

The LENINIST

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The Tories are faced with real political problems with the growing strike wave by Britain's one million health workers

NHS — Fight for what we need Not what the system can afford

THE BRAVE fight that nurses and other health workers are mounting is an inspiration to all workers. For too long successive governments have been able to get away with exploiting health workers, leaving them among the poorest paid workers because of their commitment to patients and the NHS. Such cynical manipulation no longer washes.

The flashpoint for what is now a concerted strike wave by health workers came on January 7 when 37 nurses at North Manchester General Hospital staged a one-shift strike against Tory plans to replace percentage unsocial hours payments with a flat rate premium (this would have meant a substantial pay cut — such payments make up 10-15% of total earnings). Since then there has been a snowballing of action taking in the whole of the country and encompassing not only allowances, but pay, training, staffing levels and just about every other aspect of working in the crumbling NHS.

Usually without the cooperation of union officials the call for strike action has been taken up in one hospital after another, reaching new heights with the February 3 mass 24 hour strike, the TUC's call for a national demonstration on March 5 and now the prospect of a national strike in July.

This shows a mighty head of steam has built up. It would be fatal not to use it in a decisive fashion now! To wait until 'NHS Day' in July, to wait six months before mass national action, is too little too late. What is needed is all out strikes now and the winning of massive solidarity strike action!

Clearly, the nurses action has relied on *spontaneity* as its main driving force. So far, this has been a strength. The pussy-footing cowardice of the union leaderships has been offset by the readiness of the rank and file to take action with or without the blessing of officials, not least the non-TUC, non-striking RCN.

This fighting spirit has undoubtedly been aided by the looser affiliations that nurses have tended to have with their union structures. Although this is a sign of the *undevelopment* of working class consciousness among nurses, at least it has not nurtured the type of 'my union right or wrong' outlook that narrows the options of many militants.

Thus far then this spontaneity has been a positive strength. But spontaneous action can only maintain its forward momentum for so long before it is derailed into endless ineffective 'days of action' or blocked by a rotten sellout which

sees more money for the NHS at the expense of further cost and job cutting privatisation and the sacrifice of the wages, rights and conditions of those who work in the health industry.

What is needed is *conscious* leadership, an overall *national* strategy. To facilitate this, there is a pressing need for nurses and health workers to form joint rank and file action committees to take the running of the dispute into their own hands and to link up these unofficial bodies nationally.

Action committees would have a number of practical advantages for the health workers.

- The potential isolation of militant hospitals could be overcome. Union leaderships do not want to escalate action, but channel everything into providing ammunition for the pathetic Labourite front bench spokesperson Robin Cook. The coordination of militants would take the initiative out of the hands of the union bureaucracy.

- Action committees would cut across the dangerous sectionalism that divides health workers and lay the foundations for one union in the health industry. There are currently over a dozen different unions representing workers in the health industry. This is dangerous. Apart from it providing jobs for more bureaucrats, what is the *point* of nurses and health workers being split into so many different unions? They all work in one industry; they all face the same problems and the same bosses — they should all be in the same union, they should *strike* as one!

Schisms only benefit the management and the Tories. They play one section off against another. This is what they did in the 1982 dispute and more recently, last month, when they offered talks to the scab RCN leadership and ignored the weaker nurses unions, Nupe and Cohse.

The Tories try to 'buy off' one section of the nurses, specifically those in specialised areas of the health industry, with new wage structures and the promise of private money which can then be used to turn nurse against nurse.

If all health workers were in a single union, then the type of 'divide and rule' tactics that the Tories have employed so skilfully elsewhere could be blocked. A single union in the health industry — from nurses to ancillary staff — but strictly *excluding* management and consultants, would be a tremendous step forward.

In the meantime, joint rank and file action committees should fight for *workers' control* in the health industry. Health workers themselves should usurp management's

authority and organise and manage emergency cover. This will pull the rug from under the Tories: their accusation that strikes in the health industry only lead to patients suffering will be undermined.

However, the real key to a winning strategy is not organisational. If action committees were formed up and down the country tomorrow, without an independent platform there is a danger that they would quickly become no more than appendages of the official leaderships.

No, the central task, one which every nurse, every worker concerned to defend the health care of our class — remember this is what we are defending, not the institution called the NHS — must face up to, is what sort of politics are going to underpin and guide the dispute?

Nurses are workers in *objective* terms. Now *subjectively* they are also beginning to feel, act and *organise* like workers. Nonetheless the majority of nurses are still organised in the 267,000 strong non-striking RCN. It is the EETPU of the health industry. So there is a glaring contradiction between the way the nurses' fight is being conducted at a grass roots level and how it is being led at the top. The rank and file (including a slim majority of RCN members) want militant action, the leadership does not. It wants to court 'public opinion' and Tory wets. These are perfect conditions for a whole layer of militant rank and file leaders to emerge.

Nurses, a section of the working class involved in a class action, are being encouraged to present themselves as a 'profession', not a *job* in essence like teaching, mining, computing or driving a bus. This false notion plays into the hands of the Tories. They use moral injunctions to the nurses to heed the 'responsibilities' of their 'profession' and refrain from striking.

Health Secretary John Moore, for example, has praised the RCN for recognising "that the rock on which the nurses' pay review body rests is the commitment of the profession against strike action."

The RCN's cross-class alliance with the healthcare establishment in the form of management and consultants can only weaken the nurses in their fight. It only helps those who want to finance the NHS through charity mongers, privatisation and in-house tenders. What is needed above all is unity not with the upper middle class medical establishment, but unity with *other workers*, both in the health industry and outside it.

But with the experience of the printworkers and miners behind

us, both of which fought alone for over twelve months, crippled by lack of solidarity action from other workers and even by the inability to achieve unity in their own ranks, is not this just hot air? Is there any way to forge fighting working class unity?

Often when workers, honest militants, are in the heat of a strike or industrial action, they see debate and argument about politics and the way forward as a diversion, a luxury for 'academics'. This idea is understandable, but very wrong.

The importance of having a battle plan, a strategy for victory is illustrated quite neatly by the problems that the Tories have got themselves into over the NHS. The success of the nurses so far in retaining the initiative against the government and in wringing concessions from them is only partly explained by the rank and file's bravery and enthusiasm.

It also has a lot to do with the fact that the Tories were caught on the hop; they had no strategy, no alternative to the NHS as it is presently organised. Thus, the action of the nurses struck at a vulnerable point. John Biffen, a leading Tory MP has denounced what he sees as the "machop-politics" approach of the government on this issue.

