

THE LENINIST

GENERAL ELECTION

FIGHT



WHOEVER WINS



FROM JUNE 1 to August 2 many readers and supporters of *The Leninist* will be taking part in our fourth Summer Offensive. In the course of these two months comrades will be aiming to give the organisation a minimum of £400 on top of their usual donations and regular dues payments.

We are aiming to make this year's Summer Offensive the broadest and most 'inclusive' we have ever staged by involving more comrades than ever before both in direct participation in the campaign and through readers sponsoring comrades.

This year's Summer Offensive is more intense than any previous year's for we have both reduced its duration from three months to two and at the same time we have set for the first time an 'across the board' target of £400 for employed and unemployed comrades alike.

In previous Summer Offensives, comrades have raised a £300 average stretched out over a longer period, so this development in our annual fund raising drive will mean that participants will need to strain every sinew to meet their pledges.

Are we being 'unrealistic' when we make these demands? Is this campaign 'unfair' to unemployed comrades in demanding they raise as a minimum the same as the employed?

On the contrary, we believe those who mouth off about the need for a reformed CPGB without drawing the hard conclusion that this is going to require heavy sacrifice, financial and otherwise, from communists are being truly 'unrealistic'.

There are no life long communists, communists are not born, they are made in struggle and steeled through self-sacrifice. We have found the Summer Offensive acts as a 'dose of salts' through the body of *The Leninist*. It cleans out all that is unhealthy, all that is excess, all that is pretentious. In the past, it has 'purged' in an unofficial way, those in our ranks who talked a good revolution, but when the chips were down preferred the soft life and slithered off to what they chose to call the 'broad movement'.

In many ways we will put more work into our Summer Offensive than the general election. This is absolutely correct. Only those Lenin characterised as parliamentary cretins would disagree. The point we have made, the point blindingly obvious to any militant with eyes to see, is that the working class needs to build the vanguard party, a reformed CPGB, capable of taking on whoever wins on June 11. Our Summer Offensive will play a vital role in this. Why?

Well, every one of our Summer Offensives have been linked organically to a development in our organisation and this year's is no exception. Our tendency has to expand the breadth of its publications with books and pamphlets and we also desperately need to equip a national centre. The struggle to reforge our CPGB needs more than fine words. It needs self sacrifice.

We therefore call on all genuine communists, all working class partisans who want a genuine mass revolutionary Communist Party in this country, to take a deep breath, tighten your belts a few notches and join us in our fourth Summer Offensive.

Even if you do not feel you can participate fully, why not support a comrade who is and play a part that way? Sponsor a comrade during the Summer Offensive and get friends, contacts and workmates to do likewise. Sponsor the future. Send off for a sponsorship form. Write to: *The Leninist* Summer Offensive, BCM Box 928, London WC1 3XX or phone us on (01) 431 3135.

The Editor

LETTERS

Trotsky

Leon Trotsky was surely correct when he stated that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat" (Transitional Programme). There can be no question today as to the validity of this observation.

As regards his other oft quoted statement that communist parties are 'dead for revolution' he has been proved wrong on a number of occasions (China and Vietnam for examples). But Trotsky was I believe referring to the CP's of the 'industrially advanced' capitalist countries who were tailing the bourgeois social democratic parties and their class-collaborationist 'popular fronts'. On this issue he was correct again.

Regarding the question of the Fourth International, well, given that he was expelled from the CPSU and the Soviet Union (no longer a Soviet citizen) because of his advocacy of finishing the revolution plus Stalin's total physical liquidation of Bolshevism in the Soviet Union and the policy of 'Socialism in one country' which was being pursued at the time, is it very difficult to understand Trotsky's desire to try and rekindle the flame of proletarian internationalism?

I would like to hear *The Leninist's* reply. I would also like *The Leninist* to discuss openly the very substantial part Trotsky played during the 1917 Russian Revolution. It would be very unhealthy for the Party to merely castigate Trotskyism as counterrevolutionary without a serious and open discussion being entered into.

We are not sectarian. Let us give credit where credit is due. Let us criticise where criticism is due. This is essential for a principled democratic centralist organisation. It is also essential to the heritage of Marxism-Leninism.

John Pike
Watford

David Sherriff replies:

We do not consider Trotsky a "counterrevolutionary fascist" as the leaders of the CPSU have done and our centrists do. We do not deny the role he played in the October Revolution, the fact that he was seen as Lenin's right hand man and founded and led the Red Army. Nor do we deny that on a number of questions he stood on Leninist principles. He was correct when he defended the Leninist attitude towards world revolution, damned the liquidation of the Old Bolsheviks and stood for soviets against the growing parliamentary cretinism of the leaders of CPs in the capitalist countries. Nonetheless we do take a critical attitude to his political practice. Before 1917 he was a Menshevik, he was against the Bolshevik Party and was among Lenin's fiercest critics. This fact is rarely admitted by today's Trotskyites. In the 1930s his subjective response to the victory of centrism in the world communist movement resulted in him branding it as counterrevolutionary and his abandonment of struggle within it. The result was the abortion he called the 'Fourth International'. That it was an abortion could be seen even in his life time. The Trotskyites quickly abandoned their independent existence and sought relevance in the parties of the truly counterrevolutionary Second International. It is in the counterrevolutionary Second International parties where most of his followers can still be found. This says everything about his 'Fourth International'. What

about his assertion that the world political situation is "chiefly characterised by the historic crisis in the leadership of the proletariat." This again strikes us as a profound mistake. The main contradiction in the world is the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private nature of expropriation expressed on a world scale in the contradiction between socialism and imperialism. We trust this makes our position clear.

Birmingham Six

I have read your review of Chris Mullin's book on the Birmingham Bombs. Whilst I agree with your general policy on Ireland, IRA etc, as you say one should support the Irish struggle for united Ireland and against British Imperialism. I cannot agree with your dismissal of the reference to the Birmingham Bombs as murder. These pubs were ordinary civilian pubs and only garbled (if at all) warnings were given.

I do not consider these necessarily in the present state of struggle (no open warfare, no guerilla war) as legitimate targets and they certainly do not directly injure the British state but only creates an anti-Irish backlash. The perpetrators were an indisciplined maverick group not acting on behalf of the IRA. The people convicted were definitely framed by the British State.

James Porter
Essex

Worthy of its name

I found the literature you sent me very interesting and informative indeed. *The Leninist* is a very objective, hard-hitting, paper that is definitely worthy of its name. It is a paper which has been long overdue for re-orientating the CPGB along its true Marxist-Leninist lines.

The official Party publications (*Marxism Today*) have no answers to the increasing intensity of capitalist-imperialist oppression of the majority of the working class. The only real way this trend can be stopped is through a reformed CP that is committed to the programme of Bolshevism.

With this programme the CP will attract all genuine class conscious workers back into the only bona-fide workers party to lead the proletariat in its historic mission of seizing power from the parasitic bourgeoisie and bring the final curtain down on this inhuman system.

The present crisis within the CPGB can only be resolved by an alternative leadership committed to a return to the revolutionary road to socialism, a leadership that is prepared for the immense class struggle that lies ahead. *The Leninist* represents this much needed new leadership.

The time has surely come for all communists to reforge a real effective vanguard party of the proletariat committed to the overthrow of the capitalist state. But what is to be done before the question can be asked 'who rules'? A revolutionary situation can be brought immeasurably closer if the unemployed were to be organised as an army ready and mobilised to support the major industrial disputes

and strikes that will be erupting shortly after the next general election (if not sooner). This kind of strategy is extremely vital and necessary if the reserve army of labour is to play an effective role in overthrowing the capitalist state.

The bourgeoisie of this country are now making a concerted assault as never seen for generations. Driven by greed and an obsessive lust for total power they want to smash every last vestige of working class organisation and rights. It is not a time now for the fainthearted opportunists within the labour movement. It is now the time to begin the real fightback.

Enclosed is my application to the UWC. I would be only too pleased to help in your organisation in whatever way possible.

Yours fraternally
Adam Richards
Beds

Election tactics

Millions of workers and middle class elements either abstain from elections or move to the right, due to disillusionment with all previous parliamentary governments, Labour included. Unless a true Marxist-Leninist analysis and class policy is consistently and forcibly propagated they will move further to the right - toward fascism.

As opposed to the bourgeois parliamentary political battlefield, fought on once every five years, we must proclaim the workers' political battlefield to be in industrial strikes, street demonstrations, tenants strikes, occupation of factories, empty houses etc. where workers spontaneously gravitate toward; the battlefield that is continuously used and where the battles multiply and experience and political learning is accumulated; where class organisation is built and the various sections and diverse elements of the working class are unified into a united front. This constitutes the revolutionary transition from the workers immediate struggles and needs to the objective situation of seizing power under the high command of the Marxist-Leninist party.

