

THE LENINIST

CPCGB

Lives!

On November 23 the Euro congress 'transformed' the Communist Party of Great Britain into the Democratic Left. Just after the Euro vote Comrade Anne Murphy read the following statement to a packed press conference organised by the Provisional Central Committee

COMRADES, friends and others: Nina Temple and her sad little shambles a few hundred yards away in Congress House want us in the Communist Party to bite the bullet and admit that "the era of mass communist parties is over".

We have news for Nina and her friends - our time has not even come yet. Despite the best efforts of her and her chums in the media, the Communist Party is *not* dead: the Communist Party lives and will be built into the mass Party we need!

Over the past week of so, our organisation has been subjected to a sustained press barrage telling us that our Party, founded in 1920 as part of Lenin's world party of revolution, has finally given up the ghost; that, it seems, we are no more.

This is an example, once again, of the establishment's media substituting wishful thinking for reality. So, let us set the record straight at this press conference in a way that allows no misunderstanding for our media friends:

Point one - the Communist Party of Great Britain is *not* dead. Our Party founded in 1920 has parted company with those elements who attempted to hijack the Party, who have dragged its banner through the mud. Those has-

bens have now finally admitted that they never had anything to do with communist politics. The Party is not over - the Party is alive, kicking and growing under its young new leadership - the Provisional Central Committee.

Point two - to underline the fact that reports of our death are grossly exaggerated, the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party will be standing four candidates in the next general election.

Stan Kelsey will stand for the Party in the traditional communist constituency of Bethnal Green and Stepney in the East End of London; Tam Dean Burn will be the Party's rep in Glasgow Central; Mark Fischer will be standing up for working class politics in the Rhondda; and I will be standing against the pale pink impostor, Ken Livingstone in Brent East.

Point three - for the period of our general election campaign, the Communist Party is proud to reiterate the fact that we *will* relaunch our mass, popular daily newspaper - the *Daily Worker*.

Point four - at today's press conference, we are proud to launch the first in our new book series, *Communism Lives!*. Taken together, these books are the most authoritative and weighty answer of communists to the triumphant howls of the bourgeoisie internationally. These

books provide a comprehensive set of handbooks for anybody interested in changing the world, for anyone interested in progress. They are *indispensable* reading for anyone who wants to know the shape of the politics of the 21st century.

We have been asked why we are actually standing in the forthcoming general election. After all, we are told that communism has been so discredited by the collapse of socialism in the east that all we can expect are derisory votes and lost deposits.

The Communist Party is clear: we are standing in the next general election to plant a flag. We are introducing a unique element into the forthcoming charade that passes for 'democracy' in Britain.

In four constituencies there will be the chance to vote for a genuine *working class* alternative. What choice are ordinary people being presented with otherwise? Either the Tweedledee Major or the Tweedledum Kinnock.

In these four constituencies, electors at last have the chance to vote for a candidate who can stop the rot; who can say, after 12 years of our class being kicked from pillar to post, "enough is enough!"

Four constituencies is not enough, but it is a beginning. The election cam-

paign of the Communist Party poses the question to all those who profess to stand for the working class - okay, here is your chance. We are standing candidates who will:

- Enter parliament committed first and last to the jobs, living standards and democratic rights of the working class.

- Waive parliamentary niceties to hammer home that message. We are not interested in the tame pillow fights that currently constitute 'debate' in the House of Commons: in terms of parliamentary procedure and etiquette, our comrades will be thugs.

- Take only the average wage of their constituencies from the generous handouts MPs vote themselves and donate the rest to strengthen the organisations of the working class.

- Be clear that we are not entering parliament as pompous 'legislators' there to 'liberate' the working class. We go in under covering fire from our class as a guerilla unit in the enemy's camp. Our MPs will be there to work to promote the fightback where it really matters - not in the musty halls of Westminster, but in the mass movements of ordinary workers.

That is why we are standing in the election. A vote for the Communist Party will be a vote for socialism, for a decent future for humanity. We urge all

genuine fighters for the working class to help build the election campaign of the Communist Party.

As I said, our press conference is also organised to launch the *Communism Lives!* book series. Communists do not have an ostrich-type attitude to reality. We recognise that there is a need to singlemindedly analyse the experience of living socialism thus far, its weaknesses as well as strengths; we have to analyse the current stage in which capitalism finds itself, and more importantly, where it is going.

But none of the four books in the series *Communism Lives!* will be exercises in dry Marxist quote-chopping. The ideas in our books are there to be used, to be applied in the real world.

That is the message that the Communist Party wants to give out from this weekend. As we illustrate in our election campaign, in the content of our books, we have taken to heart Marx's dictum that the point is not simply to interpret the world...

We plan to change it!

If you believe the world needs changing, then your place is with us, in the struggle to reforge the only working class party ever built in this county, the Communist Party of Great Britain.



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

LABOUR'S witch hunt, its headlong rush to thoroughly bourgeois respectability (and, Kinnock hopes, government), combined with the liquidationist cancer which ate away the 'official' Communist Party in the 1980s, has created a vacuum on the left of politics in Britain. Two groups in particular say they aspire to fill it: the Socialist Workers Party and Militant.

There is a problem though. For all their revolutionary rhetoric and claims to be loyal to the theory and practice of Marxism, neither of these organisations is orientated towards building the Communist Party workers in Britain need if they are to end the crime of capitalism and open the road to communism. Both the SWP and Militant seem intent on competing with each other in an attempt to reconstitute left social democracy outside the Labour Party (contradictorily neither finds the slightest problem calling for a Neil Kinnock general election victory).

In pursuit of its left social democratic project, the SWP's weekly paper *Socialist Worker* has been making siren calls for a "socialist alternative" to Kinnockism. The exact political content of this "socialist alternative" is never made clear. But one thing is clear: it has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism.

Through its "alternative to Kinnock" campaign, the SWP has been recruiting a not insignificant number of Labour leftists understandably fed up with Kinnock's politics and internal regime. However there is a big, big problem. These recruits have been won on the basis of anti-communist politics - *Socialist Worker* "celebrated" the "collapse of communism" - and have been signed up to an organisation which shows all the characteristics of social democracy.

While our CPGB took the lead in the 1926 General Strike with 5,000 members - nearly half suffering arrest or imprisonment - at the SWP's 1991 conference Tony Cliff admitted that in spite of having a claimed 6,000 members, his organisation "is not enough to make a decisive difference" in the class struggle (*Socialist Worker*, November 16 1991). Not surprising either.

The SWP is not organised on Leninist principles, with every member active and working under the discipline of the Party. It is organised in a Menshevik way, with "active members" being expected to "relate" to the non-activists (quote Tony Cliff, *Socialist Worker*, November 16 1991 - incidentally, to our certain knowledge only about half the SWP's members regularly attend its weekly meetings).

Such a Menshevik reality must create tensions within an organisation which says it is Leninist (revealingly in the 1960s Cliff and Co were openly anti-Leninist, claiming their practice owed more to free and easy "Luxemburgism" than "authoritarian Leninism"). Inevitably the "active members" become the main source of discontent. Having read Lenin's *What is to be done?* they consider it more than a passing phase in Lenin's thought, as Cliff would have it. Hence they begin to move into opposition.

It was precisely to head off such a danger that the SWP leadership decided earlier this year to abolish its entire branch committee structure, lock, stock and barrel. Naturally this spiking of potential opposition from the "active members" concentrated in the branch committees was carried out in the name of democracy. Nevertheless the SWP's lack of any genuine democracy is plain to see.

The SWP's 1991 conference was organised along the undemocratic lines typical of both the Labour Party and right opportunist 'official communism'. Its leaders presented a united phalanx and hand picked delegates "took up the discussion" echoing them one after a monotonous other, no wonder the SWP does not deem it necessary to publish a full account of its debates and resolutions as is the case with communist parties. Of course, such a bureaucratic approach has nothing to do with Leninism but it has been the norm with the SWP since the early 1970s, when in the guise of the International Socialists it expelled its dissident factions - who now carry on as *Socialist Organiser*, Red Action, Workers Power, RCP, RCG, etc.

What of Militant? As our readers will know (and readers of *Militant* will not) Militant Tendency is split, with the majority intent on a "new turn" which will see the building of "alternative" or "real" Labour Party branches around the country. As Militant's disaffected founder/former leader Ted Grant says, such organisations will be "neither fish nor fowl". Like the SWP's "socialist alternative" to the Labour Party, Militant's social democratic project is doomed to fracture along left/right lines, doomed to the irrelevance that effectively killed off the Independent Labour Party in the late 1930s.