What in essence he is pointing to is the fact that without a coherent ideological alternative, the Tories simply appear to be running down the health service out of callous indifference. Thatcher's recent announcement of a wide-ranging internal review of the NHS shows that she too sees the problem and we can be sure that in the not too distant future, the Tories will bring out a detailed plan for attacking working class healthcare and alternative legislation to implement it.

When that happens, if the nurses and the workers who support them have not developed their own *working class* strategy for defending and extending health care, then the Tories will regain the initiative and win the battle.

Politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum. If workers do not have a proletarian strategy then their campaign will end up going down a cul-de-sac of balancing capitalism's books. If health workers fight a battle using the strategy of *their enemy*, then victories are always fleeting and never permanent. A winning strategy must be *anti-capitalist* above all else.

Why do we say this? After all, at the moment the nurses have been relatively successful by relying on public sympathy for them as 'carers' in a 'caring profession'. Surely by adopting the anti-capitalist strategy we advocate, potential support would be frightened away

rather than attracted?

In fact the opposite is true. If nurses and other health workers limit themselves to trying to 'balance capitalism's books' better than the Tories, then we have lost the fight. If one wants an example of the mess which that type of 'battle plan' gets you into, just take a look at Judas Kinnock and his Labour Party. In a parliamentary exchange on January 26, Thatcher taunted Kinnock in the following way: "Which of our figures are you challenging? None of them!" And Tory MPs noisily baited Kinnock to get to his feet and respond. The windbag stayed emphatically seated.

Kinnock's parliamentary bluster and the ease with which the Tories were able to deflate it illustrates just how weak any argument is that tries to make a case for the NHS within the boundaries of capitalist profit and loss. Labour is not taking a lead and calling for strike action. It fights for what the system can afford. The Labour Party is a party of hot air, not action.

We, unlike the Labour Party, take as our starting point the health of *workers*, not Lawson's £1.3 billion and the government's problems with balancing its budget. We start with the living standards of nurses and health workers, not the solvency of capitalism.

Given the changing age structure of the population and the need to replace decaying old hospitals it is clear that the government is spending less and less compared with what is actually needed. Nurses exist on a miserable pittance (between £6,250 and £7,750) and ancillary workers are among the lowest paid of all workers. Thatcher's statistics are bunk when it comes to what is actually needed by patients and workers. And that is and must be our concern — not what the moribund system can afford.

That should be the central core of a working class strategy for a nurses' victory and anything else is to put profit before people.

Once workers, be they nurses or miners, accept the needs of the bosses system — that is profit — we have crippled our fightback. After all, the attacks on the NHS are a result of the crisis of profitability of British capitalism.

That is the bosses' problem: it's their system, it's their crisis. But if we tie health care provision to an argument about resource allocation, spare money here, hidden reserves there, then we are tying our livelihoods as workers to a sinking capitalist ship. This, health workers should refuse to do.

Ian Mahoney



LETTERS

Centralism

I wholeheartedly agree with your Enniskillen editorial (issue 56), but would like to raise a number of important points. As I waded through the fog of the IRA's statement after Enniskillen, it seemed that the bombing had taken place without the knowledge of the political organisation, ie Sinn Fein.

This raises the problem of a lack of centralism, which is vital in a revolutionary situation. Clearly, if the military rises above the political then the party itself cannot enforce the centralism required to operate to its maximum effectiveness and worse than this, leaves it open to political opportunism and infiltration.

It is perhaps significant that the IRA statement should suggest that the bombing was due to British Army electronic countermeasures. Of course, this may have been the case, but why such a defensive statement? It would have been far better if Sinn Fein had come out with a forceful statement along the lines of The Leninist editorial.

In the historical and continuing revolutionary struggle of republicanism in the Six Counties, Enniskillen carries little or no importance. However, it did, in a small way, raise some important questions for the republican movement.

Frank Archer
Leicester

Pardon?

Why do so many who call themselves 'communist' in the same breath condemn the 'terrorism' of the IRA, as does Paul Watts in the letters column of *The Leninist* (issue 58)? He cannot, he writes, "allow the IRA a pardon" for the Enniskillen bomb. The Army Council of the IRA must be heartbroken by Paul's refusal to exercise the royal prerogative here.

It is worthwhile pointing out that, unlike Watts, at no time did Marx or Engels direct open criticism at the armed actions of the IRA of their day, the Fenians. They criticised their programme, but unconditionally defended its democratic content, including the right to take up arms. If some actions misfired instead of throwing up their arms in righteous indignation they identified the real culprits - the British ruling class.

Far from chastising Irish revolutionaries from their armchairs, Marx and Engels fought to build a movement in solidarity with their struggle, no matter how 'dirty' this might be at times. I would suggest that in future comrade Watts' energies would be better directed to this.

Stephen Jardine
East London

Scargill

Congratulations on the excellent article, "Scargill yes, but..." (issue 57): "The position of militants in the pits must be to support Scargill only insofar as he supports them." Excellent!

What a revolutionary contrast to the 57 brands of Trotskyism who vie with each other to ingratiate themselves with militant mine workers by acting as Scargill's apologists, excusing or ignoring his chauvinistic pro-capitalist plan for making the mining industry prosperous for both the capitalists and the workers; his support for the Plan for Coal, for EC (European Capitalists) cooperation in exploit-

ing the miners, in import controls, etc.

It must be recognised and stressed that Scargill's policies are the results of trade union politics as opposed to the class approach; even the most revolutionary minded person at the head of a union is a prisoner of the trade union bureaucracy. Trade unions cannot pursue revolutionary class politics.

Sections within the workers' movement are impotent in themselves. Furthermore, the solutions to workers' problems can only be resolved through the class struggle to establish working class dictatorship and socialism.

To realise both immediate fighting organisation and the embryonic workers councils for workers power, it is necessary to fight for the development of class organisation in the form of rank and file organisation that will develop alongside the trade union movement but independent of the official trade union machinery, which will be based on all trades within industry and encompass tenants committees, unemployed workers organisations, etc, making it a truly class body.

Only through class action under the leadership of a genuine Leninist Communist Party can the workers hope to overcome the series of defeats over the last few years and forge ahead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

P Conlon
South London

Abortion

Whilst agreeing with the arguments outlined in your article *Free Abortion on Demand!*, may I make the following points not in contradiction but rather in addition to it.