This does not mean that we do not participate in the bourgeois elections - the question is; how do we do so consistent with revolutionary Marxist-Leninist perspectives? I would suggest that, together with exposure of parliament, telling the workers the truth despite their immediate rejection of our position, we present to all alleged workers and socialist candidates, through public meetings and leaflets, a series of questions which will serve to define their position and also serve to educate their audience.

On this basis we will determine whether or not we give support irrespective of the party label.

Gerard Richardson
Bristol

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

WRITE OR RING
If you would like 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 us on 01-431 3135.

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TACTICAL SPLITS

The Party crisis has now split Eurocommunism into two factions

Jacques: leader of the right Euro faction

THE PPPS AGM this year is a one horse race. The Executive Committee of our CPGB has decided to bow out and not seek the reelection of comrades George Bolton and Chris Myant to the *Morning Star's* Management Committee. This is hardly as a result of the success of the Management Committee's 'survival plan'. It is in tatters.

The *Morning Star* is no longer even printed on its own press. Instead large amounts of cash are handed over to the SWP's East End Offset to do the job. The £1.5 million Urbanite Mark II has been idle for most of the time since it was installed in Farringdon Road. Efforts to lease it out to press baron Robert Maxwell have come to naught and a proposed deal with Probrook printers has also collapsed, losing the *Star* yet more money.

So why has the Party EC decided to call it a day? Why is it not fighting to regain for the Party what generations of communists have sacrificed to build? The answer, according to the Party leadership, lies with the undemocratic attitudes and ploys of Tony Chater and his crew.

This is untrue. Of course, Tony Chater and the majority of the PPPS Management Committee are bureaucratic manipulators of the first order. They know every dirty trick in the book and a few more besides. But then so do those who sit on our Party's EC. Inside the Party the Eurocommunists, for all their talk of democracy, have imposed the most authoritarian, dictatorial and intolerant regime. They have driven out those who disagree with them using re-registrations, exclusions and straightforward expulsions.

What our Party EC really objects to now is not that the Management Committee has used bureaucratic methods against their supporters - this is nothing new. No, the majority of the EC just want to bury the whole *Morning*

Star debate. They want politics in the Party to get back to normal. In other words they want to believe their own propaganda that the Party crisis is over. That is why they are boycotting the PPPS AGM this year for the first time.

And yet, just as the Euros felt they had rid themselves of the accursed old guard around the *Morning Star*, along with their 'pro-Soviet' centrist followers, just when they began to think that the civil war in the Party had been won, a new enemy appeared within - just as we always predicted.

What is the enemy? Why, it is the very flagship of Eurocommunism itself, *Marxism Today*. Its call for tactical voting has split the camp of Eurocommunism asunder. It is now *Marxism Today* vs not the *Morning Star* but 7 Days.

We have also seen the crystallisation of two distinct Euro factions - a right one and a left one. The right Eurocommunists around *Marxism Today* such as comrades Jon Bloomfield, Dave Green and Martin Jacques himself are now 'coming out'. Although they want comrade Jacques to take over the position of General Secretary when comrade McLennan retires they have no clear vision about the future of the Party beyond organising *Marxism Today* events.

The right Euros are thoroughly liquidationist, they want to influence the 'mainstream' of British politics, ie the centre and right of the Labour Party and the LSD Alliance.

They are fed up with being considered on the fringe - they want a piece of the action. Many are openly questioning the wisdom of standing Party candidates (ending up with a position remarkably similar to the Straight Leftists). Others are canvassing the organisational break up of the Party into a jigsaw of autonomous movements and groupings.

The left Eurocommunists, like comrades Dave Cook and Monty Johnstone, object to Jacques as a



Cook: leader of the left Euro faction

personality and a politician. For them *Marxism Today* is elitist and provides no role for the Party. Against his 'project' they stress the need for CPGB candidates in elections and CPGB campaigning.

Where Chater declared UDI for the *Morning Star*, at Martin Jacques' insistence *Marxism Today* was granted independence courtesy of a vote on the EC. Comrade Jacques lost no time in using that independence. The tactical voting article was announced well in advance of publication and when it did hit the streets it was to the flash of press cameras and under the glare of TV lights.

The editor of the Labour Party's *New Socialist* also jumped on the tactical voting bandwagon. This resulted in him being sacked. Ironically, in the 'democratic centralist' CPGB it was anything goes (if you are right wing enough) while in the Labour Party 'broad church', discipline was imposed in no uncertain fashion.

The right Eurocommunists are in a minority at present. But they have the logic of bourgeois politics on their side. As we write these lines a third term for Thatcher looks like a certainty. Jacques will therefore be in a position to pronounce to the Party's 40th Congress in November that the majority of the leadership have only paid lip service to the dangers of Thatcherism.

With tactical voting, Jacques will argue, Thatcher would not be in No 10. He will easily be able to 'prove it' by adding up the non-Thatcher votes up and down the country. Thatcher is the No 1 enemy, he will declare. Unless the *Marxism Today/Hobsbawm* advice on tactical voting is followed there is the prospect of a fourth bout of Thatcherism. The left Eurocommunists will have little to counter him with.

The job of defending the Party therefore falls squarely onto the shoulders of Leninists.

NO GLASNOST AT THE STAR

THERE WILL only be two motions at the PPPS AGM. Motion 1 originates from the *Proletarian* grouping. We have certain criticisms of it, not least its sycophantic attitude towards the comrades in the USSR and its implication that Sinn Fein is not a revolutionary democratic organisation. Nonetheless we urge a vote for it. We also urge the passing of Motion 2 which is on class war prisoners - it demands the support of all class conscious workers.

But why so few motions? Well as is usual the Management Committee has been busily ruling others out of order. We know of at least three motions which have suffered this fate. What are they and why will shareholders not be allowed to debate them on the floor of the PPPS AGM?

One moved by a supporter of the left centrist *Proletarian* - in the same vein as those submitted by this grouplet in previous years, but

accepted - has been ruled out of order simply because it deals with the crisis in the communist movement in Britain. A similar excuse has been used to bar the motion submitted by Mark Lewis.

According to Mary Rosser, secretary of the PPPS Management Committee on the Lewis motion the AGM cannot alone call upon the PPPS AGM cannot call upon against a split in the CPGB, demand it reprint statements from all tendencies in the CPGB - and not just those from the CCG - because it is beyond the 'remit' of the PPPS to do so.

Clearly the *Morning Star* has taken the side of the CCG. Its Management Committee simply does not want its support for a CCG split debated - it does not want glasnost, it prefers to hide its true politics.

A different approach has been used to bury Mick Regan's motion on Ireland. It is "libellous". Why?

Was it because it tells the truth about Gusty Spence who was favourably interviewed in the *Morning Star*. This Orange bigot has been convicted of murder. His so-called Progressive Unionist Party was described in *The Guardian* as the political front of the semi-fascist UVF. Is this libel?

Or is calling the *Morning Star's* coverage of Ireland "social chauvinist"? Perhaps it was the criticism of *Star* reporter Roger Trask's "sneering at Sinn Fein's 'claim' to be a liberation movement" which constituted a libel?

As to candidates standing for the Management Committee. Although there are none from the EC there are two not on the *Star's* recommended list. Gary Davis led the fight against the *Star's* sacking of its printworkers. This alone commands a sympathetic attitude towards his stand. Vote against the Management Committee.

The May edition of the Straight Leftists *Communist* makes uninteresting reading. Too late to deal directly with the general election *Communist* proclaims - "All Out to Defeat the Tories". As there is no call to vote Labour are the Straight Leftists urging their supporters to vote tactically? We think not - but with the Straight Leftists worship of the Harry Pollitt led CPGB you never know. Its main articles are not worth commenting on. This cannot be said for the so called letter from Straight Leftist 'Jean Murphy' of Tyne and Wear. Reporting the Viraj Mendis national conference over two pages she praises the church because it has "probably moderated the worst excesses of the Trotskyites" (praise the Lord), opposes campaigning against all immigration controls and to cap it all she calls for the Communist Party to "draw up" an "immigration policy" for "implementation in Britain." This is not only a prime example of opportunism, it is also straightforward racism.

Readers of our paper may recall that in issue 49 we carried a polemic against the *Morning Star's* interview with Ulster Volunteer Force founding father, Gusty Spence. In a most sympathetic write-up by *Star* deputy editor, David Whitfield, Spence claimed to be "not a kick in the backside away from" the UVF today. We have since discovered that this is something of an understatement. *The Guardian* of April 29 describes the Progressive Unionist Party, led by Spence, as "the political wing of the UVF". This has been confirmed by comrades in Ireland. How can the *Star* give such a platform to a fascist and sectarian murderer like Spence when it denies one to the republican and republican socialist movements? Supporters of the Communist Campaign Group, how can you associate yourselves with such a paper? The *Star* should make an unreserved apology to the Irish people, and to its readers and shareholders whom it has disgraced by carrying such an article. If it does not, then it shows more clearly than ever on which side of the class line it stands.