What Britain's workers need is not a second rate left Labour Party. We need a reformed Communist Party.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Japan solidarity

We received your letter regarding the Euros' November congress, which informed us that they would hold it for the purpose of the 'liquidation of the Communist Party of Great Britain'. Stalinist party though it is, we cannot help feeling indignation and humiliation about that.

Nina Temple and her followers have surrendered to the British bourgeoisie and followed the anti-revolutionary Gorbachev. Poisoned by social democracy to the core, they are completing a barefaced conversion. Impudently, they are finally announcing the death of the communist movement initiated by Lenin, and that under the name of the 'Communist Party of Great Britain'. We shall not allow such an outrage to be committed.

The communist movement in Britain, founded by Marx and Engels themselves, is being dishonoured, though temporarily, by these counter-revolutionary betrayers. We share grave indignation with the British working class.

As the ruled class in the motherland of capitalism, the working class in Great Britain pioneered the way to the self-liberation of the world proletariat. You have been struggling to reforge yourselves as their genuine vanguard and to organisationally rally all the revolutionary lefts, including the Trotskyists not affiliated to the Fourth International. We wish a great advance of your struggle for sweeping away the Euro betrayers from the arena of the class struggle, for awakening and rallying the principled members still left in their ranks.

We have also been struggling here in Japan, denouncing the 'revolution returning to capitalism' openly started in the collapsed USSR. We vow that we will struggle in the forefront of the proletariat in Japan, transcending the pseudo-communism named Stalinism and the quasi-lefts such as the pro-Stalinist Social Democratic Party in Japan.

Down with imperialism! Down with Stalinism!
Masao Yoshida
Japanese Revolutionary Communist League (Marxist Faction)

International Forum

The present dismal picture in the world communist movement consequent upon the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe is, of course, a matter of great shock and grave concern to all of us. True believers in the noble ideology of socialism and communism cannot remain silent spectators to these developments and should, as we strongly feel, close up their ranks and respond to the need of the hour.

In the considered opinion of the Central Committee of our Party the continuous practice of revisionism since the time of Krushchev, now culminating in the counterrevolutionary blueprint of glasnost and perestroika led by the renegade Gorbachev clique, has wrought havoc in the communist movement from within, causing the downfall of socialism. The capitalist-imperialists and their revisionist allies all over the world are rejoicing on this occasion and launching attacks on communism. An anti-communist hysteria has been whipped up. We believe you are no less concerned over all these painful developments in the Soviet Union and else-

where.

We feel all genuine communists in different countries now engaged in a fight against revisionism in general and the counterrevolutionary blueprint of glasnost and perestroika in particular should step out and find ways and means for establishing closer ties and organic links among themselves and strive hard to create an International Forum for conducting ideological struggle.

Remaining steadfast to the noble cause of communism and proletarian internationalism, all of us should come forward with concrete proposals and initiatives in this regard. A meeting of different communist and workers' parties of the world would be a starting point. Any party willing to host it may take the initiative now. We feel real unity of genuine communists of all countries is a must for the present situation.

Nihar Mukherjee
General Secretary,
Socialist Unity Centre of India

Bangladesh

Without any specific knowledge of the national question in Bangladesh, it seems to me that the leading member of the Communist Party of Bangladesh whom you interviewed (*The Leninist* No 112) presents a most confused, and in fact dangerous, position.

The CPB, the interviewee declares, wants to establish communism in Bangladesh, "but at the present moment it is not through armed struggle, it is through democratic process and peacefully".

What does this mean exactly? Confusion. Communism does not come overnight. Communism is the end of a long process of the transformation of society. First the workers have to seize power. Not democratically within the confines of a bourgeois state and certainly not peacefully - in the bourgeoisie's terms. No, the workers' seizure of power must involve the *smashing* of the bourgeois state, almost certainly with violence.

Having seized power then the workers have to establish their own state - the dictatorship of the proletariat. That state and that society proceed to develop socialism, which contains elements of both capitalism and in-the-future communism.

Having said all that, it is good to see that communist parties in differing parts of the world are exchanging views and working out policies for the advance of communism.

Malcolm Sparkes
Liverpool

Poll Tax

I think the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB and *The Leninist* made a mistake in not taking part or supporting the recent national anti poll tax march organised by the Trafalgar Square Defence Campaign and various anti poll tax groups in different parts of Britain. How big that mistake was will come out in the course of time.

The arguments against participating are, of course, possibly tenable. A small organisation stretched in its resources, humanly and financially; a demonstration on an ebb-tide, organised largely by fringe anarchists and their like, under slogans which are narrow and miss the main point - that the poll tax is an attack on all the working class (not just the prisoners and prisoners-to-be) by the capitalist class in favour of their own - the rich.

Are they really tenable? This was a demonstration, minute as it was, of those prepared to carry on the fight. Symbolically, it went to Trafalgar Square.

The Socialist Workers Party was there - at least with one local branch banner. It did its usual patronising act: 'You carry our posters - we'll stand around chest-warming with our papers'.

The Leninist did have paper sellers, and nothing else. Here was a case when necessity should have overcome all obstacles.

The poll tax is still a live issue - as the millions now getting liability summonses through their letter boxes know.

It will rear its ugly head in the next weeks and months of the election campaign. It is an issue that no Marxist-Leninist organisation can just give verbal notice to, or worse still, ignore.
Robert Belling
Kent

Tax exile

I have received the copies of *The Leninist* you sent me. Quite interesting points you project within your paper.

Myself politically, I suppose I once sympathised with Class War, but since being sent to prison, I've heard nothing more from them, only read news articles about their recent 'conference' at Shoreditch Town Hall.

I'm not aligned to any party or group, I just read various left wing newspapers, *Anarchist Fortnightly* and *Direct Action*, but very little of *Militant* or *Socialist Worker*. They seem to have abandoned us, judging from the comments they were making after the riot last year, that we were "backward elements" and "reactionary in our behaviour".

Seems hardly surprising that they would want anything more to do with us. Their main pre-occupation is lobbying Labour MP's, canvassing for membership and holding meeting after meeting, talking about the same thing all the time; its enough to send anyone to sleep!

I have read your paper on numerous occasions in the past. Last year you were very supportive of us and critical of the judiciary and main parliamentary parties' spokespersons for their condemnation of events that culminated in a mass riot.

You quite rightly slagged off the SWP and Militant for their disgraceful acts of cowardice during the riot; after all, they evoke a message of revolution and mass defiance against the present state. Added disgrace on their behalf was to make comments like "we will hold our own enquiry and if necessary we will name names".

The SWP's line was not so much 'let's be coppers' narks', but sympathised with demonstrators' anger, because it related to breakdowns in public services, but at the same time said it wouldn't change anything. Well there was a climbdown from the Tories after public pressure via non-payment, opinion polls and of course the riot. So many were arrested, including myself.

I agree with some of the things you write about Cuba, homelessness, defending Russia against reintroduction of capitalism etc, but I honestly cannot see people around here grasping left wing views/ideology. I suggest just submissively trudging down to the polling station next election and voting for the moderate Labour Party. Its the next best thing you can hope for; don't rely on the revolution.

Neil Bremner
HM Prison Coldingley.

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.

Class war prisoners

Winston Silcott has won his appeal. Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite are now walking free. Years of campaigning by the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign have paid off

COMING in the wake of the collapse of the frame ups of the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the Maguires and the Winchester Three, victory for the Tottenham Three is another welcome exposure of the class nature of the police and judiciary.

The police are now desperately trying to cobble together some semblance of credibility. The day that Winston's conviction collapsed, a spokesman for the Met appeared on *Newsnight* claiming that it was the fault of the lawyers who presented the evidence at the original trial that the three were imprisoned! After all, he argued, if the police were really interested in framing up the black community of Tottenham, how come only three men had been sent down?

This explanation conveniently omits the hundreds of raids and arrests that the community there was subjected to after the uprising of 1985, and the fact that many resulting testimonies were thrown out of court because they were so obviously 'encouraged' by police brutality. Otherwise, the police would have had a lot more people behind bars.

The climate in which this is taking place testifies to the continuing criminalisation of black people in Britain. The collapse of the frame ups has been met by establishment calls for renewed

attempts to "find the real killers". That can only mean further attacks on the black community, 'guilty' for standing up to police attack.