The first problem, as you rightly indicate, is that the need for abortion, be it under capitalism or socialism, is primarily social not technical. Engels makes the telling point in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* that no woman should have to reject sexual love for fear of the consequences.

The second point is that the demands put forward are reformist. Though this is no argument against them, for it can be a proper communist tactic provided it is not opportunist. It is reformist because it calls on the bourgeois state to provide remedies for a problem of the people (not just the working class), though as you point out in your article, the main burden of Alton's proposals would fall upon our class.

There is, however, a problem in the demand as formulated, that is, of infanticide. Given the history of this century (the Nazis in particular, but not them alone), we would have some difficulty in agreeing to it. Therein lies the problem of at what point termination of pregnancy could be agreed to. For instance, two days before natural labour?

Here raises the more general problem of law. I think *The Leninist* recognises that given the cultural level of the mass, bourgeois as much as proletarian, we cannot nor could any present society grant the proposition the mass will recognise necessity.

Therefore, there is a need for arbitrary restrictions on freedom and this will continue even into the first stages of communism. For example, we will still have traffic control, safety regulations, etc, although the administration might not be through a state. This is certainly true of family relations, for

the family both predates class society and, in spite of the mysticism of Greenham, postdates it, albeit in different forms.

If this regulation is necessary then we need to have law and although our long-term aim is to abolish law, we have to recognise that law contains more than just class interests, but also the general needs of society. Our main objection to bourgeois law is that it is bourgeois and administered by bourgeois institutions.

Until we are able to replace the bourgeois state with our own, we will just have to live with this anomaly if we call upon the bourgeois state to provide any services. The question is not just of abortion but also of infanticide, mercy killing etc. We all know that these problems sometimes are posed in both a moral and a humane way. Yet no communist to my knowledge advocates law which allows infanticide or mercy killing within capitalist or socialist society. Thus it is with abortion.

At the same time the political slogan 'Smash Alton's Bill!' and 'Free Abortion on Demand!' are correct both in spirit and above all as political demands.

Tom Lockett
South London

SWP Allies?

We have no choice but to support the Khomeini regime against the US and its allies! So declares the SWP's *Socialist Worker*

Shades of 1914 and the reformists of Europe, methinks, only now its 'Allah mit urs!' And *Socialist Worker* rubs it in: "We are for a military victory. The key question is whether or not you fight imperialism. We are not for political support for Khomeini, but we are for military support against imperialism." And that's the declaration of the present-day Mohammed, the guru Tony Cliff himself.

So "we" (the SWP) are against imperialism - but not the 'little imperialism' of the Iranian mullahs. When, then, is *Socialist Worker* going to launch its campaign: 'Arms for Iran! Tanks for the Ayatollahs!' After all, they are for a military victory.

Mark Eastman
Sussex

Undeviating

The Communist Party will not be 'reestablished' by the CCG into a Marxist-Leninist party. The CCG 'party' will be based on the *British Road to Socialism* and it is neither Marxist nor Leninist. *Morning Star* loyalists are being engineered by the opportunist leadership of Photis Lysandrou, Tony Chater, Mike Hicks et al.

Only *The Leninist* stands for the reestablishment of a vanguard party of the working class based on the undeviating tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

Lorna Jenkins
North London

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.

THE attorney general, Sir Patrick Mayhew, has decided not to take criminal proceedings against RUC officers responsible for the killing of six unarmed men in 1982. This is in spite of his admission that there is abundant evidence to prove that there has been a cynical cover up.

Yes, he is an accomplice to murder. Who can doubt it. But we say the entire British ruling class is guilty, not just a few RUC mercenaries. Mayhew's course of action was taken, he said, with a view to the "public interest and national security", ie the interests of British imperialism. Clearly a public trial would have exposed the fact that orders for RUC hirelings to assassinate unarmed republicans came from the very highest level. This is where the real guilt lies.

On top of this example of British 'justice' came the rejection of the appeal of the Birmingham Six by Lord Lane. This ermine clad bewigged servant of state lies, perjury and hypocrisy was also determined to save the British establishment from embarrassment. Because of this six Irish men, beaten till they confessed, are meant to spend the rest of their lives in jail.

Tearful concern has been expressed by liberals and left reformists at the insensitivity of these decisions. A typical response was to call for "wiser counsels" for British imperialism to "prevail". Apparently, until they do, Britain's "honesty in negotiations" will not be trusted and this might damage "Anglo-Irish relations" - or at least so said the *Morning Star's* editorial of January 29 1988.

Communists offer no advice to imperialism. We offer it only our unyielding hostility. The logic of the likes of the *Morning Star* is pro-imperialist. It was therefore hardly surprising that its concerns were echoed in the right wing Tory *Economist* (January 30).

It too fears that Britain's credibility and standing has been "shaken" because it will appear to "Ulster Catholics and the Irish government" that British law is "more forgiving to police officers than to Irishmen". *The Economist* frets that this will further undermine faith in "the impartiality of British justice".

If the Dublin government finds it difficult to maintain the counterrevolutionary Hillsborough Accord, excellent! We await mass working class demonstrations in Dublin against it. The more British imperialism is exposed, the better.

We say the Birmingham Six must be freed. Not just because they were framed by the thuggish police. No, we say that all jailed Irish republicans must be freed because they are all political prisoners of imperialism.

Of course, this will not be achieved by appealing to British 'justice' nor imperialism's "better counsels". British rule of the Six Counties is maintained through terror, frame up and torture. There can be no justice from it and its law. Ireland's soldiers will be freed through the class war in Britain combining with the liberation war in Ireland.

The British working class has a vital interest in siding with Irish republicans who have heroically taken up arms to free their country. Marx said that if the workers in Britain do not take up the cause of Ireland they forge their own chains. The truth of this was vividly seen in the miners' Great Strike of 1984-5. The methods developed on the streets of Derry and Belfast came to Notts and South Yorkshire.

The working class in Britain will take up the struggle to free Ireland as a precondition for our own class freedom. We are supremely confident of this. Through the class war our working class will smash the bosses' jails and we will finally win our freedom.

Then we shall bring to justice, the stern justice of the proletarian dictatorship, those who have imprisoned and tortured our brave republican friends. Let the ruling class tremble, as we ask for no mercy neither shall we show any. You have been warned: you will pay for your crimes against Ireland.