London May Day: part of the Leninist section

Supporters of *The Leninist* plus a contingent from the Unemployed Workers Charter joined this year's 600 strong May Day demonstration in London. Our contingent outnumbered and outchanted both that of the official CPGB, the tired old New Communist Party and the shuffling Communist Campaign Group. While the route echoed to our slogans calling for the organisation of the unemployed, troops out of Ireland and for workers' unity, the opportunists marched as if they were attending a funeral. The contingent organised by *The Leninist* was the largest and most lively British one on the march which again this year was dominated by Turkish politics. The Communist Party of Turkey - *Worker's Voice* and the Mensheviks of the official Communist Party of Turkey taken together formed the overwhelming majority of the march and the CPT - *Worker's Voice* were, like many previous years, actually the largest contingent. We marched behind our comrades from Turkey and with the Iranian revolutionary organisation, Rah-e Kargar. Together we formed a distinct, militant section of the march.

NOT GOOD

Long suffering readers, here we are again. We have been setting up a national HQ and this has caused - and will continue to cause certain problems. So if you do not receive a paper exactly every fortnight over the next month or so, do not be alarmed. Our lack of regularity has no doubt been the cause of a certain shortfall in our monthly £600 fighting fund. In May we only received £314. This is not good. So do your best to meet our target in June. Of course many readers will say we are only suffering from problems of growth. True, but with a general election campaign in full swing reorganising our set-up has caused problems we could have done without. This said, we are preparing for future battles and with your help 1987 will see our paper take important strides forward.

A THIRD TERM for Thatcher is a grisly prospect. Who would disagree?

Although a member of the 'gentle' sex, the sex which according to the feminists is naturally caring and peaceable, Thatcher has done her best to prove herself truly an Iron Lady.

Where even Ronald Raygun now talks to Gorbachov about the need for nuclear disarmament, in Moscow the Plutonium Blond delivered one of her chilling sermons on how nuclear weapons have kept the peace since 1945.

What sort of peace? An imperialist peace, in the name of which Thatcher sanctioned the use of Britain as a base for US bombers to attack Libyan cities and civilians. In the name of which she has continued Britain's bloody colonial war in the Six Counties. In the name of which she ordered the sinking of the *Belgrano*. In the name of which she is prepared to spend £ billions on new nuclear hardware.

Thatcher's government has already attacked trade union power with all the zealotry of those possessed by some demon. Now she promises more swingeing legislation.

Where Heath sought support from the shrinking middle ground and buckled in the face of the Communist Party led militant challenge to his Industrial Relations Act, Thatcher proved intransigent and now says she will 'kill socialism'.

She has conjured up a return to Victorian (read reactionary and hypocritical) values and appealed directly to the most backward, narrow minded, racist and chauvinist attitudes.

The unemployed are blamed for being unemployed - not the system. She therefore proposes to make the 'work shy' unemployed work for their dole. Likewise blacks are blamed for racism and working class women are blamed for juvenile delinquency - they can only expect an increase in their double oppression under Thatcher.

Her offensive against the 'permissive society', the local state and trade union power have been pursued with such a callousness that significant sections of bourgeois opinion have voiced worries and have sought a softer image for their rule.

But whatever party wins the general election on June 11 we must prepare to fight them.

Is Labour the answer?

Whether Margaret Thatcher moves out or Neil Kinnock moves into No 10, even if we have a Tory/LSD Alliance or a Labour/LSD Alliance government the working class will still face a continued attack on its rights, living standards and conditions.

This is a fact. A fact accepted (sometimes only privately) by almost the entire spectrum of leftwing opinion. Yet from the 'ultra left' Socialist Workers Party to the 'broad left' *Morning Star*, from the 'loony left' *Militant* to the 'traditional left' *Tribune*, the call is made to vote and work for a Labour victory. Even the 'designer left' *Marxism Today*, despite its tactical voting platform, would like to see a Labour government - it just does not see it as a realistic prospect.

Labourism is as loyal to the system as the Tories and the LSD Alliance. Its terms in office - and that includes the 1945 Attlee government - shows it is committed to running the capitalist system - not fighting it.

The history of the Labour Party - in and out of office - is the history of class collaboration and betrayal of the working class. Who can doubt it? Look at the record of the traitors who lead the Labour Party today.

Kinnock has tried to outbid Thatcher in reaction on issue after issue. His commitment to a nuclear free Britain is only in order to allow more spending on conventional weapons which will be directed against the Soviet Union. His visits to Berlin and Washington were designed to reinforce his anti-Soviet cold war warrior image.

Establishing his pro-imperialist credentials is only one facet of the plan to market Kinnock as the personification of Labourism. Declaring himself "a reactionary" when it comes to the family was only for starters. *Militant*, as we predicted, was only the first victim. He has gone on to use anti-gay smears with which to attack the so-called hard left of his own party. And now he has turned on blacks, like Sharon Atkin, who dare tell the truth that Labour is a racist party. It certainly is.

It supports immigration controls, it condemned the inner-city uprisings and when PC Blakelock was killed Kinnock went out of his way to show just which side he was on. He vigorously condemned the youth of Broadwater Farm and later went to lay a wreath there in Blakelock's honour.

He rubbished Thatcher over the Zircon affair - not in order to expose the way the government had gone behind the back of parliament. Not in order to defend Duncan Campbell, a loyal member of the Labour Party, who exposed the whole shady business. No, he attacked Thatcher because she had jeopardised Britain's 'national security' through what he called her clumsy handling of it.

On Ireland, Labour has maintained the bipartisan approach and, if anything, has stood to the right of the Tories. Calling for IRA blood every time a member of her majesty's state machine was killed and rejoicing along with the rest when IRA volunteers were gunned down in cold blood is Labour's approach to Ireland.

Thus, when Judge Gibson was despatched by the IRA, Stuart Bell, a former left winger and now Labour's Junior Spokesman on Northern Ireland, declared in true Tory style that "this House and this country will never bend the knee to terrorism. To paraphrase what Winston Churchill said, what kind of people do the IRA think we are?" The Irish republican movement knows what kind of person Stuart Bell is - a dyed in the wool imperialist.

Those who still doubt Labour's reactionary role should cast their minds back to the miners' Great Strike of 1984-5. The Labour leaders stabbed it in the back. They attacked the miners' heroic hit squads, did nothing to rally support and heaved a visible sigh of relief when it was - thanks to them - defeated. No wonder militant miners spoke of Ramsay MacKinnock and Judas Willis.

So the Labour Party is no friend of the working class. It is no socialist party. It is a bourgeois workers' party. It was set up by the trade union tops to systematically dupe the working class.

When in office, Labour is in many ways more dangerous to the cause of socialism than the Tories. Because workers see the Labour Party as their party they are prepared to put up with more from a Labour government than a Tory one.

This was the case with the last Labour government. Where workers fought for their rights against the Tory government of Heath, loyalty to 'our government' ensured that workers put up with swingeing social service cuts, a doubling of unemployment, a merciless driving down of wages and other anti-working class measures perpetrated by the Labourites Wilson and Callaghan.

It's Kinnock's party and he'll do what the boss class wants him to do

Is Neil Kinnock any different to Wilson and Callaghan? Hardly. As we have shown above, he is carrying on where they left off. His only virtue is that he is more transparently pro-capitalist.

When previously in opposition, the Labour Party has promised workers radical reform measures, wide ranging social improvements and even socialism. Kinnock does not. He knows the system is crisis ridden and decrepit. British capitalism is no longer able to freely offer the working class bribes. Its decline means it simply cannot afford to give the mass of the working class what it needs for a decent life.

Therefore Kinnock's commitment to capitalism means he can only promise a continuation of the anti-Soviet war, women's oppression, anti-black terror, the war in Ireland, mass unemployment, MSC slave labour schemes, economic stagnation and state interference in trade unions. The dictates of capitalism necessitate this.

No wonder those workers who will vote Labour on June 11 will do so with no enthusiasm. They will vote Labour because of a combination of habit, hatred of Thatcher and the fact that there is no real alternative to Labour at present in existence.

So why do most left groups call for a vote for Kinnock? Why don't they challenge the Labour Party?

Frankly, the leaders of most left groups do not think revolutionary politics are practical politics. In the main they suffer from a parochial outlook. They claim the mantle of the October Revolution but in truth they have an inability to see political life beyond the Labour Party. To them there seems to be no alternative but to call upon workers to vote Labour.