All the crocodile tears about Blakelock are used to cover the real events around the 1985 uprisings in Brixton and Tottenham. Police shot Mrs Cherry Groce in Brixton. Mrs Cynthia Jarrett was killed in a police raid in her home on the Broadwater Farm estate. Blakelock was killed as local youth resisted police attacks on the resulting protest demonstration. The only bourgeois paper which gave any indication of this was *The Guardian*, which stated that the "rioters were protesting over the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarman [sic]" (November 26 1991).

PC Blakelock is sanctified. A murdered black woman, Mrs Jarrett, does not even merit getting her name right.

Unfortunately, many people who have campaigned for the Tottenham Three are not prepared to challenge this. On *Newsnight*, Bernie Grant MP argued that anyone who *did* know who killed Blakelock should volunteer that information to the police; ie, they should act as informers to the racist state against those who have had the courage to resist it. Grant is advocating scabbing. This is the logic of his politics. For left Labourites, the state itself

is the agency of change. When it comes down to it, Grant and Co will rally to defend it, whatever the provisos.

Winston Silcott has argued that black people cannot expect any justice from this system. His brother made the same point after Winston's appeal won. This does not just apply to six years ago but to today. What framed up the Tottenham Three also framed up the Guildford Four and striking miners. The 'justice' of the bosses is a weapon in the class war, directed at the working class and the oppressed. Events such as the jailing of Silcott, Braithwaite and Raghup are not just 'errors of judgement', they are aspects of the class war, cohering a racist consensus around the state.

Those who fought back on Broadwater Farm in 1985 found their own answer to our enemy's 'justice'. We fully defend them in this. The racist core of the British imperialist state provoked the resistance of the black community and then resorted to scapegoating the Tottenham Three.

The youth who took on the police are not criminals, they are the raw power of revolutionary change.

Free all class war prisoners!
Hands off the black community! For workers' defence against police attack!

Sean Quinn

The Unemployed Workers Charter attended the founding conference of the 'Crisis in London' campaign on November 9 1991 at Holborn Library. The campaign seeks to link different campaigns in the capital, together with workers in the public services, to campaign against further cuts. Jeremy Corbyn MP attended, and spoke about the effects the various cuts were having. The emphasis of his speech was on how much Tory policies were to blame for the problems, and what the next Labour government should do to revive public services. The other speakers, including those of the UWC, took the view that the cuts would have taken place irrespective of which political party was in power, and that people should start organising to protect their services. The Labour Party has no solution to the erosion of services, not only in London but throughout the whole country. The way forward is for workers to take direct action to ensure that the public services are provided as people need them. Militants must agitate for the setting up of councils of action, composed of elected recallable delegates from workers in public services and the people who use them, to take these services away from the control of bureaucrats and to ensure they are properly provided for people who need them. The UWC, in the run up to its national demonstration against unemployment in London on February 29 1992, will be actively participating in the Crisis in London campaign. CA

There never was much to choose between the Euro Jack Adams and the Kinnockite Jack Dromey in the battle for the post of Deputy General Secretary of the TGWU. To prove it, in mid-November, Adams, now TGWU No2, agreed a pay deal which binds the car workers to only half a percent above inflation until 1994. In an effort to excuse this miserable agreement and his failure to cut hours to 37 a week, the

Daily Telegraph quotes Adams: "The industry is not in a good state, we have lay-offs taking place ... there was no fight among our members over the reduction of hours". The paper recognises a victory for the government when it sees one: "The government, worried by the stubborn refusal of wages to drop as quickly as inflation, may also be concerned about the outcome of negotiations that traditionally set the standards for the rest of industry". The *Telegraph* also quotes Jimmy Airlie of the AEU - and until recently a Euro organisation member - who also urged his members to accept the deal: "We have got the psychological figure of five percent and I think the Chancellor will not be pleased." Lawson will be pleased, so too will Major, Kinnock and all the capitalist class. Car workers need new leaders. TE



● For union bureaucrats, Kinnock comes first

Saturday November 23: the streets of Manchester echoed to the sounds of flute bands, as the annual Manchester Martyrs march was cheered along by locals lining the route. The minimal, but perennial, fascist harassment was deterred by the fact that the march was routed through working class areas with a large black population. The march is a regular display of solidarity with the Irish liberation struggle, against British imperialism's occupation of the Six Counties. Importantly, it has been sustained on an openly pro-republican basis, in the face of opposition from the liberal 'official' solidarity movement, such as the Troops Out Movement. The afternoon concluded with a rally addressed by Suzanne Bunting of the IRSP, who emphasised the need to build a genuine Communist Party in Ireland. Again, many organisations, sadly including Sinn Fein, have boycotted the march because of the presence of the IRSP on the platform. Fittingly, as this year marks the 10th anniversary of the hunger strike, a poem by Bobby Sands was read. Among those sending solidarity greetings were George Silcott (father of Winston), Dessie Ellis and Hands Off Ireland! VD

Moscow gold



Following the recent 'revelations' concerning Soviet funding for the CPGB, a few points need clarifying. We are all in favour of workers in one part of the world giving financial aid to workers' struggles in another part. This is basic solidarity. We reject the concept of tailoring an organisation's politics to suit the policy of a financial backer, be it an individual or a state. We have condemned such political prostitution used, for example, by the NCP and the WRP. As to our own funding, we state loudly *our politics are not for sale*. We are proud of the financial support we receive from our readers, both in Britain and abroad. *The Leninist* has no other source of funds - no city deals, no property investments, no rich benefactors, no bundles of used fivers collected from embassies. Our hands are clean, but they are also empty. The November total of £631 was good, but has already been used up. Special thanks to MK in Manchester who promises a monthly fiver, and welcome cheques from SB, AS and TR. December's fund is now open...
Vernon Douglas, Fund Organiser

Alan Merrick

Tit for tat?

RECENTLY the British press has latched on to the so called tit-for-tat killings in the Six Counties of the north of Ireland. For the British establishment this is all grist to their mill, further proof that the British army is needed to stop the two sides turning on each other in sectarian frenzy.

Right wing rags such as the *Evening Standard* have taken their lead from the Ulster Defence Association's press officer and portrayed this as one initiated by the IRA, with the violence of the UDA and UVF merely being reactive. The *Standard* urges the loyalists to be calm.

Facts speak otherwise. The loyalist paramilitaries have turned their guns on the nationalist population of the Six Counties. Although the legal UDA, under the *nom-de-guerre* of the Ulster Freedom Fighters, claims that all nationalists assassinated have connections with the IRA, the IRA - an organisation which normally claims its Volunteers when killed - denies it. The

loyalists have even justified murder of nationalist taxi drivers on the pretext that they are in a position to relay intelligence to the IRA. The fascistic UFF was responsible for throwing a shrapnel grenade into a football crowd in Belfast on November 5. This, like the UVF, is an organisation which "claims to attack only known republicans" (*The Guardian*, November 16 1991). Such as the two young girls it shot at a mobile shop in Belfast in March? The logic is simple: if you are a catholic, you are a target.

In contrast, the IRA's attacks have been directed solely at members of these murder gangs.

The loyalist paramilitaries do not function as isolated fascist gangs. They rely closely on the covert cooperation of the British state. The leaking of security documents on nationalists from the RUC and UDR to the murder gangs is well known. Recently, *Dispatches* on Channel 4 uncovered evidence that prominent loyalists - RUC officers, bankers, solicitors, politicians,

etc - are hand in glove with the loyalist gangs in setting up nationalists for assassination.

There is no lack of evidence of both the sectarian nature of the loyalist paramilitaries' campaign and of their links with the establishment. There is no escaping the connection between this and Britain's occupation of the Six Counties. The loyalists are British imperialism's auxiliaries in Ireland, used to intimidate the nationalist population. The loyalist instigated escalation in nationalist-loyalist violence has given the British an excuse to increase the size of its army of occupation and step up harassment of the nationalist community. There are renewed calls from sections of the British establishment for the introduction of internment.

We are not neutrals in this. All workers in Britain have an interest in siding with the IRA, against the British army and its pawns, the loyalist murder gangs.

The death throes of 'official

Goodbye to all that

The Euros' congress was more a funeral than a birth

THE PARTY is dead! Long live the Party!" wrote the *New Statesman and Society* (November 29 1991) as the Euro organisation's final congress as the 'Communist Party of Great Britain' was met by a spirited picket by the Provisional Central Committee.

On November 23 1991, in a gathering under the official title of the Communist Party of Great Britain's 43rd conference, the Euro organisation finally managed to ditch the words that have been haunting it so much in recent years. CPGB was cast aside and *Democratic Left* installed as the new name for the grouping.

