 'next Labour government', not because we thought that there couldn't be a 'next Labour government', but because such talk was designed to hold back the class struggle. More than that, we insisted that a Labour government would be no better for the working class than a Tory government.

We always opposed the 'lesser of two evils' theory of politics. We have always advanced what our working class needs, not what capitalism, whether under Labour or Tory governments, can afford. In the same spirit we warn our class that not only does the Labour Party operate as a second eleven - that's a quote from Militant - but if Kinnock gets into No10 there is every reason to expect that his government will be even worse as far as the working class is concerned.

So for us, the prospect of a Labour government in 1992 is not something we look to with relief. For us it is a challenge. The enemy is fielding a new team against us. We can, we must, we will, fight them with all our strength. We will fight whoever wins.

Labour changes

For all the silly claims that the Labour Party has undergone some sort of an epistemological break from its Labourite past, and thus from the trade unions, they have been the locomotive behind Labour's revival. The trade union tops have provided the discipline, sense of purpose and direction, the bloc votes and the finance for

the Kinnockite project of repairing the Labour Party and making it fit for office. The results so far show that it was sectional money well spent.

Of course, it would have all been for nothing if Britain had really experienced an economic renaissance. But it didn't. This, Europe, and the sullen resistance of the working class, in particular to the poll tax, has left the Tories floundering in the polls.

That's right; the government's unpopularity has nothing to do with John Major's grey personality, nothing to do with British politics being boring, or that Ashdown and Kinnock have crowded out the middle ground. Yes, in the last analysis the reason why the Tories are at each others' throats is the class struggle and the mess that is the economy. There was no Thatcherite economic renaissance. Britain's economic decline and resulting lack of strategic direction continues.

Britain's position in the world is now weaker, relative to its major rivals, than before Thatcher came into office. Britain's 1980s 'boom' was built on paper. It was based on yet another stretching of the credit system. Hence Britain's extraordinary vulnerability. We've not seen a new general crisis. All that has happened is a rather minor downward oscillation in the world economy. And what did that trigger off in Britain? Bankruptcies sky-rocketing, crippling interest rates, falling house values, attacks on wages, spiralling unemployment ... and wholesale ideological disillusionment.

That is why the Tories are in disarray. And what disarray! They are all at sixes and sevens over European integration. We have Tory attacks on Major over the Kurds, Emu and just about everything else. The 'back seat driver' is making concealed but nonetheless withering criticism of her chosen successor. Even the true blue *Daily Express* complains that the cabinet (overwhelmingly chosen by Thatcher) consists of nothing other than dunderwits.

What this adds up to is that Thatcherism itself suddenly stands discredited. The lunatic right alone now defends the poll tax. And what about twin track motorways and the privatisation of prisons? No wonder the City and the CBI are making overtures to the Labour Party, and former Thatcher cabinet ministers are singing Kinnock's praises.

The fact is that an increasing body of the ruling class is turning to the Labour Party as their alternative. Solid evidence of this can be seen in the columns of the *Financial Times*. Over the last week or so it has been carrying a series of editorials on the Labour Party, its politics, its prospects, its personalities. The *FT* is far from negative; on occasion it is glowing. For it, Labour is no longer part of the problem. Indeed it concludes that it is part of the answer. Only a fool would suggest that the *Financial Times* has somehow gone soft on socialism, that its politics are the same colour as its pages. It is a cool headed and authoritative voice of finance capitalism in Britain.

Because the Tories are so unpopular and are in disarray, the ruling class needs a second string to its bow. Thanks to the trade union bureaucracy, they now have it in the form of the Kinnockite Labour Party - a Labour Party which, in the words of Marx, we can vote for so that it can misrepresent us for the next five years. That is the role of the Labour Party in our tweedledum-tweedledee democracy.

Having made it clear that there is a real possibility of the Labour Party misrepresenting us in government after a May or June 1992 general election, it's worth asking what we should expect from a Kinnock-led government. Well, in a word, comrades, we should expect nothing positive. Labour under Kinnock is openly, unashamedly committed to running capitalism. Its slogans are not agitate, educate and organise. Its slogans are a left version of the Tory programme; *social market, social Europe and social capitalism*. That's the platform Labour is standing on.