In the light of the defeat of steel workers, car workers, miners and News International printworkers, the prostration of the union bu-

General

FIGHT WHO



Would you vote for a party led by a man who condemned the Broadwater farm youth, refused being 'a power for good'?

reaucracy before the Tories' industrial relations legislation and the decline of campaigns like CND, the only prospect that seems realisable to most left organisations is getting Kinnock in to replace Thatcher as Prime Minister.

For them the continuation of the Thatcher government seems just too awful. Kinnock's Labour Party with all its faults is presented as infinitely preferable.

Naturally they all, to one degree or another, have pretensions to be building a revolutionary alternative to the present Labour leadership.

There are plenty of excuses and much circular reasoning as to why this goes hand in hand with automatically voting for Kinnock. But at the end of the day it comes down to opportunism and an unwillingness and inability to take a firm stand against Labourism.

Workers Press says vote Labour because most workers will do so. What tailism! *Socialist Worker* reckons the fightback after June 11 depends on the size of Labour's vote. What parliamentarianism! In the name of returning a Labour government *Socialist Organiser* says that Sharon Atkin was "off beam" - the Labour Party is not actively racist. Moreover, for them, *Marxism Today's* call for tactical voting is treachery and Neil Kinnock is in comparison "an honest working class politician". What sickening pro-Labourism! Finally, *Workers Power* virtually demands that a Labour government under Kinnock and Hattersley introduces socialism. What stupidity!

Only *The Leninist* and a handful of groups, containing between them a tiny fraction of what is called the revolutionary left, argue that workers should not vote for Kinnock's Labour Party.



Why do we do this? Firstly, we do not consider that communists are duty bound to fight for a Labour victory. Secondly, voting Labour is for us a tactical question.

If the Labour Party was led by a Benn, a Livingstone, a Hutton, an Atkin or a Scargill, if the mass of workers believed a Labour government would introduce socialism it could be a correct tactic to put Labour into office - but only to expose them for the traitors they are.

Our tactics are determined by and subordinated to the struggle for socialism. Getting rid of Thatcher is not the number one priority as so much of the left thinks. If it were, *Marxism Today's* tactical voting would be correct. (Although the *Morning Star* threw up its Labourite arms at Hobsbawm's tactical voting article in the May issue, CCGers would do well to remember that the CPGB called for a vote for a Liberal candidate against Labour in the late 1930s - a 'golden age' for the CCG's leadership but not for us).

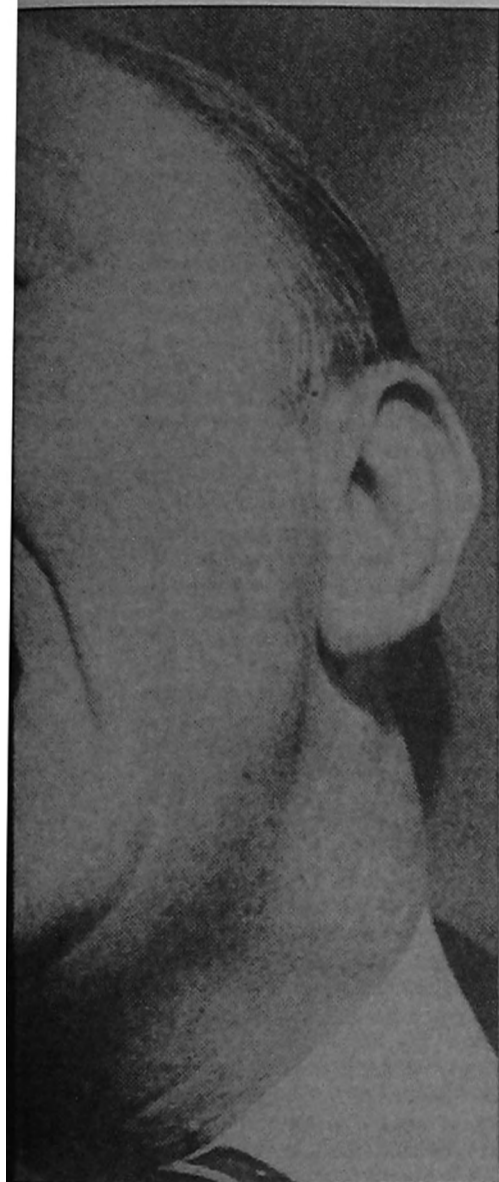
For Leninists, the development of human society is driven by the class struggle, not parliamentary elections. Communists should use elections, yes, get MPs into the House of Commons, yes, in order to expose the sham that is bourgeois democracy. We do not want to organise the proletariat to transform the Mother of Parliaments, we want to organise them to overthrow it.

As a precondition for revolution, we must overcome illusions our class has in parliament, and that requires overcoming illusions in the Labour Party, tactical voting and parliamentary roads to socialism, all the junk that goes with playing the game of bourgeois democracy by the rules of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin advised the Communist Party in Bri-

Election

EVER WINS



A power for good



to back sacked and jailed miners, witch hunts leftists and talks about British imperialism

tain to use the tactic of supporting Labour in the early 1920s – “as a rope supports a hanged man.” But this was only a tactic, a tactic which presupposed not only illusions in Labour but also a genuinely revolutionary CPGB with which to carry out the job of exposing the Labourites in office.

Those militants who say they will vote Labour on June 11 to expose it only fool themselves. Labour Party leaders have sat in numerous governments. All of them have been thoroughly pro-imperialist, thoroughly anti-Soviet, thoroughly reactionary and thoroughly anti-working class.

This might have created disillusionment among wide sections of workers but they have hardly turned to revolutionary solutions as a result. To positively expose the Labour Party necessitates a revolutionary alternative.

No vote for Kinnock's party

With this in mind, we have taken our stand against voting Labour to emphasise in the sharpest way we can the need to reforge our Communist Party of Great Britain. Of course, the Trotskyites launch themselves against us because of our commitment to the CPGB. They say it is impossible to reforge it, that we are tainted because we have ‘strange bedfellows’ like Martin Jacques and Gordon McLennan.

We will let our readers judge as to whether or not we have sacrificed any principles through our commitment to reforging the CPGB. But let us say this. Those in reformist glass houses should not throw stones.

There they are, the Trotskyites, in their Labour committee rooms, staffing the lower echelons of Kinnock's election machine, lec-

turing us about the company we keep. What damnable hypocrites! What philistines! What Labourites!

Talk about ‘strange bedfellows’ – what about comrades Hattersley, Willis, Hammond and Mason. What about your Socialist International with your fraternal anti-working class parties? In Peru your comrades massacre Maoist revolutionaries, in Greece they break strikes, in Spain they impose austerity and in Australia they smash trade unions!

The Labour Party is not, never was and never will be a party of socialism. This cannot be said about the CPGB. Admit it.

Today it is under the domination of opportunism, yes. We are not exactly unaware of this. But its origins are within Lenin's Third (Communist) International and, in our hands, its future will be to lead the British revolution.

Let the Trotskyites bury themselves in the Labour Party – it is a grave of their own choosing, they are welcome to it. It will never change, the CPGB will. With this firmly in our minds we will defend our CPGB against liquidationist attack whether from within or without. We say the place for all genuine communists is in the Communist Party.

So what about our CPGB? For a number of years the standing of candidates in elections has become a major source of contention within the Party. This debate has been provoked by a combination of factors.

Firstly, the fact that votes for the CPGB are few in number. As the Party programme, the *British Road to Socialism*, sees socialism coming through transforming parliament, this is bound to provoke crisis. Also the Labour Party is characterised in the *BRS* as “the mass party of the working class” and a vehicle for socialist change, so why stand against it?

For us, therefore, the standing of CPGB candidates under present day conditions is vital. Whatever rotten opportunist platform Party candidates stand on, the fielding of candidates at least has the virtue of maintaining the CPGB's organisational independence of Labourism. We therefore say: Vote communist with your eyes open.

Those like the Straight Leftists and CCGers who consider the place for communists is to be in the Labour Party, who do not really believe communists should fight election contests against Labour, are just as liquidationist as the Trotskyites and those around *Marxism Today* who advocate tactical voting.

Reforge Lenin's CPGB

The key question today is the survival of the CPGB and the struggle to reforge it back into a principled, revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist organisation. This is the main link in the chain. In the struggle to reforge it, the attitude we take towards the Labour Party is crucial – and who can doubt a general election is the acid test of one's attitude towards the Labour Party?

Workers in Britain need a reformed Communist Party if they are to conduct a really effective fightback against the bosses' offensive. Small left groups can call themselves ‘the Party’ if they so wish, but as the votes for the candidates of the WRP (*News Line*) and the RCP's Red Front will show, this is not a statement of fact. In reality the anti-Labour left are only sects.