This was in effect decided in a 'debate' on whether to discuss the Democratic Left draft constitution or the CPGB constitution on Friday December 22. Looking to the past rather than the future, some whose attachment to communist politics is of the sentimental type did point to the "decades of tireless sacrifice for the CPGB"; however they were outnumbered 3:1 by the petty bourgeois radicals who claimed that society has fundamentally changed without really saying how or even why. Anyway, new realism triumphed over sentiment. All remaining ties with past "nostalgia, discredited ideologies, rosy views of history" and "unaccountable command structures" (Nina Temple) were cut and the Democratic Left was launched.

Saturday saw the formal vote on the name change. Delegates were given a ballot paper containing 21 names on which they had to select their first three preferences. The three receiving most votes were then put through to a second ballot where delegates chose the Democratic Left, even though it is clear that most people in their organisation as a whole wanted to keep the name communist.

This congress marked the final straw in the break of the Euros from working class politics, something which had been on the cards for many, but was spurred on by the collapse of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe and the August 1991 counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Riding on the back of counterrevolution, the Euro tops claimed that communism was completely discredited; indeed Euro secretary Nina Temple admitted "I never had anything to do with Marxism-Leninism. It is far too dogmatic".

Only technical details stopped the Euros dumping the name at their last congress, apparently legal problems concerning members' wills! There were no such hitches this time around. The "transformation" of the Euro organisation is now complete.

Hence all references to democratic centralism, proletarian internationalism and other fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism have now been finally buried and politics worthy of the bourgeoisie themselves have been adopted to suit their 'new' political vision. Even their revised logo has been manufactured for the 'changing times'. The Euros commitment to pluralist politics will now be displayed in the form of three people holding hands, designed against a background of red, purple and green: "red for history, purple for women's suffrage, green for environmentalism".

Letting go of the name of our Party is the only contribution the Euros could have made to genuine communism and working class politics in Britain. No longer will communism be attacked in the name of communism by these types. They have long dragged our banner through filth, blaming communism for the crisis in Eastern Europe and the USSR as well as all the crimes of the 20th century.

The question of the 'red shekels' provided the nearest thing to an 'exciting moment' during the whole congress. The stage managed "revelations" that the CPGB right opportunists were in receipt of "secret, massive funding" from the CPSU allowed Temple to express her "disgust and anger at these compromising arrangements" and that she had no "knowledge" of them (as we are sure Nazi leaders knew nothing of the massacre of Jews, communists, gays and Gypsies). Soviet cash was also used to stoke the anti-communist fire.

This produced something of a commotion. Straight Leftists, in the form of rank and filers, rather than faction chief Fergus Nicholson, saw nothing wrong with 'Moscow gold'. While the Euros huffed and puffed some heckled, others even staged a 'trickle out' from the hall. That was the end of it, more or less. One delegate stood up to speak against the motion condemning the Soviet communists for their "generosity", but the delegates who now call themselves members of the *Democratic Left* made so much noise his speech became inaudible.

Aside from dumping the last of their historical baggage and heart bleeding disclaimers about 'Moscow gold' and Stalin's role in writing their 1950 *British Road to Socialism* programme, the congress was a predictably grey and bureaucratic affair. Presented as the birth of the new, the atmosphere was very much that of a funeral. A costly one too. The Euros spent a small fortune promoting the Democratic Left before their own congress had even voted on the name.

Nina Temple might hope that good times are just around the corner: "A renaissance of popular left politics, and nothing less, is required if new times are going to be good times". But one thing is for certain - the Democratic Left will not be around to enjoy it. These 'new thinking' petty bourgeois are way past their sell by date. Over the last two years they have lost thousands of members and won and kept six! According to their own figures, most delegates were retired or lecturers, or retired lecturers; the largest age group was between 60 and 70 years.

The Euros may believe that unemployment, poverty, homelessness, war and all the other grotesque characteristics of capitalism can be removed by parliament through "popular left politics", but we know different. Only revolution can save our class and the whole of humanity from the horrors of capitalism, and revolution requires the reforged Communist Party - that is the sole reason why the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain exists.

When we took back the name of our Party at the 5th Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB in December 1990, we also rededicated ourselves to the revolutionary principles on which our Party was founded in July 1920: communism against capitalism, soviets against parliament and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Supporters of the Provisional Central Committee picketed the Euros' congress in a demonstration to show that communism lives. The four CPGB prospective parliamentary candidates spoke at the picket, all vigorously defending Marxism-Leninism. And at a packed press conference later on in the day, comrade Ann Murphy released a press statement [see front page] and fielded questions from various bourgeois and left publications on behalf of the CPGB. As the statement says, "reports of our death are grossly exaggerated... the Party is alive, kicking and growing under its young new leadership - the Provisional Central Committee".

Gareth Phillips and Michael Davis



Loose ends

Euros used to boast about the impact of Pride comes before a fall

HISTORY has a way of tidying up its loose ends. The end of the era of 'official communism' is accompanied by the winding up of a variety of publications. Not surprisingly *Soviet Weekly* after 49 years of dull propagandising on behalf of every official Soviet leader (and in the last year Yeltsin) has announced its death. But it is not alone. For all its fashionable heresies and promotion by the bourgeoisie, *Marxism Today* is to go too.

The November 1991 issue of *Marxism Today* advertised a "special collectors double issue" of the magazine in December. With typically Euro levels of openness and honesty, they omitted to tell us that the reason why collectors will be interested in this "special" is that it will be the last issue published. We had to read *Tribune* or the *Morning Star* to find out that *Marxism Today* is to fold.

Marxism Today was once the theoretical discussion journal of the Euro organisation. As it moved to the right, centrists in the CPGB dubbed it *Kautskyism Today*, but with the Euro gallop to liquidation *Marxism Today* went beyond even the

fuzzy edge of reformist socialism and dropped into the abyss of pseudo-intellectual and quasi-radical petty bourgeois wackiness.

During this terminal phase of opportunism only a minority of members of the Euro organisation read *Marxism Today*, mostly the hardline Euros. From my experience in a typically moribund branch of the Euro organisation composed mainly of misfits and Methodists, it was clear that many old-timers who wanted to retain the name 'Communist Party', and may even have imagined they were still communists, did not read *Marxism Today* because they could not understand it, although their memory of the Party of the past made them believe it contained profound truths ungraspable by their undeveloped working class brains. Others however realised that all the talk about "settlements" and "post-Fordism" was not profound at all, but in fact obscure and vapid gobbledegook, theoretically incorrect when not actually meaningless. Knowing that the bulk of the membership did not read *Marxism Today*, the Euro leadership clique relied on *Changes* (another publication that has just bit the dust) to campaign against communism

'Communist' in Britain

Living fossil

Unable to face up to the great issues of the day, the Communist Party of Britain fell back on fudge

THE BARELY living fossils of the Communist Party of Britain convened their '41st congress' on November 9-10, held under the dark shadow of the counterrevolutionary collapse of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The 130 delegates who managed to limp their way to Caxton House were 'treated' to two days of virtual non-debate and speeches which only the brain-dead could have found stimulating. This would have come as no great surprise to anybody who had read their pre-congress discussion documents, which were very slim, sterile affairs in which nothing concrete was discussed and were obviously only an excuse for 'leading' members to boost their own egos and indulge in 'socialist' journalism.

Of course, the fact that only two days were allowed for a congress, given the momentous and catastrophic events in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, is extremely indicative. As the congress staggered to its end on Sunday the outgoing executive committee did adventurously propose an extension of the congress to 3.40pm, but a steely-eyed Bolshevik delegate from Scotland objected to this on the grounds that "the Scottish comrades all have Apex tickets so if we don't catch our train we will have to buy new ones". Given this inspiring level of commitment and dedication we can be sure that the revolutionary dictatorship of

the proletariat is just around the corner.

Showing their determination to provide the working class of Britain with Leninist leadership they postponed giving any verdict on the August counter-revolution, much to the disgust of one delegate who correctly complained that "this is just a cop-out" and that "it is inconceivable that at a CPB congress there is no discussion on the most momentous event since 1917". Of course, postponing the time of execution to the autumn of 1992, which is when the congress is going to be reconvened, and frantically 'updating' the international section of the *British Road to Socialism* is going to change nothing. Given the political track record of the CPB, the 'updated' international section of the BRS promises to be as brilliantly incisive and prophetic as the last 'updated' BRS, which was cobbled together in 1990. This version, coming after the counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe and with the Soviet Union in terminal crisis, announced that the world balance of forces had decisively tilted in favour of socialism! With unaccustomed honesty Nidge Tovey, the national organiser of the CPB, admitted in an interview that the last BRS "was obsolete before it came back from the printers". Not just obsolete, Nidge; wrong in principle.