The Editor

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FORDS

All out action is the key
only one section of the
union has shown
itself prepared to
push for this

Rank and file rebel



Ford workers will not be treated like machines

RANK and file Ford workers have suffered because of the misleadership of their negotiators. On January 31 they agreed to recommend to members acceptance of the Ford company's offer after it was raised marginally. From offering increases of 2% above the inflation rate in the last two years of a three year agreement, the management 'magnanimously' upped the offer to 2%. The offer for 1987-88 was left unchanged at 7%.

The company evidently believed at one stage that it could rail-road this deal and its controversial proposals for changes in working practices through relatively easily. It was thought that the support of the TGWU would carry the deal despite opposition from the 9,000 skilled workers organised in other unions, who would be most affected by the restructuring of work practices.

Indeed, so cocky did the car bosses get that, in an effort to pressurise the T&G leaders, they loftily announced that if its improved offer was even put to a ballot without a recommendation from the T&G bureaucrats to accept, then the new offer would be automatically withdrawn.

Frankly, the Ford bosses had got the measure of the union negotiators alright. After some shilly-shallying, the team recommended acceptance of the sell out deal by 25 votes to 18, with most full time union officials giving a marvellous example of decisive leadership by abstaining!

The company, however, neglected to consider the strength of rank and file opposition to the company's attacks. The leaderships of the unions involved all agreed that they were bound by the negotiating team's decision: a neat way to pass a buck, but a rebellion on the shop floor orchestrated by TGWU stewards in the major plants spiked the bureaucrats sell-out.

Clearly, beneath the relative calm in the industry that has reigned since the 1985 two year pay deal, rank and file bitterness and

anger has been building up. Since 1985, Ford management have crowed over their victory, 'industrial peace' in the industry and the end of "the days of mayhem" - the intense class struggle that was an accepted fact of life in the industry.

Until the recent upsurge, the car industry has been lauded as a show-piece of Britain's reformed industrial relations climate. "There is peace now at Ford" intoned the pompous *Guardian* in July 1985.

In the recent period, however, not only have Ford workers made nonsense out of the wishful thinking of bourgeois journalists, they have also put the wind up their own leadership.

Mick Murphy, the Transport Workers' chief negotiator and a veteran of Ford pay deals going back 30 years, openly refers to the dispute as "a tragedy".

According to Murphy, the company is messing up its chances of achieving a 'once and for all' commitment from the workers to the interests of the company. "We had virtually no trouble for two years" Murphy has said, "but since these pay negotiations began we have lost 26,000 cars."

The identification of the interests of Ford workers with the profit rates of the Ford company (Murphy's "we's") is the main danger facing the workers.

The *Morning Star* of February 2 epitomises this poisonous approach. It urges Ford workers to fight for "a deal that reflects the fact that the company is due to make £350 million profit on last year's trading." This idea is fraught with danger and must be rejected by the workers.

Whether Ford is making a profit or making a loss should be totally irrelevant to our fight. We should go all out for what car workers and their families need to lead decent lives, and all other considerations must be totally ignored.

If we tie our livelihoods to profit margins of Ford or any other capitalist firm we are batting on a very sticky wicket indeed. After all, if Ford workers are entitled to a pay

increase because the firm is making a profit, should workers volunteer to take pay cuts if the company starts to lose money?

Threats to the profits of Ford will be posed in the long term by emerging producers like Taiwan and South Korea. Should then Ford workers volunteer to have their wage levels reduced to compete with the super-exploited Taiwanese and South Korean workers?

Murphy's promise to the company that "we will discuss anything with them", given his and other trade union officials' commitment to the health of Ford's profit rates, is one which should be viewed with deep concern by all car workers. Tied to the offers from the company are demands for the management's right to draft in 15% temporary labour, the acceptance of working practices based on the Japanese 'quality circles system', with a special category of 'team leaders' being paid 10% more than their 'teams'.

Car workers must break free of this type of collaborationist politics if they are to wage a militant and successful fightback.

Clearly, there is an enormous discrepancy between the willingness to fight of the rank and file, as expressed in the huge 88% vote to strike for their 10% one year pay claim and the readiness of the union tops to lead their members into battle. Compared to the obvious determination of the management, the workers' leaders are weakkneed and embarrassingly eager to compromise at the first possible opportunity.

Ford workers must take the running of their dispute with the bosses out of the hands of the bureaucrats. They should link up at rank and file level nationally and attempt to draw in other car workers, at General Motors and BL. World demand for cars is on the up, which may prompt the employers to be more 'flexible'. But only uncompromisingly militant all out action can beat the bosses.

IN STRUGGLE

The 10,000 strong pit deputies' union, Nacods, shut down 101 out of 103 collieries in Britain on February 1 after a 90 per cent vote for action, short of indefinite strike, against British Coal's 4.28% pay offer. British Coal has responded with threats to break the power of the union. It is vital not only for workers in the mining industry, but for our class as a whole, that the UDM is beaten. For if it is allowed to grow and harrass the workers' movement successfully, the bosses will move to create other such scab organisations. That such a traditionally 'moderate' union should be the first in the coal industry to undertake national strike action since 1985 is indicative of the potential for industrial resistance throughout the pits, and beyond. This current action is also a powerful argument for one union throughout the coal industry, ensuring a more unified struggle in the next strike than the sectionalist approach in 1984-5. Indeed there is a burning need to build a powerful industrial union throughout the energy industry, including all those working in open caste mining as well as all miners and power station workers. Sectionalism is the enemy of all workers, unity is the way ahead.

Arthur Scargill's re-election is a victory. But unless rank and file miners see to it, it could be turned into a Pyrrhic victory. His vote was down to 54% from the 70.3% he secured when first elected. The right (and this includes the former left in South Wales and Scotland) will use this. Opportunist area leaderships, where the CPGB holds considerable influence, voted against Scargill on February 1 in favour of talks with the scab UDM. But again proving that Scargill maintains a powerful rank and file base this was fortunately defeated the next day at the union's delegate conference. What is needed now is for the rank and file to organise independently of the area leaderships. The Broad Left has had its day, what miners need is an end to the politics of electoralism and a turn to the politics of class war. If Scargill supports this, rank and file militants will rightly support him.