To get a rough idea of what this platform means in practice, all we need do is cast our eye over countries which have Labour-type governments. In Spain the government attacked the working class with such viciousness that its own trade union federation broke its links with the Socialist Party. In France the socialist government under President Mitterand has broken strikes and deployed new nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. In Australia Bob Hawke's Labour government complains of lazy workers and stopped benefit for the long term unemployed.

To complete the picture, we can do no better than look at past Labour governments in our country. In the 1920s the Labour Party managed

capitalism in general crisis and cut the dole. In the first half of the 1940s, the Labour Party managed British imperialism's home front while Churchill managed the international front. In the second half of the 1940s Labour managed capitalism's reconstruction by breaking strikes and imposing austerity. In the 1960s Labour managed capitalism in boom and tried to shackle the trade unions. In the 1970s it managed capitalism as it moved into its period of pre-general crisis stagnation and drove down real wages.

No Labour government has fought for the working class, no Labour government has fought capitalism. We shouldn't expect anything different in the 1990's.

There will be those who are prepared to give us that, who say that Labour might be bad ... but that it couldn't be as bad as the Tories. Not true. As we've seen, Labour can be just as bad. We can expect Britain's economic position to continue its deterioration. And as capitalism drifts nearer and nearer to a new general crisis there is every reason to expect a 1990s Labour government to be *worse* than the 1980s Tory governments.

Labour would have us believe that the reason unemployment doubled in the 1980s was the Tory government. The Tories would have us believe that the reason unemployment doubled in the 1970s was the Labour government. It's a lie. It's a trick. The agents of the capitalist class want us to blame this or that party rather than the system itself. Governments have an effect on the workings of capitalism of course, but only in detail, not substance. That's why our prime concern is not who manages capitalism, but getting rid of capitalism.

That's the communist position. Any other approach ends up tailing one or another faction of the ruling class. So we must not take the 'lesser of two evils' theory as our starting point, but the goal of socialism. Because of that we do not at this particular juncture call for a Labour vote.

As well as standing four CPGB candidates, we will draw up a series of demands, a series of minimum demands which begin from the basis of what the working class needs rather than what capitalism can afford. We will present this minimum platform to the working class movement in Britain and we will urge the working class to organise around it. If Labour candidates accept these demands then it would be principled to vote and support them. If they won't then other candidates should be called forward - where this does not happen we are calling for workers to 'spoil' ballot papers by writing 'communist' across them!

We know that many will disagree with us, like the SWP and the rumps of 'official' communism, who will vote for the Labour Party no matter who leads it, no matter what it stands for. But so will the mass of those who are far too casually called class conscious workers, i.e. those workers who have trade union consciousness.

Trade union consciousness is actually a form of bourgeois consciousness. Our task is not to tail the masses, especially when they have no *socialist* illusions in the Labour Party. Labour might be better, they hope; it can't be worse, they imagine.

These illusions are in essence no different to those held by our class in the Liberal Party during the last half of the 19th century and the beginning of this century. Then, trade unions sponsored Liberal MPs and trade unionists voted Liberal in the belief that they were the lesser evil compared to the Tories.

The Labour Party's formation represented a step forward from that. It posed the necessity for a genuine working class political party. But to paraphrase the *Financial Times*, today Labour is no longer part of the answer. It is part of the problem. In the conditions of the late 20th century it constitutes the same sort of barrier to working class consciousness that the Liberal Party did in the late 19th century. We must break that barrier by building an alternative.

Lenin and Labour

Inevitably, some will quote Lenin against us, not least his advice to the early CPGB to vote Labour and seek affiliation to it. On the basis of a quote or two from Lenin we are meant to go out and vote Labour and even try and affiliate to the Labour Party today. That approach owes nothing to Marxism. It is to treat Lenin's writings as a bible. To understand why Lenin gave

the advice he did to the CPGB, it is necessary to examine the historical context in which it was given as well as the caveats it contained.

The first thing that we need to emphasise is that Lenin's position was not a matter of principle, it was a *tactical* question. Next it must be emphasised that Lenin's position was not the result of some sort of softness towards the Labour Party. He was perfectly clear that the Labour Party was a *bourgeois workers' party*. Characterised by reference to its leadership and programme, it had to be considered thoroughly reactionary.