Predictably, there was a lot of unity-mongering at the congress. It called on its executive committee to develop "united activity with left colleagues in the labour movement" (which means they will sink

even deeper into the Labourite mire, if that is possible) and for the setting up of a "study group on ideological positions", with a view to organising a "Unity Conference". Of course, what congress had in mind were the decaying zombies of the New Communist Party, who have been uttering incantations about the need for 'communist unity' for years.

For the CPB the world never changes. Mike Hicks gave the compulsory left sermon about how "extra parliamentary struggle is the key to working class advance", which is Hicksite doublespeak for 'lets channel the energy of the masses into electing a Labour government'.

It is amazing how little the CPB values itself or its 'programme'. The congress was treated to a "rousing appeal" by Monty Goldman. £1,200 was raised for the Boat for Cuba appeal, while not a penny was raised for the 'party' itself.

However, genuine communists in Britain must not get down-hearted. Robert Fischer, fraternal representative from the French Communist Party, reassured the working class in Britain and elsewhere, that "it took about 500 years to come to the French Revolution. Industrialisation only started in 1850 and that's not very long ago". Hurrah, hurrah.

Eddie Ford



Homeless parasites

The Euro 'transformation' has thrown its 'Militant tendency' into crisis

ONE CASUALTY struck by the collapse of the Euro organisation has been a small group of its members huddled around a journal called *Communist*. Some years ago this used to be the largest and most coherent opposition group within the 'official' Communist Party. This grouping stuck their heels in when a few hundred fled to form the New Communist Party in 1977. From there on it was all downhill.

It had a very tightly organised faction. Not only its organisation but also its political principles were treated in a clandestine fashion. *Communist* was only published (semi) openly after *The Leninist* had published key quotes from it as an internal journal so many times that its editors must have figured that they, rather than we, should get some credit for expanding its circulation.

Factional organisation and political struggle were treated in much the same way as masturbation: we may all do it, but it is not to be talked about in polite society. There was to be no open ideological struggle from this bunch. The Party was to be won through Machiavellian manoeuvres; branch by branch, district by district until ... the Congress of the Victors!

This was a most schizophrenic of groupings. As

well as being buried deep within the Euro organisation, it had a principle that the CPGB should be affiliated to the Labour Party. It ran - still runs - a torpid monthly called *Straight Left*. Now one time CPGB leader Palme Dutt used to edit a journal called *Labour Monthly* to take Communist Party politics into the Labour Party. *Straight Left* was the reverse - paid for by a faction of 'official communism', circulated within its organisation, and written by people such as Tony Benn. Still, "whom the gods wish to destroy", and all that.

What really decked the Straight Leftist-*Communist* crew was its principle to work within the Euro organisation because of its formal continuity from 1920. More and more, therefore, they became the left wing of the Euros, justifying clinging on to a decrepit shell. They 'captured' London district, but this was a hollow victory, since there was little left of it anyway, and nothing of any quality. Hope was kept up that 'communist' would not be dropped from the organisation's name. This alone was reason enough for them to keep maggotting away on the Euro corpse. Yet as time went by, reality began to dawn. October's *Communist* stated that they could not stay within something called the Democratic Left. But what to do?

When the inevitable happened on November 23,

Communist was left high and dry. This is illustrated by the 'special supplement' to *Communist* dated November 24: "There is no route to a Communist Party by way of joining or negotiating with existing groups ... [who] by their communist pretensions are, if anything, obstacles to the emergence of a Communist Party We could announce yet another Communist Party today. But this would only be a crutch for people who feel lost without one".

And so it goes on: what *not* to do, but not what *to* do. Any answer is thrown to the four winds, to the "sharp political class struggle" sometime in the future. In other words, once again, heads down and wait. For those Straight Leftists looking for something to fill their empty days, and all you insomniacs out there, "We will be arranging meetings speedily to discuss the way forward"; ie, we don't know what to do.

The liquidation of the Euro organisation leaves them out on their own. Years of factual burrowing have left them incapable of taking any effective independent action.

Just how long can the parasite survive after the death of the host?

Alan Merrik

Marxism Today.

and the name 'Communist Party' among the rank and file in the period before their November congress 'transformed' their organisation.

The editor of *Marxism Today*, Martin Jacques, was looking for £1,200,000 (Euro congress document No6) to relaunch a new version of his journal, but is finding it hard to find backers - *Tribune* reports that the proposed deal with *The Guardian* is off. This is no surprise: Jacques's value to the bourgeoisie has declined to zero. The editor of a 'communist' magazine denouncing communism was useful to the class enemy, but a boring pseudo-intellectual magazine edited by ex-communists, hardly. In an attempt to raise at least some cash, *Marxism Today* staff telephoned our office inviting us to advertise *The Leninist* in the 'special' issue. We used to be the only publication *MT* actually banned from advertising. Nevertheless we declined their kind offer; we have better ways of spending our money.

Jane Fenner



Labour rejects CPGB affiliation

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

In the left the air is loud with the sound of hands wringing in despair. How's this beauty from the recent Socialist Workers Party conference? Tony Cliff: "There will be big struggles to come, but our 6,000 members alone are not enough to make a decisive difference". Doesn't he recall that the Bolsheviks were only a few thousand strong in the much larger country of Russia in the years immediately before World War I? But they did manage to make a difference. And the Communist Party of Great Britain (which at the same conference Alex Callinicos said was the SWP's role model) was only 3,000 strong in 1927.

On the subject of the SWP's conference, we hear there was an altercation between those attending and the British National Party, who apparently got their arses kicked trying to attack it. One person who wasn't around to defend the honour of his organisation was SWP Central Committee member and scribe to the late Cap'n Bob, Paul Foot. On the Saturday of the conference he was spotted going into the matinee of Spartacus. Who can blame him? Given a choice between the theatrical performances of Tony Cliff and Kirk Douglas, most people would do the same.

And once again on the SWP, which has been busier than usual in providing political faux pas. On the morning of the successful Anti-Fascist Action march against racist attacks a 'party' spokesperson appeared on Greater London Radio claiming they had organised the march. In the week before the march - for which AFA activists had been mobilising over a period of months - the SWP went a-postering for it with publicity mentioning only the SWP. Alongside this outrageous behaviour comes the rumour that it will relaunch the cross-class Anti Nazi League. Bandwagon-hopping at its most foul.

The Revolutionary Communist Party, true to form, claimed 3,000 people on its Irish Freedom Movement's march in August. This was a march on which we counted about half that number. Now an RCP member has revealed to one of our supporters how RCP events multiply between occurrence and the printed page. They had counted 1,400 on the IFM demo, but - and here's the secret - "We take the police estimate and triple it". What was that an old Russian once said about honesty in politics?

AFFILIATION to the Labour Party was debated at the Communist Unity Convention, the founding congress of the CPGB, and was endorsed as Communist Party policy by 100 votes to 85.

One month after the Party's application for affiliation was submitted the Labour Party's negative reply was received and published in the CPGB weekly, *The Communist*, in an article which made it clear that affiliation was only a tactical question, and advanced the idea of the Communist Party standing candidates against Labour in elections.

Ourselves and the Labour Party.

One of the first items that had to be considered by the Executive Committee of the Communist Party ... was the resolution in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party. This was done in the communication embodying the whole of the objections, methods and policy of the party as decided upon at the Convention ... [Later] it became known that the decision of the [Labour Party] Executive was against our application and that a reasoned statement would be forwarded to us ... we print it here:

September 11 1920.

Mr Albert Inkpin, Secretary, Joint Provisional Committee of the Communist Party, 21a Maiden Lane, Strand, WC2.

Dear Sir, Your letter of the 10th August, in which you inform me that at a National Convention held in London on Saturday and Sunday, July 31 and August 1 last, the Communist Party was established, was placed before the National Executive of the Labour Party at their meeting at Portsmouth on Wednesday last, the 8 inst.

My Executive fully considered the resolutions adopted by the Convention defining the objects, method, and policy of the Communist Party as set out in your letter.

They also considered your application for the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party.

After full consideration of the resolutions and your request, it was resolved that the application be declined, and I was instructed to inform you that the basis of affiliation to the Labour Party is the acceptance of its constitution, principles, and programme, with which the objects of the Communist Party do not appear to be in accord.