As to the pro-Labour left, they, in the main, have lost all revolutionary honour. The ‘entryists’ like *Militant*, *Socialist Organiser*, *Socialist Action* and even *Workers Power* do not operate as principled revolutionaries. They have become Kinnock's left advisers. If only the Labour leadership would follow our line we could win on June 11, they whine. In other words, they have all, to a greater or lesser degree, become Labourites.

In so doing they become a barrier to militant workers breaking from the grip of Labourism and taking up the task of building a revolutionary alternative to Labourism through reforging the CPGB. They are part of the problem, not the solution.

That another Thatcher government appears to be the most likely outcome of June 11 represents a conundrum for most pro-Labour left groups in and out of the Labour Party. Quite simply, why hasn't Labour support soared and Tory support collapsed?

As every left publication tells us, Thatcher's Tories are viciously anti-working class and the majority of the population in Britain is working class. So why are the Tories – not Labour – riding high?

It's hardly the Tory record. The ‘party of jobs’ which swept into office using clever Saatchi and Saatchi advertising, which made much of the Callaghan government's inability to prevent a doubling of the dole queues, has itself presided over at least a doubling of the number of jobless and a nosedive in manufacturing output.

Even on the terrain of bourgeois politics, much of the left insist Thatcher's government has a miserable record.

While the ‘party of law and order’ has seen to it that Britain is blessed with the highest per capita prison population in Europe, it has been powerless to stem the rise in criminal offences or the decline in the detection rate. This is in spite of short sharp shocks and the recruitment of very many extra police officers.

The ‘party of the property owning democracy’ has sold council houses, it is true. Yet private housebuilding has declined by a third, repossessions by mortgage companies is at an all-time high and the construction of council housing has all but ground to a halt.

Under the ‘party of tax cuts’, the average household now pays almost 10% more tax than in 1979. Thatcher has, with all the reckless abandon of the profligate Tudor and Stuart absolute monarchies, financed the massive tax cuts for the top 5% and balanced the government's books only on the basis of squandering oil revenues and by selling off the assets of the capitalist state (the ‘family silver’, as Harold Macmillan so aptly put it).

What of the booming economy? This is pure eye wash. The only thing booming about the British economy is the bank balances of the stock exchange ‘get rich quick’ elite. They have never had it so good. The big bang and the massive extension of the credit system has allowed them to make unprecedented speculative killings. Under Thatcher, Britain's relative decline has continued apace and almost all establishment economic pundits are predicting a sharp economic downturn within the

next year or two.

So why, why, why do Thatcher and the Tories maintain popular support? Why, when the capitalist system shows increasing signs of heading towards a new general crisis, do people say they will vote for the party most openly identified with capitalism?

Well, despite Thatcher's thumping parliamentary majority in 1983, only a minority of those voting voted Tory. And when one takes into account the 30% or so who did not vote at all, Thatcher's claim to represent the British people is revealed for what it is – a lie. Since the early 1950s the percentage of the electorate voting Tory has declined – just as with the Labour vote.

There has been no Thatcherite revolution, as *Marxism Today* likes to imagine. In the main Thatcher's vote comes from where Tory votes have always come from. From the middle class and the upper echelons of the working class. From those who so closely identify with capitalism they prefer to see the bosses administer their own system – this makes more sense to them than grammar school boys from the Labour Party doing the job.

Labour's crisis – our opportunity

Nonetheless, the fact remains that Labour does not look like a party of government as it did in the 1960s. What is the cause? Basically the cause lies in the ending of the long post World War II boom and the visible drift of capitalism towards a new general crisis. Under these conditions the Labour Party has gone from being the alternative party of government back to being the party of crisis it was in the 1920s and 30s.

Labour leaders are always in a contradictory position. On the one hand they have to appeal to a working class electorate. This requires promises of reform and on occasion even talk of socialism. On the other the capitalist class must be reassured that when in office Labour can be trusted.

During the boom this contradiction could be overcome to a degree. Capitalism could afford reforms, not least ever increasing wage packets. This is not the case today. Consequently the contradiction that runs like a giant fault line through Labourism is visible to its core.

The Labour leadership are faced with an impossible balancing act. When they turned to the left in the early 1980s, in order to keep the loyalty of a rank and file thoroughly disillusioned with the disastrous Wilson/Callaghan governments, they lost right wing voters and precipitated the formation of the SDP. Now they turn to the right in an attempt to present themselves as a party fit to govern they have to tame their left wing, serving it up as a sacrificial lamb to the bourgeois media, and risk losing left votes.

Attacks on leftists will intensify. That most have constituted themselves as the Labour Party's best defenders shows just how deep is the ideological crisis that grips it. After the election, Kinnock will not reward the left's loyalty. He will blame it for the defeat. He will hound the left out of the very party it has come to see as its own.

Only one organisation has stood consistently, unyieldingly and correctly for the reforging of the CPGB into a revolutionary alternative to Labourism. In contrast to the right moving left-Labourite groupings, we pose to workers what they really need – not what Kinnock says the system can afford – and above anything else the working class in Britain needs a genuinely Marxist-Leninist Communist Party.

Defeat for Labour at the polls is not a defeat for the working class. The working class will have to fight whoever wins on June 11. The majority of class conscious militants realise this.

That is why there is a considerable cynicism against Kinnock in the working class movement. Many will vote Labour with a heavy heart, many will just not vote at all. No wonder the pro-Labour left is in disarray. Certainly it is doomed to disintegrate further with a third term for Thatcher.

In the great battles we will see over the next few years, the Labour Party will prove itself useless. Labour will betray – it will not fight. Kinnock will take his party further to the right. Tens of thousands of militants will be looking for answers and looking to build an alternative. This presents extremely fertile ground for our strategy of reforging the CPGB. The future will be ours. History is on our side.

Jack Conrad



Our contingent in Birmingham on May 9

NOT IN VAIN

THE LENINIST has always put solidarity with the cause of Irish liberation among the most important tasks for the working class in Britain. In accordance with this we brought our banners, flags and comrades out on the streets of Birmingham in support of the hunger strike commemoration march on May 9. Along with us marched an estimated 500 demonstrators. Not, in our view, a figure to crow about, especially as the previous evening had seen the murder of eight IRA by the SAS in Loughgall. Nevertheless, throughout the march our comrades showed a disciplined, militant and – despite police bans on megaphones – loud presence on the march.

The day ended with a rally addressed by speakers from, among others, the Kashmiri Workers Association, Pakistani Workers Association, PAC, Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

We reprint below the main body of the IRSP speech delivered by Eammon Mullen. Comrade Mullen prefaced the speech with an announcement that the IRSP comrade who was *meant* to deliver the statement had been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act at Manchester airport with another comrade upon their arrival in Britain. They were only released six days later, the Wednesday after the march, and immediately deported back to Belfast (Comrade Mullen himself spent a few days at her majesty's pleasure on his return to the Six Counties). He also sent condolences of the republican socialist movement to the families and comrades of the Loughgall martyrs.

The text below is the first statement by the republican socialist movement to be delivered in Britain since the cessation of hostilities between it and the Irish Peoples Liberation Organisation

(IPLO) and clarifies the current position of the movement.

TODAY WE are gathered here to commemorate the revered memory of Irish prisoners of war who died whilst on hunger strike. This month, the sixth anniversary, is in itself poignant as it witnessed the deaths of IRA Volunteers Bobby Sands MP, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreech and INLA Vol. Patsy O'Hara. The following months only added to the list of our martyrs, in July Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson and INLA Vol. Kevin Lynch, in August IRA Vols. Kieran Doherty, Thomas McIlwee and finally the death of INLA Vol. Michael Devine.

The deaths of these brave young men had widespread ramifications: by their protest and sacrifice a fresh surge of resistance and unity of purpose was re-instilled in a war weary people. The British government's facade of a normal situation in the Six Counties was effectively smashed along with their attempt to criminalise the Irish people's struggle.

The decision to embark upon the hunger strike was taken after a protracted four years blanket protest whereby republican and republican socialist POWs refused to be criminalised by wearing prison garb and was heightened by the no wash protest when the protesting prisoners were forced to refuse to slop out after they were repeatedly set upon and attacked by mobs of sectarian savages in screws' uniforms.

Their protest was supported and backed up initially by the Relatives' Action Committees and the prisoners' respective organisations – this support later took on bigger dimensions with the formation of the broad-based H Block/Armagh Committees. This unity of the prisoners, their organisations and most important of all the people, was to

bring to the attention of the world the plight of not only the long suffering prisoners themselves but the suffering of the populace of the six occupied counties of our country.