Nevertheless, Lenin argued that, as the mass of workers had *socialist* illusions in it, because it had never been tested by being in government, it would help the cause of communism if Labour was given a helping hand to power. There was no question of Labour being a lesser of two evils or introducing socialism. The communists would support Labour "like a rope supports a hanged man".

What about affiliation? It is true that Lenin said that it would be good if the Labour Party allowed the Communist Party to affiliate. But he also said that if the Labour Party turned it down that would be even better. Being turned down would deny the communists some immediate mass influence, but it would expose the Labour Party for what it really was.

In the early 1920s that needed doing. It should be remembered what sort of image it had then. It was very different from the moderation and red roses so carefully projected by Peter Mandelson. Its leader, Ramsay MacDonald, was detested by the establishment because of his opposition to World War I. Far from giving loyal advice or joining the war cabinet, he stuck to his pacifism. In other words, he was a social pacifist and thus, in terms of the world working class movement of the time, a centrist. It was these politics that led him to call for British workers' and soldiers' *soviets* in March 1917. Not something one would expect from Kinnock!

And in the wake of the October Revolution, Labour moved to head off the danger of a Communist Party by moving to the left. In 1918 it transformed itself ideologically and organisationally from being a trade union party into a far more European type socialist party. It introduced individual membership and its famous Clause 4.

When was the last time Kinnock spoke about taking over the commanding heights of industry? He doesn't even mention nationalisation any more, even the capitalist nationalisation practised by the 1945-51 Attlee government. No, Kinnock doesn't promise any sort of socialism, certainly not MacDonald's new Jerusalem. Where MacDonald wanted to achieve the same results as the Bolsheviks, only using different (parliamentary and peaceful) methods, Kinnock wants to emulate Japan!

Organisationally too, Labour was a very different party. In 1920 communists could be and were individual members and there was no bar on them representing their trade union at Labour Party conferences. Labour was also formally committed to acting as the umbrella for the whole socialist and workers' movement, through its federal affiliated structure.

Today it's not only that Neil Kinnock's politics are hard to distinguish from John Major's. The fact of the matter is that after the first unsuccessful CPGB applications for affiliation, the Labour tops began a witch-hunt; they expelled, hounded and then put in place a whole series of anti-democratic bans and restrictions barring communists from any activity within the Labour Party. This reached its final stage in 1946 when it constitutionally ruled out any further affiliations.

Taken as a whole, these measures have made it impossible for communists as a body to *openly* work (as Lenin insisted as a matter of principle) in the Labour Party. More than that, the Labour Party has been tested in office many, many times. Not surprisingly then, few people have socialist illusions in it now. Those who do are surely very foolish, considering Kinnock's pro-imperialist, anti-socialist politics and his promise that capitalism will be safe in his hands.

So the Labour Party has changed and so have peoples' perceptions of it. Taking all this in account, we find nothing to justify voting Labour at the next general election. Of course Labour will continue to change. That we do not deny. But whether to the right or left we cannot tell. What we can say is that our tactics will reflect those changes just as our tactics reflect the changes in the Labour Party since 1920. It would be ridiculous if they didn't. Tactics by

definition have to be flexible. If they aren't, if they are set in tablets, they can only but become a form of opportunism.

If

Let us illustrate our approach to tactics by playing a little game of 'if'. If a Tony Benn or a Ken Livingstone was leading the Labour Party today, and if they had a mass movement behind them that was calling for socialism, then it could be legitimate to tactically call for a vote for Labour. Of course that support would be with the aim of acting like Lenin's rope, as would resurrecting the call for CPGB affiliation. Such a move would put the Labour Party's socialist proclamation to the test before a mass socialist movement which would naturally desire working class unity, and would have no problems with revolutionaries, communists, joining its ranks.

Nationally no such situation exists today. There is, however, something like it in Liverpool, where Militant has been forced by the Kinnockite witch-hunt to break from its own programme and stand against the Labour Party. Far from being a last gasp, this is a very positive pointer for the future. We therefore consider it perfectly legitimate to have supported the Broad Left candidates in the council elections. We would also consider it perfectly legitimate to support a Broad Left candidate in Eric Heffer's old seat.