Arthur Henderson, Secretary.

The reply, it will be seen, is a definite refusal to our request for affiliation on the ground that our objects "do not appear" to be in accord with those of the Labour Party.

To be quite frank, we never supposed they were. Our worst enemy will not accuse us of ever pretending they were. But we thought the Labour Party was a body so wide in its scope, so

eclectic in its outlook that it could embrace in its ranks every section of the conscious working class movement, and even give them freedom to express their particular point of view from its platform. Such a procedure would, of course, be illogical in any party which was tied down theoretically to a rigid line of policy; but we conceived the Labour Party as something different from this; as something that was striving to express politically the half-formed aspirations and ideas of the surging mass of organised workers in this country.

In such a party we conceived we held a place. Perhaps we were mistaken. We prefer to think the Executive of the Labour Party is mistaken. But certain it is, that, affiliation or no affiliation, the Communist Party will not depart by a hair's breadth from its pursuit of those objects which it has set out to attain, whether they meet with the approval of the Labour Party or not.

The Communist Party is a political party striving to use parliament - while parliament exists - as one among other means for helping forward the social revolution whose consummation is the sole object of its existence. Inside the Labour Party our power to fight elections whenever or wherever we thought fit would unquestionably be hampered. Those of us who advocated affiliation were prepared to forego this freedom in return for the greater opportunity we obtained of a hearing for our views among sections of the workers who really count in this country. Outside the Labour Party we lose the opportunity, but gain the freedom. We can fight where we like, and whom we like. We can oppose Labour candidates as freely as we oppose ordinary capitalist candidates, and since the Labour Party Executive admits that our objects are not in accord with their own they cannot have the slightest cause for complaint. So be it. It is their funeral not ours.

It is not clear yet whether the embargo will be held to apply locally as well as nationally. In accordance with the resolution in favour of affiliation carried at the Convention our branches, where affiliated, have been advised to hold on until action is taken compelling them to withdraw. Whether such action will be taken we do not know, but we expect our branches to act in accordance with instructions which will be issued, from time to time, by the Provisional Executive. In any case, whatever happens, this matter must be considered in its proper perspective as a comparatively minor matter of tactics, and judged accordingly. It is the communist principle that counts, and from that we will not swerve. This decision will serve but to consolidate our ranks. We appreciated the loyalty of the comrades who accepted the finding of the Convention in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party, although disagreeing from it, and did not waver. In the day of non-affiliation the others will be no less loyal.

The Communist, September 16 1920

The rejection, conveyed in a single bland sentence, was not to be the end of the matter. The CPGB wanted the

Labour leadership to come clean and explain to the working class its political reasons for excluding the Communist Party. The Provisional Executive Committee's reply, containing a series of questions to the Labour leaders, was also included in an article in *The Communist*.

The Great Taboo

The action of the National Executive of the Labour Party in refusing affiliation to the Communist Party has caused considerable stir in all sections of the working class movement.

It is no exaggeration to say that it has forced the question of Communism into a position of prominence such as years of ordinary propaganda could not have achieved. Wittingly or unwittingly, the Labour Party Executive have compelled their followers, as individuals, to take sides on a matter which otherwise they might have avoided. For that we are profoundly grateful. Communism will not suffer from the discussion. We have everything to gain and nothing to lose from such a course. But it is a good thing for comfortable Labour MPs to be forced to drag their tactics, principles and actions into the light of day, and defend them before the common people.

The provisional Executive of the Communist Party has instructed the Secretary to send the following reply to Mr Arthur Henderson's communication refusing our application:

September 23, 1920.

Dear Sir, Your letter ... stating that the Labour Party Executive had declined the affiliation of the Communist Party was considered at the last meeting of our Provisional Executive. In reply, we were directed to request that the reasons for this decision be more explicitly stated, in order that the relations of the two bodies may be more clearly defined and understood.

The affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party is declined on the ground that its objects "do not appear to be in accord" with the constitution, principles and programme of the Labour Party - a decision which, as you have no doubt noted, had been warmly applauded in the columns of the capitalist press. But the working men and women of this country, to whom both the Labour Party and the Communist Party appeal, will look for a more reasoned explanation of this decision than is given in your letter of September 11th. The object of the Communist Party, as set forth in the resolutions of our National Convention already sent you, is "the establishment of a system of complete communism wherein the means of production shall be communally owned and controlled". Does the Labour Party Executive rule that the acceptance of communism is contrary to the constitution, principles and programme of the Labour Party? Or is it the methods of the Communist Party to which exception is taken? Those methods are the adoption of "the Soviet (or Workers' Council) System as a means whereby the working class shall

achieve power and take control of the forces of production," and the establishment of "the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary means for combating the counterrevolution during the transition period between capitalism and communism". Does the Labour Party Executive decisively and categorically reject the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat? Does it propose to exclude from its ranks all those elements present in the Labour Party who hold these means to be necessary in order to achieve the political, social and economic emancipation of the workers, and does it impose acceptance of parliamentary constitutionalism as an article of faith on its affiliated societies?

The Communist Party in deciding to make application for affiliation to the Labour Party did not suppose that the whole of its principles, methods and policy would find acceptance on the part of those who at present constitute the Executive of the Labour Party. But it understood the Labour Party to be so catholic in its composition and constitution that it could admit to its ranks all sections of the working class movement that accept the broad principle of independent working class political action, at the same time granting them freedom to propagate their own particular views as to the policy the Labour Party should pursue and the tactics it should adopt. And having regard to the past history of the Labour Party, particularly during the war and since the peace, that belief was justified. Since when has the practice of the Labour Party changed in this respect? Is the affiliation of the Communist Party declined because it claims the same measure of freedom as has been granted to responsible leaders of the Labour Party during the last six years? And do the members of the ILP, who constitute a large section, if not an actual majority of the Labour Party Executive, deny the Communist Party the liberty of action inside the Labour Party that was claimed and exercised by them and their organisation during the period of the war?

These are questions that arise out of your letter of the 11th inst. They are questions we are entitled to submit, and feel justified in asking for a reply to. Yours fraternally,

Arthur MacManus, Chairman.

Albert Inkpin, Secretary.

The Communist, September 30 1920

So the affiliation issue provoked discussion within the working class and exposed the pro-bourgeois politics of the Labour Party. The Labour leaders knew that the Communist Party was no quiet debating society, that it would use every opportunity to mobilise the working class and link day to day struggles to the fight for socialist revolution. This was not at all compatible with the Labourite agenda of reformism and class collaboration.

Further correspondence and renewed applications ensured that the CPGB kept the affiliation issue alive, a permanent thorn in the side of the enemy.

Compiled by Doug Hulme

REVIEWS

Ivory tower

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: an introduction*, Verso Press, 1991, pp224, £11.95

TERRY EAGLETON is one of Britain's leading 'red professors', who has made his name in the goldfish-bowl world of academia by trying to fuse aspects of orthodox Marxism with concepts like post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-'Marxism', post-anything.

With the counterrevolutionary collapse of bureaucratic socialism in Eastern Europe our eagle-eyed professor obviously saw a gap in the academic/ideological market-place, and has rushed in to fill the vacuum by mounting a defence of 'orthodox' Marxism. So what do we get?

It has to be said that in many places this book is excellent. Eagleton kicks off with a well deserved broadside against the cretinous 'end of ideology/history' theorists so beloved by *Marxism Today*, by asking: "Why is it that in a world racked by ideological conflict, the very notion of ideology has evaporated without trace from the writings of post-modernism and post-structuralism?" (Introduction).

He then goes on to make the obvious, but important, point that this is a highly ideological viewpoint in itself, which "spuriously generalises to a whole society what is really a highly specific mode of consciousness" (p39) - ie the consciousness of right-moving academics, frantically retreating from the bourgeois ideological onslaught.

The pernicious ideas of Michael Foucault and his acolytes also get it straight between the eyes. Foucault's glorification of "personal politics" and total rejection of revolutionary discipline had a damaging effect on the revolutionary movement during the early 1970s, as many elements from the French lower middle-class who might have been won over to Marxism-Leninism were attracted to his quasi-anarchist ideology.

Eagleton rightly mocks Foucault for his unscientific use of the terms 'power' and 'ideology': "For if there are no values and beliefs not bound up with power, then the term ideology threatens to expand to vanishing point. Any word which covers everything loses its cutting edge and dwindles to an empty sound" (p7).