Only the rank and file can ensure that Arthur's victory does not turn out to be pyrric

The National Union of Seamen must be defended against the High Court and the sequestration of its funds. It is vital to stand by the 161 NUS sacked by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. If seamen and the working class as a whole do not support these men, then there is a certain prospect that the bosses will press home their drive for 'rationalisation' ie job and pay cuts. Yet there is no way that the left in the NUS and the militant rank and file should trust McCluskie. He has already promised to bow before the injunction the High Court granted to Sea Link and P&O lines. His 'defiance', his refusal to act in the spirit of the High Court injunction could quickly change if faced with fines or imprisonment. His conversion to militancy is seen by many in the NUS as a ploy and could collapse at any time. The biennial NUS conference looms, and McCluskie is seeking to fend off left wing criticism. In the past five years NUS membership has declined by 30%, some reports even suggest that NUS membership only stands at 15,000. (No wonder McCluskie is seeking a merger with the NUR). In the past McCluskie has gone hand in glove with the bosses drive for 'rationalisation'. Now he has turned to 'militancy'. All militant in the union know that it could be dumped just as quickly as it was taken up. So the NUS rank and file must not place any trust in McCluskie. They must take the battle into their own hands. All effective industrial action has been made illegal by the Tories. Therefore the law must be broken. And if McCluskie and the NUS leadership refuse to lead because of fear of jail and fines then other must step forward. The rank and file need to organise all out action, set up inter-port committees, picket out non-striking ports and send delegates to Ireland and Europe. The way to fight the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and all the other job and pay cutting bosses is to make the strike 100%.

Support your paper



According to the *Morning Star* (February 2) its national readers and supporters' meeting in Birmingham was "enthused" by a report from its Glasgow *Morning Star* Youth Committee. Why? Because its 50 members were selling 45 copies of the paper every Saturday. That is 0.9 of a copy per member! Such a record might cause a stir in *Star* circles but supporters of *The Leninist* have to aim higher, far higher. We are aiming to build a party that can take on and beat the British state itself and that task is what must dictate the level of the targets we set ourselves. Our readers know this well. That is why we are pleased with the increase in bulk orders and finance. Since our last issue 10 readers have either asked for bulk orders or increased the number they have been taking. This is good and more readers should follow their splendid example. As to our £600 monthly fund, it stands at £130. We are confident that our readers will do more than the supporters of the *Morning Star* to support their paper.

THE ATTITUDE of the British left to its own preservation, security-wise, is something of a black comedy. Taking the petty bourgeois revolutionary left first of all; on the one hand you have the melodramatic school of the Workers Revolutionary Party, which under Gerry Healy accused every other grouping as being the work of CIA-MIS-KGB agents (remember the surreal *Security and the Fourth International?*). The deflated Healy even blamed the implosion of this sorry little sect, the 'fruit of his loins', on CIA agents. Fortunate indeed that he is blessed with some remaining thespians to enact this work of fantasy.

The flip-side of the coin, much more common, is an openly flagrant disregard for any pretense of security. The Socialist Workers Party is a case in point of this: easier to join than the Labour Party and with a touchingly naive trust as regards the British state.

But if the petty bourgeois revolutionary left cannot be viewed as having a 'serious' attitude to work under the capitalist state, then the fragmentary and terminally sick official communist movement is more farcical than a Dario Fo production.

Take, for instance, the 'left' Euros around that criminal waste of news print, *7 Days* who insist on printing full addresses of the correspondents in its letters page for the benefit of any Special Branch officer or ultra-right head-banger who has the patience to read the wretched thing. Its predecessor, *Focus*, was mail dropped by the Post Office after the Party Executive Committee had been good enough to hand it a complete list of Party members for the purpose.

One begins to wonder if indeed the Royal Mail is a subsidiary of the CPGB when further evidence is presented; the Student Organiser at 16 St John Street used to – and may still – mail out information in a sealed envelope, but with the logo of a large hammer and sickle under which was stamped 'Communist Student' for the benefit of any postman who could not figure out the significance of the former.

And the self-proclaimed "Marxist-Leninists" of the Communist Campaign Group blunder through every conception of security (usually *other people's!*) with gay abandon. As one example among many, one journal quotes Tom Durkin, leading CCGer and PA system on legs, as saying that the state is not interested in "communists like us", but only in people like Arthur Scargill.

In a more sinister vein than the stupidities of Mr Durkin, we recently reported CCG sage John Haylett's attempts to fit names of the writers of our paper to Leninist supporters at a CCG public meeting; a source of much amusement to the assembled centrist sheep. Pardon us for not raising a smile.

A State of Complacency?

Why do we view such behavior with mixed contempt and horror? After all, we are living in a democracy; we have the right to print our

paper and associate as we will without undue state interference. Is not *The Leninist* scare-mongering, being unduly Machiavellian?

In our humble estimation the answer must be a resolute 'no'. As communists we cannot but view the state and its appendages as our intractable enemies and take according precautions. Alongside this, if we view the attainment of socialism as entailing the violent destruction of the old order it is inevitable that this perspective will at times bring us into violating the bosses' 'law and order'.

If Wapping and the miners' Great Strike broke so many laws, imagine the misdemeanors that would be committed by the working class and its party in a revolutionary situation.

But no, say our opportunists. Ours will be an eminently *respectable* socialism. Reading from their copies of the *British Road to Socialism*, CPGB programme and 'split document' of the CCG, they proceed to 'prove' this to we poor 'ultra-leftists' and 'fundamentalists'.

These parliamentary cretins assert that the 'transition' (a nicely nebulous word) to socialism will occur peacefully, through a parliamentary process starring communist MP's (don't laugh) and left-Labourites, with a supporting cast of thousands supplied by the 'Broad Democratic Alliance extras company'.

So imagine the shock of our poor would-be cabinet ministers from both CP and CCG when the state that they want to 'transform' refuses to play ball. When right Euro and leading CNDer, John Cox, found that British Telecom was providing a more personal service than the old 'Busby' adverts promised, after discovering there was a Special Branch party on the line, both he and the CPGB Executive overflowed with righteous indignation.

Comrade Dave Cook reassured the British state, just to lay to rest this obvious confusion, that our Party is a "legal democratic organisation" and "does not indulge in subversive activity of any kind." Compare this to the attitude of the early CPGB, committed to violent revolution in theory and enacting this in their practice, such as its gun running for the IRA.

Needless to say, for all its cant about "re-establishing the CPGB on its founding principles", the CCG is no better. Shortly before being sent down after being framed by the police and courts during the Wapping strike, leading CCGer Mike Hicks was quick to assure the court that "I have never attempted to, or encouraged others to, breach the laws of our land." While Mike merits a degree of respect for his jailing during the strike, such an attitude hardly reflects the commitment to violent revolution – one of the founding principles of our CPGB.