Why? Well, Militant says that it is for socialism and Marxism, and actually has a social base - something no other left organisation in Britain can claim at the moment. Now some might say that after Derek Hatton, no one could have illusions in Militant. I beg to differ. Above all though, in spite of Militant's slogan 'For a Labour government with socialist policies', its very decision to stand independently and against Labour poses the necessity of a nationwide alternative to the Labour Party - namely a Communist Party.

Our Eighth Summer Offensive

It is to pose that question in its most pure form that we will stand our own candidates in 1992. Our aim is not to hold the balance of power in a hung parliament. We are not after a deal from Neil Kinnock. The reason we stand for parliament is to build the communist alternative.

We exist for no other reason than providing our class with the Communist Party it needs. And it is on that basis that we have chosen the four constituencies of where we will stand candidates. The Provisional Central Committee will be standing candidates in London's Brent and Tower Hamlets; in the proletarian capital of Scotland, Glasgow; and in the Rhondda, the historic proletarian capital of Wales.

Our decision to stand has nothing to do with whether the sitting Labour MP is right or left, or whether they have a thumping big majority or just a big majority. We're standing to agitate for communism. We are there to build a communist organisation. That will be the nature of our campaign.

As can be imagined, all this will cost a great deal of money, not least considering that during the course of the general election campaign we will launch a paper which will become truly the *Daily Worker*. That is why we have set a £30,000 target for our Eighth Summer Offensive. It's a high target. We know that it will be extremely hard for our organisation and for the comrades to reach it. But we are confident that as we busted the targets we set for every other Offensive, we will do the same in 1991.

It is traditional in speeches such as this to compare our campaign with the campaign of the opportunists. This served some function in the past, but not any more. The NCP and CPB aren't capable of raising more than a whimper. The Euros £50,000 "transformation" appeal netted a pathetic £17,000. When we launched our first Summer Offensive they had a £100,000 target and got somewhere near it. Obviously those days are gone for ever.

So we can no longer use the opportunists as any sort of bench mark for our Summer Offensives. We must use necessity. That is a good source of pride and confidence.

- The future is ours!
- Victory to the Eighth Summer Offensive!

REVIEWS

Going down

Gerd Ruge, *Gorbachev*, Chatto & Windus 1991, pp260, £15.99

THIS IS yet another book about Mikhail Gorbachev, still the bourgeoisie's favourite communist. There is nothing new or revealing about the subject in question; the work is a straightforward biography. It is written from the point of view of the liberal, and as such lavishes praise on Gorbachev and the politics of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The book presents us with a fairly standard biographical format; it starts 'born at an early age ...' and runs on. Gorbachev's childhood spanned the years of the repressions, the purges etc. Although his family kept their heads down and did not experience any knocks at the door in the middle of the night, Gorbachev was aware of the repressions that had taken place.

His progression upwards was fairly characteristic of the ambitious 'party man' of his day. He joined the Komsomol at the age of 14 and took an active role in its work. While at university at the age of 21 he joined the Party. A year later Stalin died and the so-called 'thaw' had set in. Gorbachev put his faith in Khrushchev, who represented a further step along the road of opportunism within the CPSU and the world communist movement. After Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko that road has now finally come to the end with Gorbachev at the wheel.

The ever increasing opportunism that arose under the leadership of Stalin has now blossomed into fully fledged counterrevolutionary politics. We only need to look at Gorbachev's overtly pro-imperialist position during the Gulf War to see this. This is foreign policy which naturally is a reflection of the internal politics of the country. These are reactionary too. Gorbachev initially held up perestroika as the new NEP and a continuation of Leninism. Perestroika was promoted as a revolutionary upgrading of socialism that was needed in order to advance forward.

Perestroika's compliment, glasnost, was the sweetener for this process. The purpose of glasnost was not to allow the open discussion and the strengthening of all that was progressive, as many would have us believe; rather it was to allow the promotion of reactionary views and ideas such as the glorification of the market, the need for unemployment, and the need for women to go back in to the home. Glasnost acted as a sham democratic sop to the working class, and as a sugared pill to the intelligentsia, to hitch them to the Gorbachev bandwagon. Perhaps Mikhail Sergeyevich might now believe that the Russian for 'can of worms' would have been a more appropriate title than 'openness'.