Refreshingly, Eagleton ridicules the idea that Antonio Gramsci, apparently Neil Kinnock's favourite Marxist, was a 'liberal' Marxist who opposed the 'elitism' of Leninism, and lays heavily into 'post-Marxists' like Hirst, Hindess, LaClau and Mouffe, who absurdly deny the Marxist contention that there exists a connection between someone's class position and their general political/ideological position.

Commenting on the 'post-Marxist' gaggle, Eagleton caustically remarks: "This means, presumably, that it is wholly coincidental that all capitalists are not also revolutionary socialists" (p215).

However, this leads to a major weakness in Eagleton's work. True, there exists a correlation between someone's class position and ideology, yet it is depressingly obvious that in Britain millions of working class people vote against their own class interests and consistently vote for one of the three major capitalist parties. Why is this?

This is what Marxists have traditionally called *false consciousness*, the process by which a very large section of the British working class cannot see the connection between their own exploitation and the system which creates that exploitation - at best they will blame it on a particular political party, or even a particular individual, but hardly ever on the capitalist system as a whole.

The primary aim of ideology in a capitalist state is to inculcate bourgeois beliefs and values into the working

class as a whole; thus we learn to accept the fact that unemployment is 'inevitable', wars are a product of 'human nature', the abolition of all immigration controls would destroy the British 'identity', and so on.

Naturally, bourgeois workers' parties like the Labour Party play an invaluable role in this process of ideological bourgeoisification. Only a strong and disciplined Communist Party, armed with scientific Marxist-Leninist theory, can overcome these utterly reactionary prejudices and show how it is the 'democratic' capitalist system which is the source of exploitation and oppression.

Yet, what does the 'Marxist' Eagleton think of the concept of false consciousness?

He finds it "unconvincing" and contrary to "democratic sensibility". Even worse, in a cowardly passage he announces that "to believe that immense numbers of people would live and sometimes die in the name of ideas which were absolutely vacuous and absurd is to take up an unpleasantly demeaning attitude towards ordinary men and women" (p12).

The unpleasant (and very demeaning) fact is that during the first imperialist world war millions of people - initially anyway - were slaughtered for entirely "vacuous" reasons, precisely because the bourgeois ideologies of patriotism, chauvinism and nationalism were rife within the workers' movement and the ideas of scientific socialism (principally proletarian internationalism) were still extremely weak.

Even more alarmingly, Eagleton goes on to suggest that some forms of (bourgeois) mystification "might even be endemic to the mind itself" (p12).

However, I would still recommend this book, despite the fact that his defence of 'orthodox' Marxism frequently slips into academic formalism (among other things it talks revealingly about the "revolutions" against the "Stalinist" bureaucracies), as it provides a very lucid and honest account of all the major political philosophers (both Marxist and non-Marxist) from Hegel onwards - with the curious exception of a certain VI Lenin.

Eddie Ford

Ireland expose

Lin Solomon and Cathal McLaughlin (producer and director), *Pack up the Troubles*, Channel 4

IT IS unusual to find any television programme about the Six Counties of the north of Ireland which goes beyond the view that the biggest problem there is a tiny handful of evil gangsters called the IRA.

One that states categorically that the problem is the presence of British troops and the political establishment which keeps them there is a very rare event indeed.

'Pack up the Troubles' is such a programme, and therefore to be greatly welcomed.

It goes a long way in exposing the lies, the hypocrisies and the excuses utilised by the parliamentary representatives of the British state in its war in Ireland.

This is primarily done by letting the politicians expose themselves in a series of interviews, forming one of the two main tools used by the programme makers to put forward their argument for British withdrawal.

Many of the main protagonists on the side of the British state are here, including the present minister, Peter Brooke and his shadow, Kevin McNamara, along with several of their recent predecessors.

Geoff Bell, who conducted the interviews and wrote the commentary, does an incisive job by getting the politicians to attempt justification for many aspects of their war. Often they stand exposed as the pompous, arrogant liars that they are.

The other main tool used is an extensive public opinion poll conducted by Mori for the programme makers which shows that many of the lies are failing to convince the Great British public, two-thirds of whom, according to the poll, want Britain out.

Not only is it made blindingly obvious that the Labour Party is and always has been just as determined as the Tories to defend the interests of the British state, but politicians from both parties make clear that bipartisanship in parliament on the question of the Six Counties is considered necessary.

As Brooke says, "Of course it is helpful that it isn't a party political issue and that the two major parties ... can work in the confidence that the other will in broad terms support their policy and it is helpful at a time like this when we don't know who will be in power after the next election".

Interestingly, it is the Labour Party which has taken greatest exception to the broadcasting of this programme. Kinnock's office phoned Liz Forgan, second-in-command at Channel 4, at 7.30am on the day the programme was due to go out, demanding cuts and threatening injunctions. They persisted throughout the day in an attempt to prevent the broadcast.

As you can well imagine, the Labour Party was not furious because the programme shows that the official Labour policy of working towards a united Ireland is, to put it mildly, a heap of crap.

No, what perturbed the pretenders to the throne was the statement that Kinnock had authorised talks with Sinn Fein in 1987 for his then deputy spokesman on Ireland, Peter Archer. This is clarified by the relevant headline in the *Financial Times* and, indeed, on camera by Archer himself. There follows a lovely moment when the camera zooms in on McNamara's face and all he can manage is "Well, Peter Archer talks for Peter Archer and I talk for what is the official position of the Labour Party at the present time".

But, of course, enjoyable as it may be to watch creeps like McNamara squirm, it is clear from this that we can expect a Labour government to out-Tebbit Tebbit on attacking the media when it offers any criticisms whatsoever of government policy.

It is interesting to note that the left press has, by and large, ignored 'Pack Up the Troubles'. Only *The New Worker* and *Socialist Organiser* carried reviews. The former was as bland as you would expect, with only one reason being put forward for British occupation - that it is profitable! The latter has a loathsome justification for its pro-loyalist position.

What the programme lacks is any attempt to really pose the question of why Britain needs to keep a grip on Ireland. Indeed, it continually puts across that the British presence seems pointless, futile, costs a fortune and is basically due to apathy on the part of British politicians.

This sort of argument is a very dangerous one. Ultimately it leads to the conclusion that the solution to the problem lies not in workers in Britain taking up active service in fighting the British state alongside Irish republicans, but in the British state becoming convinced that it must do the decent thing and leave.

Pledges by Britain to withdraw will never be made on the basis of public opinion, no matter how overwhelming but only when the British state is defeated in its war in Ireland and faces a greater war at home.

Gavin Kyle

ACTION

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Militant: Which Road?

This is the main part of the minority resolution presented to the mid-July meeting of Militant's Central Committee by the tendency's founder-leader Ted Grant and its National Organiser Rob Sewell. It was originally reprinted in the Trotskyoid paper *Socialist Organiser*, November 8 1991

"IF WE are to develop the organisation and prepare the ground for the future, we have a duty to seriously weigh up all our actions in the light of experience and learn the lessons of our mistakes...

"To characterise the Walton result as some type of 'victory' is to completely misread the situation and miseducate the ranks of the organisation. Our first responsibility is to tell the ranks what it is, and not what we would like it to be. To dress up a setback in this fashion is the worst kind of deception for a Marxist organisation...

"The problem lies squarely with the false politics of standing independently.

"The policy was rushed through the Central Committee after it was given a completely exaggerated, and therefore erroneous, view of the position in Walton. The majority of comrades, unfortunately, allowed themselves to be influenced mainly by subjective considerations, ie their hatred of Kilfoyle. It is true that Kilfoyle is a gangster, but this is the case with most of the right wing candidates nationally.

"The argument, used by the majority to justify their position, that we must orient our work for the next period 'independently' is nothing new. We have, to a great extent both nationally and internationally, been forced to do so by the collapse of left reformism, the boom, the swing to the right by social democracy and the virtual collapse in many countries of the Stalinist parties.

"But our orientation towards the mass organisations was crucial. To put up a candidate in Walton was to break with the method, perspectives and theory formulated over 40 years, as is the suggestion now that, despite the

defeat in Walton, candidates may be put up in Scotland and elsewhere.

"A great part of the political capital of the tendency in Britain and internationally was the fact that we were conceived as a component part of the labour and trade union movement. We were entirely different to the sects, who try and create phantom 'mass' revolutionary parties outside of the time, experience and consciousness of the masses.

"Apart from a few countries the classical conditions for entrism have not existed for forty years. This was certainly the case in Britain. All our trade union and political work has to be determined by our orientation towards the Labour Party.