Rather than an expression of *individual* opportunism, this is the logical outcome of the opportunist politics that have matured in our Party over the decades, reaching a full flowering in the *BRS* (in either its CCG or CPGB interpretation) and the state of collapse of today.

The reality of the state today is destroying the illusions behind which these myopic reformists hide. For decades we have seen the British state in Ireland strike out with rabid ferocity at the nationalist community in the Six Counties, from Bloody Sunday to 'shoot to kill'.

The revolutionary movement there has responded to this – whatever our criticisms of the class nature of its politics – by combining legal and illegal work and structures in its struggle against British imperialism admirably, through "the ballot box and the armalite".

Now that the lessons British imperialism has learnt in the Irish war are being brought 'home' to be used against the British working class, in Brixton, Orgreave and Wapping, there is a desperate need for the working class in Britain to develop its own version of the "ballot box and armalite" strategy (a beginning was made with the miners' and printers' hit squads).

Our struggle, complimentary – indeed *central* – to this is the forging of a communist party which can act as the general staff to

The Bolsheviks and the Comintern

For Lenin, an integral part of forging his 'party of a new type' was the attitude it took to defending its comrades from the prying eyes of police agents, arrests and so on. The Bolsheviks viewed security not as an organisational detail, an afterthought, but as a *political principle*, which was key to all Party work and at times would play a central role in determining its ability to carry out agitation and propaganda before the masses.

For instance, compare Mike Hicks in the dock to the Bolshevik's approach to the inevitable arrest of many comrades: "the Bolsheviks, when on trial, did not 'defend' themselves, but attacked ... The Bolshevik on trial was not so much expected to make a fine oration as to formulate the Party position." (S Tehernomordik, *Bolsheviks under Illegality*, pp26-7)

Lenin, in a letter on the question of trial procedure, warned of the danger of a non-Party lawyer trying to portray the Bolshevik-defendant as somehow 'peaceful' – something, Lenin said, that could not be countenanced. Compare this with Mike's spirited defence of "the laws of our land", theoretically arm and lead a combatative working class into battle, without the slightest regard for the strictures of bourgeois legality, but a party too that is able to make use of and turn against the bourgeoisie every legal opportunity they allow us.

The history of the communist movement under the leadership of Lenin, the history that our opportunists pay lip-service to but reject in practice, is rich in lessons for the development of such a party today. The ideological weapons are there, it only remains to take them up and wield them.

Still, given the nature of the Party programme he adheres to, we can say that he is at least defending his social pacifistic programme to the same extent that the Bolsheviks defended their revolutionary one.

The Bolsheviks had to wage a consistent struggle against legalistic illusions within the Russian socialist movement, especially during periods when greater opportunities for legal work were present. Although the Bolsheviks made use of every legal opportunity, pushing these to their furthest limit, they always defended the essentially *illegal* nature of their Party structures and work. Time and time again, Lenin's followers had to rebuff the legal 'Marxists'.

Far from these illegal structures limiting the work of the Party, they provided maximum flexibility for it in all conditions. During conditions of comparative 'openness' in society, legal work would be carried out mediated through the illegal structures of the Party, making the surveillance and intelligence gathering work of the Tsarist Okhrana a very unrewarding job.

For instance, A Badayev's *The Bolsheviks in the Tsarist Duma* graphically illustrates how the 'open' representatives of the Party, their fraction of Duma deputies, used this legal platform while all the time communicating secretly with the underground Central Committee, and contributing to the day-to-day illegal work of the Party. Not what the *BRS* envisages as the work of CPGB MPs in our 'Mother of Parliaments'.

When the state came down on the socialist organisations, the Bolsheviks were in a position to respond with lightning speed and maximum safety to the new conditions, unlike their legalistic cousins in the movement whose rigid 'respectable' structures would break and shatter under the lash of Tsarist repression.

Instead of seeing these organisational forms as a specifically Russian response to Russian peculiarities, Lenin and the communists in Russia generalised these lessons of their work, which culminated in the October Revolution, with the formation of the Communist International in 1919. Now such rules applied not only to communist parties working under conditions of illegality, but also to those parties who had wide legal opportunities, such as those in France, Germany and Britain.

This was systematised at the Third Congress of the Comintern. Note that this is no small question or some obscure sub-clause buried among procedural motions of a communist party. It was a major resolution of the whole Third International, for which non-compliance incurred expulsion for the offending party. For this reason it is worth quoting the relevant resolution, *On the Combination of Legal and Illegal Work*, at some length:

It briefly appraised the existing organisational state of the communist parties at that time: "Legal communist parties in the capitalist countries have, as a whole, not yet grasped fully how seriously they must work to prepare the party for the revolutionary insurrection, the armed struggle and the illegal struggle.

"The parties are not preparing for illegal work; they assume that they will be able to operate legally for a long period of time and adopt structures that meet only the requirements of the day-to-day legal struggle." (*These Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, p258)

If communist parties which formally accepted the need for insurrection, armed struggle and illegal work had not prepared sufficiently to enact it in 1921, just how insufficient to the task of revolution can be the organisations on the British left, such as the CPGB and CCG, who today reject such necessities outright?

The resolution lays down organisational principles for communist parties in 'the epoch of wars and revolutions': "every party, whether legal or illegal, should aim at the same type of party structure ... Communists must prepare for revolution in all situations and always be ready to fight, since it is often almost impossible to know in advance when the movement will grow and when there will be a period of calm. But even when it is possible to forecast struggles, the signal rarely comes in time to allow for alterations to be made in the Party organisation, since such changes in the situation usually occur very swiftly and often completely unexpectedly." (*Ibid*)