The Soviet Union has of course many problems - it always had. This does not surprise us. Gorbachev - unlike most of his predecessors - pointed to some of these. The problems of the planned economy and socialist democracy were strong weapons in his arsenal for perestroika. Gorbachev however offered bourgeois solutions. The failings of the bureaucratically planned economy was for Gorbachev proof of the unworkability of the planned economy. In its place he proposed its replacement with a market economy. Further, instead of proletarian democracy with its accountability and right of recall - real power to the soviets - he offered up a Tsarist style bourgeois democracy with its resultant Duma like parliamentary politics in which hand picked misrepresentatives of the masses vie to line their own pockets and secure a lucrative position in the coming post-socialist order.

The CPSU under Gorbachev cannot provide the Soviet people with the necessary solutions in order to advance to communism. Gorbachev still has his supporters though - the imperialists in the west and the *Morning Star*, for

example.

Our 'official communists' still laughably contend that perestroika will strengthen socialism, while his support among the imperialists has begun to ebb of late, now that he is looking more of a political incompetent as the internal situation goes from bad to worse. Capitalist pundits, such as *The Economist* and *Financial Times* are now openly calling for the ditching of Gorbachev and his replacement by his ex-lieutenant Yeltsin.

After all, imperialism requires a stable and united (in the geo-political sense) Soviet Union so as to expand its sphere of exploitation without too many problems. So how long Gorbachev continues as a politician of world significance remains to be seen. He will not go down singing *The Internationale*, that's for sure. One thing is certain: if the counterrevolutionary process is not checked from below by the political revolution of the working class then it is just a matter of time before we will see Gorbachev's job finished for him with disintegration and restoration bearing full fruit in the Soviet Union. The individual that spearheaded this process deserves some kind of a biography, but this is not it. And he needs the sort of biography where the working class writes the last chapter for, and against, him through its conscious action.

Michael Waters

Their History

Joe Berry, *70 Years of Struggle - Britain's Communist Party 1920-1990*, Communist Party of Britain, 24pp, £1.50

FOR THE most part Joe Berry's pamphlet is nothing but a tired 'official' CPB excuse for CPGB history. It does not even occur to Berry that there must have been some sort of an ideological break in the continuity of the Party that in July 1920 was founded on the basis of firm revolutionary principles and the organisation that spawned the overtly reformist *British Road to Socialism* in the early 1950s (a parliamentary road to socialism which Berry believes "is still the only realistic strategy for fundamental change in the advance for socialism put forward by any party").

Berry would have us believe that the CPB is the legitimate "inheritor of the traditions of 70 years of struggle of the Communist Party in Britain".

For Berry, between the 1920s and 1970s the official Party leadership marched a perfectly straight line. For him there is no contradiction between those who in 1920 insisted that socialism could only come via violent revolution and soviets and those like himself who think it will come through "a socialist majority in parliament".

But Berry's pamphlet is more than just staggeringly stupid and wilfully blind. It is more than just a CPB attempt to snatch the entire history of the CPGB. It is more interesting than that. The pamphlet is a fawning apologia for Tony Chater, *Morning Star* editor and Berry's paymaster. This is significant, it shows which way the wind is blowing in the CPB.

From its beginnings the CPB has in essence been made up of two currents. On the one hand there were those centrists like Jeff Sawtell and John Haylett, who had been in opposition to the Euros and the rightist drift in the CPGB from the late 1960s. This current supported the 1968 Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia and later the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The other current was made up of those like Chater himself who came from the right opportunist mould. - functionaries who went along with every step to the right and only rebelled because their personal positions

were threatened by the very Euro forces they had helped promote.

These two currents have always had their own separate projects and have rightly always looked upon each other with suspicion and a degree of fear. Nevertheless, they came together and remain together because they both need each other to further their separate projects. Chater and the right opportunists need foot soldiers. The centrists need Chater's *Morning Star* for influence, jobs and, they hope, in due course, as a platform for their own particular politics.