The mass movement of the people generated by the prisoners' campaign had the potential to move on from the H Block issue, into building a united front against British imperialism. Sadly this was not to be the case. Instead this dynamic was allowed to falter and collapse. We in the republican socialist movement would lay the blame for the failure to take up this opportunity on two main factors: firstly the all too prevalent elitism of major sections of the main republican body who, rather than find any accommodation with other socialist republican organisations and anti-imperialist groups worked instead to assimilate any individuals who were thought to be of any use to the cause of nationalism. However, this behaviour and attitude can be viewed with understanding, given the make-up and nature of the nationalist movement. The other contributory factor was that we in the republican socialist movement failed utterly to move into this vacuum and bring about this much needed unity. For a working class socialist organisation this was a serious indictment of our movement at that time and reflected accurately the organisational chaos that our movement was in. This continued to be the case right through the period from 1981 onwards. Attempts to rectify our problems were frustrated intentionally by the state's introduction of the paid perjurer system against our organisation. From 1982 the use of this method of internment was to see many of our most politicised comrades in prison for long periods. This body blow to our movement only helped to destabilise our already unsteady organisation.

From then attempts were made to put our movement once more on its proper revolutionary path. One notable attempt was the policy decisions taken at our 1984 Ard Fheis. Complementary to this was the undertaking of comrades within the confines of Crumlin Road and Long Kesh prisons of a major critical analysis of our movement. This critique came to the movement by way of a smuggled document from Thomas 'Ta' Power. This document was discussed at all levels of our movement and accepted as a pointer of the way forward. Sadly Ta will not be with us to see its implementation. His death and the events that followed it are proof of the importance of building a disciplined revolutionary party, for without such a party only opportunism and reaction exist.

Despite the attempts of apolitical thugs and the wishful thinking of the media, the republican socialist movement is very much alive. Certainly we have lost many totally irreplaceable individuals. The republican socialist movement, though severely damaged, is not dead and though comrades may be killed the ideals that motivated them can never be wiped out. There have been mistakes in the past. Politics have been neglected – not, we hasten to add, the politics of electioneering, of the safe parliamentary road to socialism, but the politics of the working class.

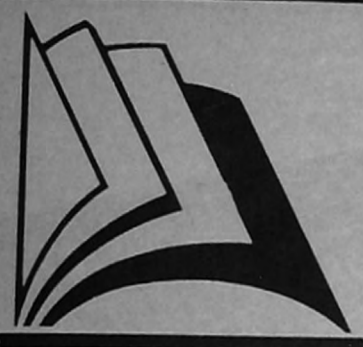
In 1984 we declared the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin as providing the basis for our socialist principles. Just as Connolly tried to fuse republicanism and socialism in his day, so we try to fuse republicanism and Marxism in our day to create a revolutionary ideology that is capable not merely of fighting, not merely of surviving but of actually winning the struggle against imperialism. As Thomas

Power (our comrade murdered in the Rossnaree massacre) wrote while in jail: "A revolutionary socialist party must have a revolutionary ideology...Marxism as a guide to action is such an ideology. It represents the historical interests of the working class, which through the medium of a revolutionary party aims to overthrow the capitalist order and begin the construction of communism". Through revolutionary theory, revolutionary war can be waged. In the forging of our theory we respect great socialists, we study them but we do not turn their writings into dogmas which ignore the prevailing political, social or economic conditions.

Dogmatism appears to reign in the various sects of the British left, many of whom cannot or will not see the necessity for armed struggle against an army of occupation. While not wishing to pontificate on this matter, we should point out that Lenin said: "If we do not want to betray our socialism, we must support every rebellion against our main enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big state, provided it is not the rebellion of a reactionary class. By refusing to support rebellions of annexed territories we objectively become annexationists." So-called socialists of an oppressor nation who call upon an oppressed to 'forget' their nationality are not internationalists as they claim, let alone Marxists, but advocates of submission, who refuse to recognise the distinction between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressor. These so-called socialists who disdainfully call upon the Irish to drop their nationalism, who simply equate republicanism with loyalism, in fact objectively seek to perpetuate British domination, cloaking their treachery in parodies of working class slogans about unity and comradeship.

The Irish working class is doubly oppressed both as a class and as a nation. We know how the powerful act. We see every day how they have used sectarian division to turn worker against worker; how they have discriminated; how they have built a bigoted sectarian local police force that ghoulishly for the past five years has viciously attacked republican funerals. We have seen the shoot-to-kill policies, we have witnessed the torture, endured the prisons, buried our child victims of plastic bullets. We have been experimented on by their military strategists, analysed by their sociologists, infiltrated by their master spies; encircled in our homes by their forts. We have been vandalised, analysed and criticised; dissected by their media and trivialised by their comics. We have been battered, bloodied and beaten; we have been ghettoised and we have been compromised and betrayed by politicians – the British hand in glove with their Free State puppets, puppets who are prepared to sell out our remaining neutrality through the Single European Act, having already legitimised the British occupation of the Six Counties through the Hillsborough Accord.

Through all this we survived and will do much more than survive in the future. Our movement produced people of the calibre of Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch and Micky Devine, who gave their lives alongside the seven IRA hunger strikers. We have lost valued and respected comrades in the recent past. We have a duty to see that their deaths were not in vain. We will continue to fight against imperialism in whatever manifestation and for the establishment of a new social order and a Marxist republic.



Red and Green

George Gilmore, *The Republican Congress*, Cork Workers Club, pp64, £2.00

THE MARRIAGE of socialism and national liberation in Ireland has not been a harmonious one. Latterday Connollys are not exactly thick on the ground. Since Connolly, however, there have been a number of attempts to fuse the struggle for national emancipation with the struggle for social emancipation. George Gilmore, in the recently reissued Cork Workers' Club pamphlet, gives an excellent description of one of the better known, and certainly most important, examples: the Republican Congress of 1934.

The Congress emerged out of the contradictory situation in which the left wing of the Irish Republican Army found itself in the early '30s. In 1932 de Valera's Fianna Fail party succeeded the openly pro-Treaty Cumann na nGaedheal in government. This put the Army Council of the IRA in a new position. Its relationship with the Cumann na nGaedheal party had been uncomplicated — open hostility — as they had fought on opposing sides in the Civil War. Fianna Fail in government was a new ball game. Strong links still remained between the two organisations, albeit of an informal kind, especially between the right wing of the IRA and Fianna Fail, which still styled itself a republican party. But whereas Fianna Fail was an openly bourgeois party, and as such forced to take measures in government to protect capitalism, the IRA was formally, if reluctantly, committed to an Irish socialist republic. Also, with a rank and file of workers and poor farmers, it had pressures on it to respond to attacks on the working masses caused by the crisis of the world capitalist system. Apart from the attacks of the state directly and a falling standard of living, working class republicans were also under threat from a growing fascist menace in the shape of the Blueshirt movement, which was closely aligned with Cumann na nGaedheal and merged with it in 1933 to form Fine Gael.

The rightwing majority on the IRA Army Council and the general headquarters staff tried to avoid open confrontation with both the Blueshirts and the Gardai so as not to 'embarrass' Fianna Fail. This brought them into conflict with the left minority of the AC and sections of the IRA rank and file, who responded enthusiastically to actions against the fascists, joining the communists in 1933 in defence of the headquarters of their Revolutionary Workers Group. The IRA repudiated this and disciplinary action followed.

Conflict within the ranks of the IRA between the left and right culminated in the General Army Convention of 1934. Michael Price proposed a motion calling for a reaffirmation of the IRA's support for the socialist republic and demanding that the Army should not disband until such a republic was

achieved. This was defeated and Price left the Convention and the Army to become one of the key individuals in the establishment of the Republican Congress. Another was Peadar O'Donnell who, at the Convention, withheld support for the motion on the grounds that it provided an escape route for the fake republicans of Fianna Fail.

The IRA leaders reacted with hostility. Volunteers were forbidden to give assistance to Congress work, and violation of this command was a disciplinary offence. Predictably, this caused a split in local brigades, with many refusing to carry out the order and leaving to join the Congress. One estimation of the split from the IRA puts it at 4,000, from an organisation of 30,000 in total. The Volunteers who did leave the IRA revived Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, along with the survivors of the 1916 Easter Rising.

The Republican Congress eventually met in Rathfines over September 29-30 1934. Republican congress groups, trade unions, trades councils, the Northern Ireland Socialist Party, CPI, Republican Labour Party, ICA, Anti-Fascist League, Unemployed Workers Movement and others were represented. Two distinct groups within the Congress clearly evolved, representing a division on the organising bureau. The majority of the bureau, led by Price, wanted the slogan of the Workers Republic to be raised now: "We who have been expelled from the revolutionary republican movement because of our working class principles, can ask nothing less than emphatic declaration of the Irish Workers Republic and the overthrow of capitalism." (Price, quoted on p53).