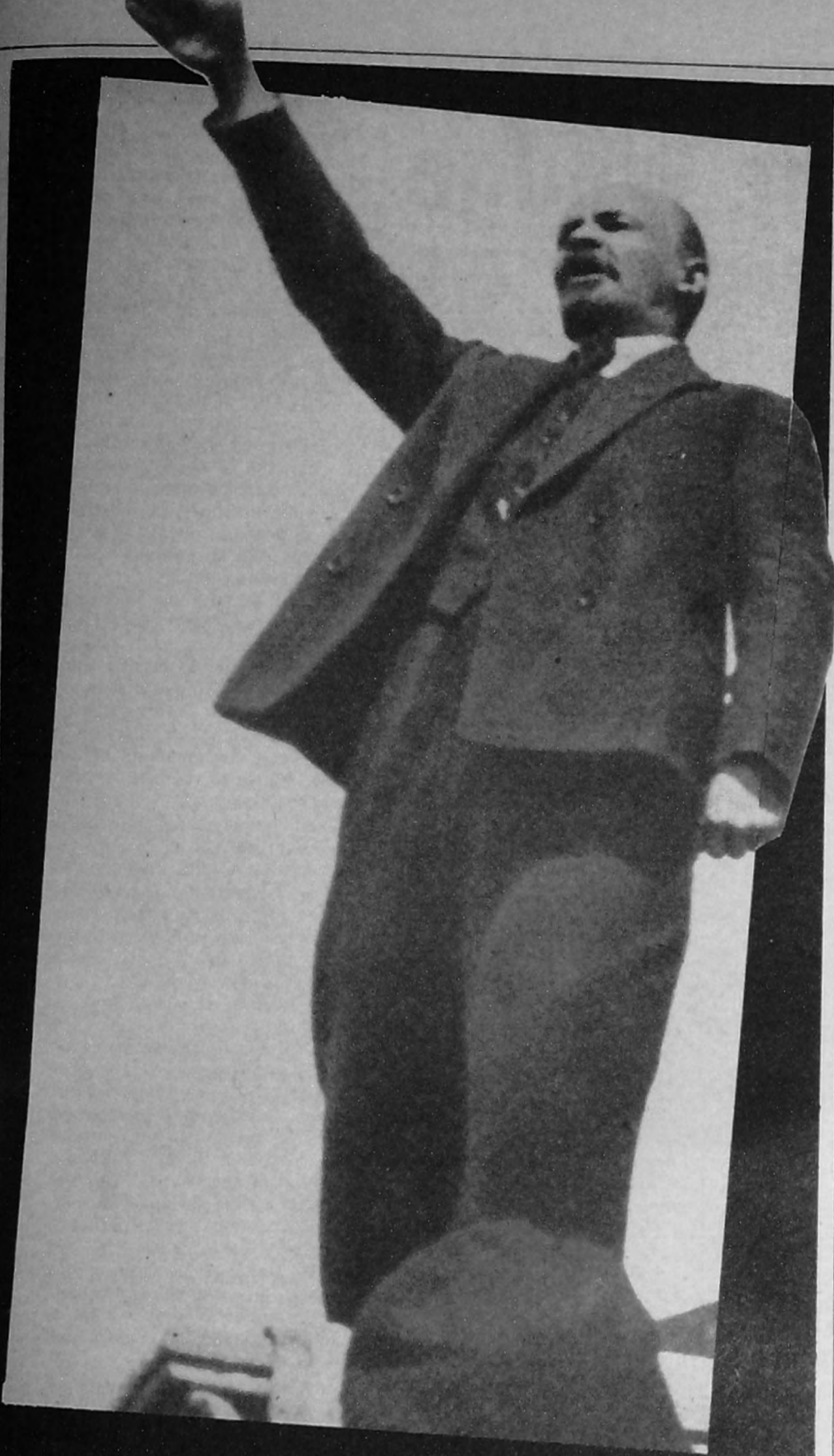
Having laid the ground, the Comintern then went on to put forward definite demands, particularly to the western European parties:

"Every legal communist party must be organised so that, should it have to go underground, it is ready and capable of continuing

Legal 'Marxism'

The Bolsheviks waged a consistent struggle against legalistic illusions, especially during periods where greater opportunities for legal work were present.

We must do the same



Mike Hicks might "never have urged anyone to break the law of the land", but not Lenin

was not so vulnerable to the illusions of the CPGB or CPUSA. Had it been so there can be little doubt that today Vietnam would still be under the heel of imperialism.

Recent history – and current struggles – provide us with examples of the disastrous consequences of such opportunist contempt for revolutionary work, bred from illusions in bourgeois legality. Take for instance the case of the Tudeh Party (the 'official' communist party) of Iran.

Much myth has been created around this organisation in the communist movement in Britain: that Tudeh played an honourable and vanguard role in the 1979 revolution and subsequently, and that today it is in the forefront of resistance to the regime. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Tudeh slavishly tailed the Khomeini regime well into 1983 and it had been suppressing workers' and revolutionary organisations since the 1979 revolution.

These 'legal Marxists' played the role of recruiting sergeant to the Islamic Republic in its reactionary war against Iraq, suppressed workers' independent action and acting as apologist for the regime's aggression against the internal colony of Kurdistan, denouncing Kurdish freedom fighters as "counterrevolutionary bands".

What they and their allied organisation, the Fedaii (Majority), also did was to finger revolutionaries and militant workers to the reactionary regime of the Ayatollahs, handing them over to their torture chambers and scaffolds.

The Fedaii (Majority)'s central organ, *Kar*, in a Central Committee communiqué resulting from the Iranian Peoples Mojahadeen failed insurrection against the regime instructed its members and supporters to "hold under observation the movements of the network of the hirelings of US imperialism [read 'revolutionaries' – AM] and inform the pasdar army and the organisation of any information they may obtain of their criminal designs and plans." (my emphasis)

After delivering revolutionaries into the hands of the regime, they then proceeded to deny that there was any occurrence of torture in Khomeini's jails! That is, until they had served their purpose for the regime and the repressive weapons of the theocracy that they had helped sharpen were turned against them.

The openness with which they had worked, so cravenly, alongside the ayatollahs made it easy to arrest the Tudeh and Majority cadre and rank and file once the regime had decided to do so. Such crass opportunism has thrown them into profound crisis, with both organisations riddled with factions. Both they and their apologists in the communist movement in Britain must not be allowed to forget that their hands are drenched with the blood of Iranian revolutionaries.

Their opportunist blood brothers in Turkey have the same stench. For years the 'official' United Communist Party of Turkey and its precursor, the Mensheviks of the Communist Party of Turkey, have been trying to weedle themselves into a situation where the Turkish bourgeoisie will legalise their party. To facilitate this, especially of late, they have been putting themselves forward as 'respectable' and eminently patriotic.

The basis for this was laid in the late '70s when, in the middle of a revolutionary situation, one of the Mensheviks' key demands was 'legalise the CPT'. The Leninists of the CPT (now the CPT itself) laid to rest this opportunist confusion and squandering of revolutionary potentiality in a resolution at their second conference in 1981: "it is inevitable that a party which is revolutionary not just on paper should be essentially illegal, independently of the formal legal opportunities existing in the country."