The CPB's forerunner, the Communist Campaign Group, was born in 1985. It had nothing to do with "the fightback for party democracy" nor the "continuation of communist work in the trade union and progressive movements." The CCG was an unprincipled factional lash up. A small cabal of centrist would-be leaders, frustrated with years of hopeless factional work under Straight Leftist hegemony, saw their chance of the big time when Tony Chater and the *Morning Star* bureaucracy finally fell out with the right opportunist Euro majority on the Executive Committee of the CPGB. Having rebelled, Chater had to secure some sort of a base in the Party's rank and file. The centrists willingly provided it. All Chater had to do was to make a few pro-Soviet leadership noises and the marriage was consummated.

As would be expected it is not an equal relationship. The CPB might have Mike Hicks as *part time* general secretary, but there can be no doubt that Chater is the backseat driver. The centrists have been forced to do *his* bidding, forced to accept *his* whims, *his* treatment of the *Morning Star* as his personal property.

Functionaries fear the truth about themselves and their history, they need lies and rewriters of history. Now, in the form of Joe Berry's pamphlet, Chater has what he needs. History has been rewritten to justify *his* actions, *his* bureaucratic rebellion, *his* politics.

Hence we find no mention of the CPGB's long opportunist slide nor Chater's role in it. As far as Berry would have us believe, everything in the CPGB's garden was lovely until 1976 when a certain Tony Chater began to find the Euros criticisms of the "content, style, presentation and management" of the yawning *Morning Star* a threat. Only then did any sort of an inner-Party struggle begin, according to Berry. Nothing about Hungary 1956, the *Daily Worker* name change in 1966 or Czechoslovakia 1968, and only a passing reference to the "400-500 who left to form the New Communist Party" in 1977.

For Leninists, liquidation is the necessary culmination of the opportunist cancer that first began to eat into the healthy body of the Party as far back as the late-1920s. For poor old Joe, the liquidation of the CPGB came out of the blue. It was simply due to the evil work of Euro "plotters".

Of course, this naive failure to recognise its own opportunist history only proves that the CPB is rotten with the same disease. The CPGB of the 1970s was torn apart by the competing pulls of loyalty to the Soviet bureaucracy and loyalty to the institutions of British capitalism. What Chater has "re-established" is a miniature - and shrinking - version, evidently incapable of initiating or doing anything. Berry's pamphlet is an eloquent testimony to this: his 70th anniversary commemoration only appears when we are preparing to celebrate the 71st anniversary.

Through its championing of Gorbachevism, the CPB has crossed class lines by supporting counterrevolution in the name of "socialist-renewal". Thus the CPB and the *Morning Star* serve as a lesson that opportunism must be rooted out and fought in our struggle to reforge the CPGB as a fighting leadership for our class.

Ian Farrell

ACTION

Communist Party

London Seminars: 5pm Sundays. Details 071-431 3135.

Collective discussion towards the Draft Programme of the CPGB (plus weekly discussion on current affairs):

June 30: Women's liberation and communism.

July 7: Ireland: troops out now and self determination.

July 14: Young people. The right to work, education and training. The age of consent. Homelessness.

July 21: Pensioners and the elderly.

July 28: End of Summer Offensive rally.

Posters (A2) and stickers: "Leninism Lives!" and "CPGB".

Ring 071-431 3135, or send donation with order to our box number.

Liverpool, Walton: Canvassing for Lesley Mahmood. Ring for details.

Claiming date: Saturday August 10: Join the CPGB contingent on the anti-interment march in London. Troops out now! Self determination for the Irish nation! Details later.

Hands Off Ireland!

Breaking the Chains! Saturday June 29. Anti-imperialist conference organised by Hands Off Ireland! Tool up with the politics to win. Registration 10am. £6, £3 (unwaged). Camden Irish Centre, Camden Square, NW1.

HOI! T-Shirts: Be the sharpest anti-imperialist on your street. T-shirts, all extra large, £6 each (including p&p) from our box number.

London: activist meetings and actions. Details 071-431 3135.

Workers Theatre Movement

WTM club *The Internationale*:: Venue: Old Piano Warehouse, Hawley Road, Camden Town, NW1 (Camden Town tube). Admission £3, unwaged £2. Theatre, music, dance, poetry. Doors open 8.00pm.