The minority of the bureau around O'Donnell were worried about alienating sections of republican opinion with the prefix 'workers': "We dare not jump through a stage in the fight, raising now the slogan 'Workers Republic', and leaving Fianna Fail to escape, saying that they are standing for one kind of republic, but that we stand for a different one. My quarrel with de Valera is not that he is not a socialist, for he makes no pretence to be one. My quarrel is that he pretends to be a republican while actually the interests for which his party acts — Irish capitalism — are across the road to the republic." (O'Donnell, quoted p52).

Sean Murray, leader of the CPI, came in to back up the 'minority' grouping, accusing the 'majority' of forgetting what type of country they lived in: "They are in a country completely dominated by another country...The republican movement led by the working class would go forward to the final achievement of the workers' republic. I would state the position to be the very opposite of what Michael Price says. He said you cannot get rid of British imperialism until you smash capitalism. I say you cannot smash capitalism until you get rid of British imperialism. Therefore let the Congress address itself to the task of fighting for the leadership of the great mass of the Irish people who are fighting for national independence." (p54)

The 'minority' resolution won through. Price and his seconder, Nora Connolly O'Brien and others of the 'majority' line refused to let their names go forward to the newly elected executive, and they and most of the northern workers withdrew from the Congress on the grounds that it had abandoned the aim of the workers' republic. Price ended up, by 1936, in the Irish Labour Party.

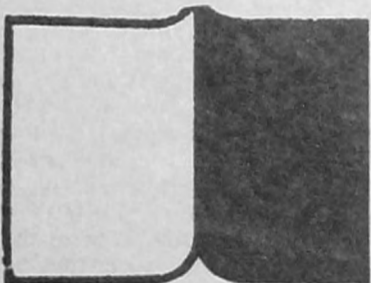
However, the remnant of the

Congress itself was to be short lived. It had fallen apart by the start of '36. The problem was that the formulation of O'Donnell, Gilmore and Murray left it as neither fish nor fowl. In accusing Price of neglecting the status of Ireland as a nation oppressed by imperialism, and therefore 'leaping' the national democratic tasks of the revolution, they were correct. But what did they pose in its place? They were highly ambiguous about the link between the republic and the workers' republic. Murray spoke of getting rid of Britain as the precondition of the final achievement of the workers' republic. What was missing, and what caused the dissolution of the Congress, was the concept of the uninterruptedness of the revolutionary process through to socialism, as advocated by Lenin. In April 1917 he advanced the slogan 'All power to the Soviets'. This was not the call for socialism in itself, but Lenin understood full well that this was where it would directly lead. This concept was absent, or at best highly ambiguous, in Murray's speech and the approach of Ireland's communists in the mid 1930s. This prevented the CPI playing a vanguard role to the left moving IRA members and the Republican Congress.

At the end of the day it was not Price or O'Donnell, 'majority' or 'minority', who were the problem at the Congress. It was the Communist Party. This was the Party that could have resolved the contradiction between the position of getting rid of British imperialism via fighting for socialism and getting socialism by getting rid of British imperialism. In doing so it could have come to lead the rank and file of both trends. But the CPI, like the entire Comintern, was on a race rightwards from the sectarian posturing of the 'Third Period' to the respectability of the Popular Fronts. Consequently it was not in the best condition to lead anything that smacked of militancy.

Today the job of uniting the tasks of the national and social revolutions in practice still remains. They are tasks that only a communist leadership can unite and fulfill.

Alan Merrik



Stalin's men

Paolo Spriano, *Stalin and the European Communists*, Verso, 1985, pp315, £16.95

STALIN'S impact on the world communist movement is undoubtedly tremendous. Stalin the individual may be dead and denounced but his theory lives and his approach to practice was absorbed by a whole generation of communists, and has indeed become regarded as orthodox 'Marxism-Leninism' by the official world communist movement. Leninism gives us the opportunity to free ourselves from the burden of preconceptions and errors inherited from the past, whether they be Euro, Trotskyite, or centrist in nature. Spriano's history of the

"manipulation of the European Communist Parties by Stalin" in the crucial decade 1938 to 1948 can contribute to this liberation, despite its obvious Eurocommunist bias.

When examining the crimes and mistakes of the period, we could ask whether the history of our world movement is a tragic story of opportunities wasted, chances missed and movements betrayed; or whether circumstances made a significantly more favourable outcome impossible. We are tempted to speculate about what might have been.

By the 1930s the CPSU and the Comintern had become so influenced by centrism and riddled with bureaucracy, that far from working for the goal of world revolution using a scientific analysis of the balance of class forces, they acted in accordance with the foreign policy of the Soviet state, and then justified their actions by suitably altering their 'official' Marxist-Leninist analysis. As Spriano says, "The unscrupulous use of 'Marxist-Leninist' theory in the interests of immediate policy is undoubtedly one of the constituent features of Stalinism." (p80)

The problem with the Stalin leadership of the Soviet and world communist movement was not that it tried to act in the best interests of the Soviet state (although the evidence Spriano gives shows that it played the game of 'international diplomacy' very ineptly); but that it weakened the ability of the parties of Comintern to make revolution by forcing them to take part in this "use of theory as an instrument to justify momentary tactical zigzags" (p3). Spriano vividly brings to life the hopes and anxieties of workers and communists living through this complex and fast moving period. He brilliantly illustrates the efforts of communist parties to adjust their work to fit the ever-changing official analyses. For example, in the second chapter he describes the so-called 'third period' ideology of "counterposition to social democracy" and the "immobile isolation" to which it condemned the world communist movement; then the shift to the 'popular front' line of regarding fascism as the main enemy and organising 'brickies to bishops' type united action against it. This was superficially successful in the short term, at least in terms of winning recruits and gaining bourgeois respectability. But as it was not based on correct ideology it was certain to fail in its aim of preventing war and did nothing to advance the cause of revolution.

The chapter on 'Revolution Blocked in the West' raises in its

clearest form the question of Stalin's relationship and attitude towards the world revolution. Spriano gives us three alternatives; that Stalin colluded with imperialism to suppress revolution, that he cynically "gave up the West...in order to guarantee the East" (p222), or that he simply lacked the courage to fight for revolutions in the West. Interestingly Spriano more or less exonerates Stalin, concluding that no other option was open to him. This is because Spriano, being influenced by Eurocommunism, does not think revolution was possible. He thinks that at the end of World War II the task of the communist parties in France and Italy "was to bring the broad popular masses, primarily the workers, into the movement and to bring their weight to bear politically and socially; it was certainly not to take power." (p224)

Spriano unwittingly illustrates how Eurocommunism grew directly out of Stalin's theory and practice. The continuity between Stalin's 'popular front' strategy (which called for unity of all anti-fascist or non-fascist forces), the post war delusions of 'new roads' i.e peaceful, parliamentary and non-revolutionary roads to socialism, and the modern Euro anti-Thatcher alliance, is obvious. Some of the phrases used by communists of the 1940s sound startlingly modern:

"...a legal struggle for major reforms...to be achieved through a process of democratisation of the state and society...to open the road to socialism...travelled with other political forces..." (p287)