"The classical conditions for entrism will undoubtedly arise during the next epoch - two, three, five or even ten years - as the crisis of world capitalism, and especially British capitalism, unfolds.

"These conditions are:

- 1) A revolutionary or semi-revolutionary crisis.
- 2) The leadership of social democracy loses complete control of the Party.
- 3) The masses move to left reformist or even centrist conclusions - there is a social ferment within the party. The left membership becomes open to revolutionary and Marxist ideas.
- 4) The subjective factor is present to take advantage of the situation.

"But by putting up a candidate or candidates this work is jeopardised. It can lead to a complete miseducation of the new layers, especially the youth, who may move towards us in the next few years. It is a complete miseducation of the cadres, who can draw dangerous conclusions. They can become ultra-left and adventuristic, this in turn rapidly leading to passivity and substi-

tutionalism.

"There could be an argument for an independent revolutionary party, though incorrect. But to put forward the idea of an 'alternative' or 'real' Labour Party would necessarily be still-born. To be neither fish, nor fowl is to get the worst of all worlds. A few years ago we had a good laugh at the expense of the Lambertists (an alleged 'Trotskyist' sect) in France who tried to create a substitute Socialist Party. Like the Lambertists, the attempt to create a 'substitute' Labour Party in Liverpool can only end in tears.

"The perception of many workers in the trade unions - who regard the Labour Party as their party - would be that of regarding us as alien to their political aspirations. The propaganda in the *Militant* over the last four weeks would reinforce this impression.

"Up to now workers have recognised that we are organised, but as a component part of the Labour Party. But now the setting up of an 'organisation' or Party in Scotland will break this view. The illusion that such an organisation or Party could gain affiliation to the Labour Party, like an Independent Labour Party (ILP) or the Co-op, is false and even dangerous.

"The ILP and the Co-op, despite the former adopting a centrist policy for a time, had an affinity with the Labour bureaucracy. They were not afraid of the ILP, but regarded it as a possible left flank when the workers moved left, preventing them drawing revolutionary conclusions. They would be terrified of a revolutionary Marxist organisation or Party.

"The bureaucracy changed the constitution to prevent the affiliation of the CP in the immediate post-war period. There is no possibility of even the most leftward Labour Party accepting

the affiliation of a Marxist party or organisation.

"Now if before or after the general election Kinnock launches a mass purge nationally the results could be disastrous. Formerly if a mass purge was launched we would have retained the sympathy and support of wide layers in the Labour Party and trade unions. Now they would be indifferent. If you have an individual party or organisation, go ahead and organise it. You can paddle your own canoe without being linked to the line of Labour.

"The argument that when the conditions for entrism arise we can switch policies will not hold water. Youth and industrial workers miseducated by an 'independent' orientation would not be prepared to change. We would have a crisis in the organisation of massive proportions. Moreover it would be very difficult to get back under these conditions. At the same time we would lose many if not most of the new movement.

"Our greatest gain over a period of decades was that we became a crucial and component part of the left. Despite the collapse of the left in both the trade unions and the Labour Party, we would have been strategically placed to become an important and even dominant part of the left.

"At best this has been jeopardised by the ultra-left binge in Liverpool and now in Scotland. The full effects of the defeats in Liverpool and nationally will be shown in the next few years...

"Unfortunately many of the Liverpool comrades, on the basis of their success in the council elections, thought they could repeat this on the parliamentary plane. Instead of most of the leading comrades of the tendency firmly opposing this they capitulated to this mood. This will have grievous consequences for the tendency in Liverpool

and nationally.

"That is the lesson of the attempts to create independent 'left' Labour parties in the pre-war and post-war period. All such efforts were doomed to failure. This new adventure on the part of the Liverpool comrades will inevitably fail, and will have as a spin-off a bad effect on the Liverpool organisation which right up to the present has to be subsidised by the national tendency.

"The new layers in the trade unions, even with a right wing Labour government will not orient towards us but towards the Labour Party in order to change it. Far from being a 'detour', it is a blind alley to which the comrades are being led...

"Everything was subordinated to maximising the vote [in Walton - IM]. Even the programme we stood on was not a revolutionary programme. There was no explanation of the capitalist crisis and the need for a socialist planned economy, etc. The programme we offered the Walton workers was in effect a left reformist one.

"Our ideas were sacrificed to preserve the 'unity' of the Broad Left - which refused to participate in the campaign in any case. It appears now they are preparing to attack us for undermining the campaign...

"In order that we can avoid disastrous mistakes of this type in the future, it is necessary to recognise the reality of the situation and draw out all the lessons concerning the medium and long term development of our work.

"Above all we must strive to avoid the sickness of ultra-leftism and impatience. The Walton episode can only be seen in this light. That is why the proposed 'Scottish turn' - the launching of an independent organisation - would be a grave mistake and result in the abandonment of 40 years of entrism work."

TED GRANT is veteran of nearly 60 years factional Trotskyite struggle, both inside and outside the Labour Party. The current rash of internal Militant documents that are finding their way into the pages of both bourgeois and other left papers therefore have a pretty obvious origin. In a minority in the organisation that he actually created and faced now with the wrecking of what he calls "40 years of entrism work", the 'old man' of the British Militant Tendency is using every weapon he can lay hold of to win his position.

Clearly, in the face of Labour's rightward shift and the expulsion of hundreds of Militant supporters, the majority of the organisation's rank and file have understandably had more than enough. As a resolution to a crisis meeting of Militant supporters in October put it, "Today, we are in a state of limbo, half in and half way out of the Party", and only tolerated in a few remaining areas where the or-

ganisation poses no threat to the right. The meeting therefore voted 455 to 51 to move to a more open form of organisation in Scotland, with an option on generalising this initiative in other parts of the country.

Faced with this, Grant has threatened to split the organisation. At a specially convened meeting on November 10, it is reported that the 'Grantites' have resolved to launch a new deep entrism organisation if the majority do not drop their "new turn".

The crisis in this organisation - today a major component part of the left wing of the Labour Party - poses important questions for all activists in the movement.

In fact, Grant pinpoints the key issue that confronts the majority of the Militant Tendency as they move, hesitantly, towards a more independent stance against the Labour Party. Perfectly correctly, he points out that standing as 'Real Labour' or some variation on this theme against the actual Labour Party is standing as "nei-

ther fish nor fowl" and manages to get "the worst of all worlds".

Grant however, dismisses the possibility of a "revolutionary party" as an alternative to today's Labour Party, because, essentially, the "Labour bureaucracy" would "be terrified of a revolutionary Marxist organisation or Party" and would thus refuse it affiliation.

On the one hand, Grant's position underlines just how correct the majority in Militant is to accuse him and his supporters of 'passivity' and 'adaption to the bureaucracy'. On the other, Grant is spot on to point to the hopeless position of the "new turn" majority.

Their project of building a 'Real Labour' alternative, based on the left reformist nostrums of previous years, is indeed a hopeless one. Yet this perspective is one that flows perfectly logically from the decades of miseducation and false ideas that Grant himself and the other leaders of Militant have been responsible for feeding to

the rank and file of their own organisation.

"Marxism", Taaffe maintained a few years ago while still a loyal 'Grant man', "has always been a part, and an important part at that, of the Labour Party right from its inception" (*Militant: What we stand for*, June 1990, p29). This falsehood, peddled for the most despicable of opportunist reasons, has had the effect of churning out Labour-loyal activists, not genuine revolutionary Marxists.

The contradiction is manifest in the position of the majority who want a more independent stance against Kinnock's Labour Party. They have been fed a diet of left Labourism for so long that they can only conceive of building a 'revolutionary party' in terms of the re-creation of left Labourism of yesterday.

Grant's document underlines his bankruptcy as a political leader. Forty years of deep entry work in the Labour Party, followed by ... forty more? Is Militant an entrism organisation any-

more, or simply a component part of this counterrevolutionary pro-imperialist party? Now that the majority of the Militant have taken their first, spontaneous steps towards breaking from this organisation, they must now purge themselves of the years of Grantite miseducation and address themselves to precisely what type of organisation they intend to build.

And that study brings them slap up against the history and living reality of the Communist Party of Great Britain, the only genuine working class party ever built in this country. As Grant himself points out, anything else is to duck the real issue.

Ian Mahoney

For a full analysis of Militant Tendency's reformist politics, see the new book from November Publications, *Which Road?*, which includes a major section on Militant's programme, *What We Stand For*.