Thursday July 4: From Washington to Scharzkopf - 215 bloody years of capitalism, chaos and destruction. Celebrate the American revolution with music from The National Interest band and The Proles, performance poetry from Neil Sparks and Chris Brown, Tape /Slide sequence from Ernesto Leal (Chilean CP).

Performers for WTM Club *The Internationale* please contact Tam on 071-431 3135.

Rehearsals: Every Sunday in London. Phone Tam on 071-431 3135 or write to WTM, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX for details of WTM activities.

Unemployed Workers Charter

No TUC support for Tory cheap labour schemes!

Fight British militarism! Organise the Unemployed!

UWC lobby of the TUC, Glasgow, September 2 1991:

Send SAE for sponsorship circular and UWC petition to the TUC.

London: activist meetings and actions. Details 071-431 3135.

	6 months	1 year	SUBSCRIBE
Britain & Ireland	£8 <input type="checkbox"/>	£16 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Europe	£11 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Rest of World	£13 <input type="checkbox"/>	£26 <input type="checkbox"/>	
For more details see page two			
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a cheque/PO for £..... made out to November Publications			
<input type="checkbox"/> Please start my subscription with issue no			
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose a donation for £ made out to November Publications			
NAME _____			
ADDRESS _____			
_____ TEL _____			
Return to: Subscriptions, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX			

Unemployment: Organising the rising tide

APRIL'S figures for unemployment showed the number of people now out of work to be well over two million. Taking into account the twenty-plus 'fiddles' that the Tories have made to the unemployed register during their time in office, the true number of those really unemployed may be double the official figures.

Establishment economists predict that the number of people looking for work will have increased to over three million by the end of the year. To add fuel to the fire, a recent report in the *Financial Times* (May 15 1991) stated that up to 3,000 staff employed by the voluntary sector to train unemployed adults were being made redundant because of cuts in government funding. Even the Tecs (Training and Enterprise Councils) reported 13,153 ET posts had been slashed because of a lack of government funds. This represented a fall in places of around 53%. Yes, surprise surprise, the government's much vaunted ET scheme is failing to adequately train people and, ironically, the very people employed to train those out of work are now adding to the unemployment figures.

It comes as no great shock to members and supporters of the Unemployed Workers Charter that the TUC bureaucracy has done nothing to defend those sections of our class threatened by unemployment. The decision of the TUC general council to endorse a package of cuts and increased affiliation fees at its meeting in October of last year, was hardly unexpected. It was facing a deficit of £1.2 million in 1990 and over £2 million this year. Something had to give and in moving to save their own cushy jobs at the expense of the movement they are meant to serve, they have exposed themselves as a sickening bunch of bureaucrats more

Two months ago unemployment figures went over two million. By the end of the year many economists predict they will reach three million. What this cries out for is action and organisation

interested in protecting their own pockets than campaigning for the rights of the unemployed.

Not only have the county associations and the annual conference of trades councils disappeared from under the auspices of the TUC, but so has all funding for regional organisers of the unemployed. This cut is supposed to save the TUC some £40,000; roughly comparable to the salary of Norman Willis or one of his minions - minus perks, of course.

At the end of the day we place our trust not on the TUC but on the organised strength of employed and unemployed workers. This has been the UWC's objective since its birth in 1986. We have stressed the need to be financially independent; relying on handouts from the TUC or from any government source is not our aim. We say what we want and when we want it, without running the risk of having our funds withdrawn for not 'falling into line'.

This September the UWC will be lobbying the TUC in Glasgow. It will be a focal point for organising against



The militancy that helped smash the poll tax must be organised against unemployment today

the attacks on our class, among both employed and unemployed workers. We do not have any illusions in the TUC leaders' ability to take up this fight. But demands to take up the struggle against unemployment *should* be taken up in the context of the TUC, as this is the expression of the overwhelming majority of the organised members of our class. It poses the question of unemployment, not as a side issue in the workers' movement, but as one of central importance that can only be successfully taken on by the class as a whole. It also directs a political challenge to the trade union leaders - back the fight or step aside. It presents, in every section of the class we can gain access to, the alter-

native to the wingeings of 'Stormin' Norman.