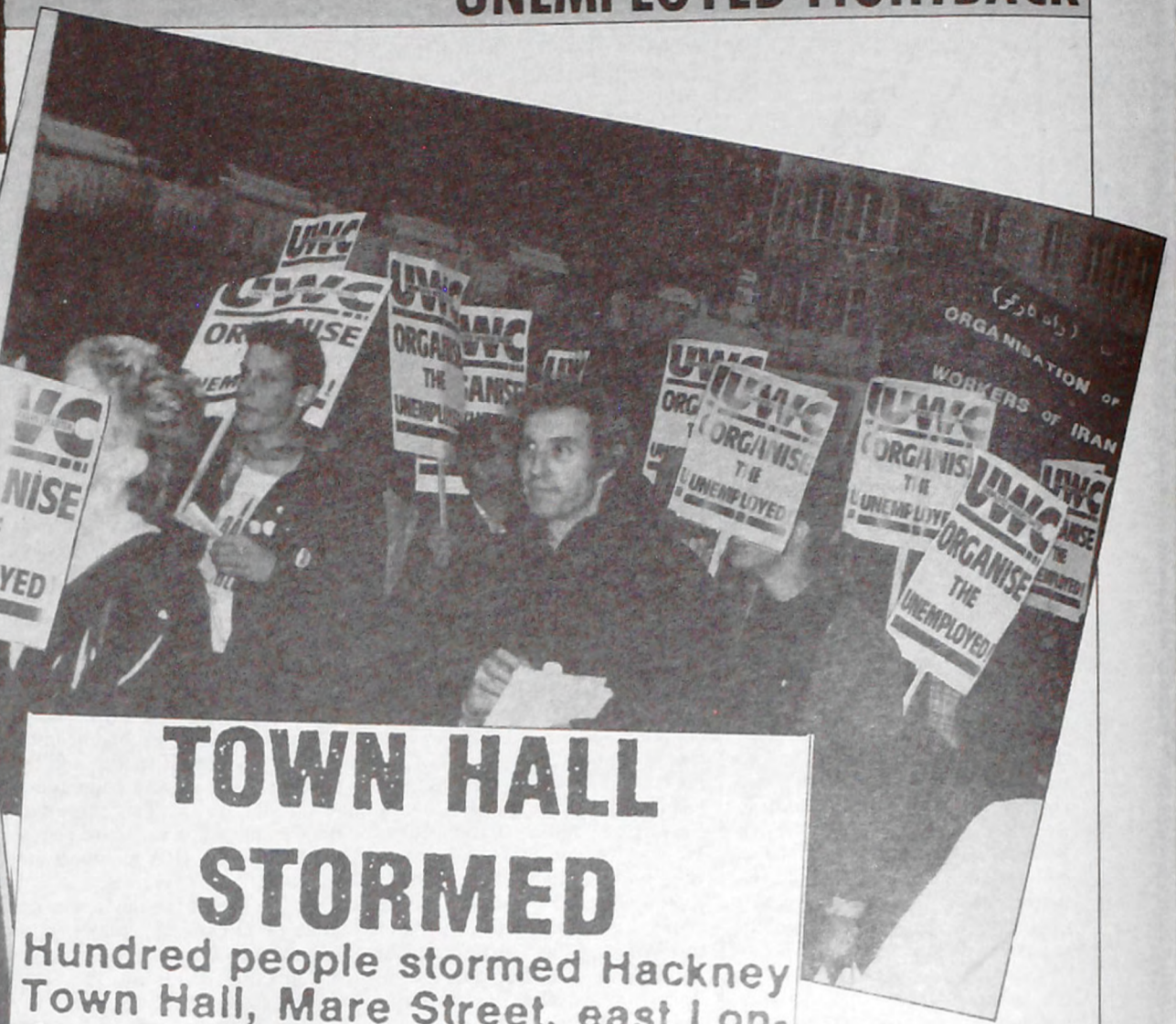
That is, progress is seen in maximising the scope of bourgeois democracy, not through the struggle for revolution. This is the essence of Eurocommunism.

Spriano notes that in the war against Hitler (p122) there was no equivalent to "the decisive slogan that distinguished Lenin's line in 1914-1917: turn the imperialist war into civil war!" (p122). Had there been, the subsequent history of Europe might have been different and socialism might now have been the dominant force in the world, rather than constantly under threat.

Spriano insists that the post war rise of the communist movement was a socialist renaissance which was crushed by Stalin. In fact, its centrist ideology of championing the interests of the bourgeois nation and bourgeois ideology, far from being a healthy reaction to previous rigidity, was the first stage in the disintegration of the world communist movement.

Mary Goodwin

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TOWN HALL STORMED

Hundred people stormed Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, east London. Banner proclaiming "Unemployed Charter for East London" carried into the building. Hackney sit-in, page 2.

DAILY NEWS

The UWC takes off!

IN CONTRAST to the general doom and despondency in the workers' movement the Unemployed Workers Charter is showing real results in its campaign to organise the unemployed. Already it is the largest organisation of its type in Britain, with over two hundred supporters up and down the country. It stands head and shoulders above anything claiming to stand in the traditions of the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1920s and 30s. A fact illustrated by its intervention against Hands Across Britain, its leadership of the occupation of Hackney Town Hall and the London May Day march. It organised the largest British contingent. So over the last two months the UWC has really shown what an uncompromisingly militant organisation can do when it rolls its sleeves up and gets stuck in...

Hands Across Britain

At the packed meeting in April which launched East London UWC, Anne Jones, secretary of ELUWC, denounced the Hands Across Britain stunt. As Anne put it, the idea of holding the bejewelled hand of the likes of the gaudy Tory, Jimmy Saville, would upset the stomach of any self-respecting unemployed person.

For the UWC, she emphasised to resounding applause, class collaborationism was out and class war was in: "Its our class against theirs" she underlined. Yet she insisted that unemployed and militants in the workers' movement

must not boycott HAB.

So we fought for it to be turned on its head by making May 3 a day of militant protest. We therefore launched Fists Across Britain.

We called for people not to meekly hold hands as Norman Willis, Michael Parkinson, the *Morning Star*, 7 Days and the Straight Leftists' *Communist* wanted. We called for a march to Downing Street instead where the HAB organisers originally planned to focus their stunt. Later, they quietly dropped this idea. Frankly, they feared a riot if the unemployed were put anywhere in the proximity of Downing Street. The UWC had no such worries.

Our comrades covered all HAB rallying points across London with leaflets announcing our plans. We confronted the LSD Alliance, Labourite and generally patronising HAB do-gooders head on.

The response of these yuppies, who were sloshing around in their green wellies and waterproof country jackets, varied between embarrassed resentment and open, unashamed, loathing. Anyone who thinks that the petty bourgeoisie in Britain are simply wet and wimpy should have been with the UWC.

Once the veneer of middle class concern cracked, out came the pure venom of class hatred. How dare you unemployed reject our sympathy! We were not intimidated. We intimidated them instead. We outnumbered and outmegaphoned them.

The response we got from the few unemployed that turned up to the flop stunt was very different.

Most agreed with us about HAB and many joined us at Trafalgar Square and then marched to Downing Street.

As to Hands Across Britain itself, the organisers knew the unemployed would not support them. To substitute for the real thing, ie unemployed workers, they supplied cardboard cut-out figures for the concerned middle class to hold hands with! We kid you not. To prove it the UWC decided to 'liberate' a few of these two dimensional comrades and they have promised to join the UWC in some of our future actions.

Our march on Downing Street took place at exactly 3.00pm. It thus directly challenged the holding hands stunt by directly coinciding with it. Once at Downing Street a UWC delegation handed in a letter demanding the right to work and we then waited for the HAB luminaries to deliver their plea to Thatcher to be nice.

When the HAB crew, including Molly Meacher and Peter Hain, parked their expensive cars opposite Downing Street they found to their horror a militant UWC picket. It made it pretty clear to them what the unemployed thought of their 'concern' and their refusal to let the UWC speak at the HAB rally unless they could first censor our speech (in fact, they had no provision for any unemployed speakers at any of their gatherings).

Among others the front page of *The Independent* reported our action and we were well pleased with

the embarrassment we must have caused the charity mongering creeps.

We eventually took the decision to leave Downing Street when the senior police officer present informed us that unless we did "blood will flow". Discretion, we decided, was the better part of valour, and we withdrew with the determination that next time we took the unemployed to that particular part of the world it would be in sufficient numbers to ensure that the filth would think twice about threatening us. Next time, superintendent, next time ...

May Day

The UWC contingent on May Day in London was the largest best disciplined and most vocal British contingent on the march, out-classing the likes of the Communist Campaign Group. It showed the future for May Day mobilisations in Britain.

CPSA/SCPS strike

The civil servants unions, CPSA and SCPS were out in London on May 5 for a week's strike as part of their national action. Consequently, all dole offices were shut.

The East London UWC mobilised unemployed activists to join the strikers every day on the picket line to express our determination that no wedge will be driven between the employed and unemployed working class. On May 9, the day in Hackney when personal

issue giro (ie. across the counter rather than via post) were meant to be given out, ELUWC stayed after the CPSA picket had disbanded to argue with claimants, many of whom were initially anti-strike, that we must stand with the strikers and demand our money from Hackney Council.

So, led by ELUWC, hundreds of unemployed workers converged on the Town Hall where they faced locked doors and a building which had been deserted by all the local Labour Party dignitaries. The door however, somehow got kicked in (tut, tut ...) and nearly one hundred and fifty unemployed workers streamed in to demand their rights!

The banner of the UWC flew proudly over Hackney Town Hall that day. Unfortunately, confusion developed because of the rather obstructive and bureaucratic attitude of Hackney Nalگو. Although the day had its negative features, these are problems of growth. Trade unions must be won to overcome a sectional approach which does not take the rights of unemployed workers into account. It is still very early days. Hackney Nalگو has affiliated to ELUWC and next time civil servants strike there will be a real workers' united front.

The UWC is showing the way to all militants, unemployed and employed. We have shown what can be done. Get involved in making the future now. Write to the UWC at: BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX or phone (01) 431 3135.