The build up to the lobby has already begun. We have had a good response from every trade union branch we have approached for support - for example the NUCPS, Department of Transport, Lambeth Bridge House branch has also agreed to organise an all-mem-

bers meeting to discuss the whole issue of unemployment and the farce of the Tories' cheap labour schemes. A UWC speaker has been invited to address this meeting. Our street work has also started promisingly. Over the past few weeks we have been working at various locations throughout London, raising the issue of unemployment. Throughout the forthcoming months, activists will be petitioning thousands of people and collecting money in order to finance the lobby. This type of work is extremely important to us as it allows us to 'spread the word' and make new contacts - many of whom are active trade unionists themselves and recognise the need to take the question of unemployment

seriously and do something about it. The UWC also expects that it will again make new enemies. Many of these will, of course, be from the right wing of the trade union establishment but many will also appear from the 'left' and from those organisations which profess to be 'friends' of the unemployed.

During the UWC march from Manchester to Blackpool in 1989 for example, Preston Trades Council withdrew their initial support for the marchers just 24 hours before we were to arrive at their town. With this withdrawal went the loss of overnight accommodation, let alone any solidarity. Their justification for this was the fact that the march was 'political' - which of course is true. But harassing unemployed workers and intimidating employed workers through 'workfare' is also political. Fighting back is political. Sabotaging an unemployed march by last minute withdrawal of facilities is certainly political, but it is the politics of the capitalist class, which loves passive 'innocent victims' and charity, but hates militant workers who organise to fight back.

The UWC's lobby of the TUC takes principled politics for fighting back against unemployment and puts them into practical effect. Employed and unemployed workers should have no illusions in the TUC. It cannot equip our class with the ideas or methods necessary to overcome the onslaught we have faced for the past decade. The UWC can. We need you to join us in organising for this lobby and to build the mass unemployed movement that our class needs!

- Smash all slave labour schemes!
- Organise the Unemployed!

Gareth Phillips

Jack Dash: UWC pays tribute

ON SATURDAY June 8, the Unemployed Workers Charter organised a wreath laying ceremony on the River Thames to commemorate the anniversary of the death of our friend and comrade, Jack Dash. This event, the first of what we plan to make an annual commemoration, was attended by Jack's daughter as well as close comrades and friends of this great fighter for the working class.

Jack Dash was an outstanding rank and file dockers' leader, veteran of the National Unemployed Workers Movement and a principled communist. Our all too brief association with this fine comrade was an inspiration to all in the

UWC.

Jack first felt the stirrings of proletarian class consciousness during the General Strike of 1926 as he watched troops in London protecting scab lorries. But it was the experience of unemployment that was the key. In his autobiography, *Good Morning Brothers!*, he describes how he came across the organisation which the UWC campaigns to recreate - the NUWM:

"During my spells of unemployment, I found time to do some reading and political study. I joined the Labour Party, but I did not remain a member for long. One day, after signing on at the Walworth Road Labour Exchange, I found that the

National Unemployed Workers Movement was holding a meeting. I stopped to listen. The speaker was a powerfully built chap with a rugged countenance and a stentorian voice. He was explaining the need to get organised to demand an end to the Means Test and the closing down of the work camps - Belmont in particular.

"That was the place where you could be directed when you had exhausted your twenty six weeks miserable unemployment benefit: you made an application for relief and then were directed to this labour camp while your dependents were issued with food..."

"[The speaker] made good sense to

me and when [he] had finished his talk and answered questions from the crowd and the chairman had appealed for a collection and closed the meeting, I stayed behind. I was deeply impressed by all that had been said and wanted to continue the discussion with the speaker. Arising out of our conversation I learned he was a casual dock worker and his name was Patsy Hicks. We became friends, and as a result of many keen and heated discussions we had together, and the reading of some of the books he recommended, I began to do some political rethinking."

The path that Jack's political rethinking led him on is one that the UWC

says all the unemployed should travel: from inarticulate class anger and resentment, to conscious, communist struggle. The UWC's tribute to comrade Jack Dash is a reaffirmation of the fighting spirit and communist resolve that this remarkable man embodied.

The next issue of *Unemployed Organiser* will carry a fuller report of our tribute to Jack Dash as well as details of plans for our lobby of the TUC in September. Individual copies, 30p (incl p&p), bulk orders (above 10 copies) 5p each (plus 10% p&p). Available from UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.