"Legality should not be considered the opposite of illegality. Legality is the state in which the bourgeoisie has chosen not to prosecute for the moment ... Secrecy and openness must not be confused with illegality and legality. Both legal and illegal party work comprise varying degrees of overt and covert activity ..."

"Within the framework of historical materialism, the limits of the demands for freedom made by communist parties which have not yet carried out their revolution, are the freedom to make revolution." (Second Conference of the Leninists of the CPT, Resolutions, pp73-6).

The resolution makes clear that illegal or legal in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, so long as the party rests on the principles and method of Marxism-Leninism, this freedom is inalienable. It then goes on to put this into the context of the opportunist practice of the then CPT leadership: "The distorted understanding of freedom is reflected in the Third Programme

of the CPT ... What it proposes is, not the smashing of the state, but the purging of fascists and reactionaries." (p75) Is this not in essence exactly what the BRS proposes?

The resolution concludes: "The Second Conference of the Leninists of the CPT rejects the slogan, 'Freedom to the CPT', as a symbol of opportunism for the following reasons:

"1. It is a liquidationist slogan which repudiates the raison d'être of the party and deprives it of its revolutionary content ..."

"3. It equated freedom with legality and spread legalist consciousness. It belittled the illegal organisational inevitability necessitated by the revolutionary situation ..."

"5. The convening of this conference under illegal conditions, the free discussion of problems of the revolution and the adopting of decisions, is the most perfect confirmation of the freedom of the CPT." (pp76-7)

The Leninist comrades of the CPT have been proven right by the development of legalism and opportunism in the officials and through the official party's liquidation into the UCPT along with the petty bourgeois reformist Workers Party of Turkey.

The opportunists within Turkey have shown themselves every bit as ready as the Tudeh 'pasdar stooges' to set up genuine communists in their rightward rush. In 1979 the Mensheviks pinned a list of *Iscinin Sesi* (paper of the Leninists) supporters on the notice board of a Turkish college, setting them up for attack by fascist gangs and the state – attacks which meant imprisonment, torture and death.

In the same year, the Menshevik's radio station, *Voice of the CPT* went as far as to read out the names of *Iscinin Sesi* supporters. It is interesting to note that these worshippers of legality and respectability have recently closed this station in the interests of "national unity".

Recently, at a state funeral of WPT leader, Behice Bohran, the UCPT stewards pointed out supporters of the CPT to the police, leading to the arrest of our comrades. There have been many other occurrences of a similar nature. A proud tradition indeed!

It is incumbent on the CPT and revolutionary communists in Iran to raise the proud banner of communism from the filth that Tudeh and the UCPT have dragged it through.

Britain: the way forward

If this is a pressing task for communists in Turkey and Iran, it is no less so for communists in Britain. The opportunist specimens ranged against us are no more pleasant, and indeed no less potentially dangerous, than those in Turkey and Iran, with whom they eagerly associate.

We shall return to Haylett's foul behaviour here: his flippant attitude as regards the organisational integrity of revolutionary tendencies can so easily have the same repercussions as have his foreign comrades' malevolent and reactionary actions.

As the above quoted Comintern resolution made abundantly clear, conditions even in the most 'stable' bourgeois democracy can swiftly change to those of utter turmoil. When – not if – this happens, not only will opportunist buffoons such as he, and their social-democratised organisations, be easily wiped out with a mere flick of one of the state's fingers but they put themselves forward to furnish the bosses with any other information at their disposal.

Durkin may find that the state may be more interested in Scargill than he. He will also find out that the state's attitude to genuine communists – not social democrats swathed in (fading) red flags like him – is somewhat different.

Haylett and his ilk should not be trusted. The practice of his style of opportunism world-wide has lined up revolutionaries for repression, jail and death. We do not intend to see this happen to us.

We are well aware that Britain will at some time be plunged into revolutionary crisis; a crisis which will depend for its positive resolution on the maturity and effectiveness of the Communist Party. That rests on the Party's ability to make its own the past experience of our world movement and present developments – both positively, as in the case of the comrades of the CPT, and negatively, as with Tudeh.

One thing is certain: the CCG and its future manifestation as a 'party' cannot learn these lessons and fulfil that role. It is up to the one thing that can, *The Leninist*, to clear the ground for such a Party.

Alan Merrick

its struggle. In particular, it must be prepared to respond to outbursts of revolutionary activity ... The party as a whole must become a military organisation fighting for revolution." (Ibid, p259, emphasis in the original).

By this is meant, not some Red Brigade type structure, but a party that can respond, through iron military-style discipline, to the requirements of the revolutionary struggle, whether it be electorally or through armed struggle and revolutionary insurrection. Does anybody believe that either Gordon McLennan or Tony Chater (or, for that matter, Tony Cliff) are leading "military organisations fighting for revolution" of this type? We think not.

Although not entirely successfully, the CPGB during the 'twenties fought to apply these principles of communist organisation to their party working in British conditions. It was such communist determination, such a serious approach to their role and duties as revolutionaries, that when applied allowed the Party to remain in the forefront of the 1926 General Strike, even after the arrest of most of the Central Committee.

The fact that no organisation during the 1984-5 Great Strike incurred the bosses' wrath to any extent is indicative not only of the CPGB's demise as a revolutionary party, but the lack of any alternative on the left to step forward and take its place.

International application and degeneration

Since the revolutionary years of the 1920s the Communist International suffered death by a thousand centrist cuts. Organisation is not independent from politics, but dependent on them, so it is to be expected that centrist degeneration would have repercussions on the structure of communist parties. We only need

look at the 1930s and '40s to see this.

During the struggle for popular fronts – what our centrists and many Euros view as the 'golden age' – communists stood shoulder to shoulder with their 'own' ruling class, and of course this could not but lead to the abandonment of illegal work and militant activity. (The CPGB wound up the National Unemployed Workers Movement, for instance, to appear as 'respectable' anti-fascists first, communists second).

Communists now stood under their own national flags – literally: there are plenty of pictures around showing marches of the French party with the tricolour at their head, or CPGB meetings with the platform draped in the Union Jack, both imperialist flags drenched in the blood of millions of subject colonial peoples.

The CPGB, which as we said, had once assisted in running guns to the IRA, now condemned it for taking James Connolly's advice and making "Britain's difficulty Ireland's opportunity", and continuing their struggle for national freedom while imperialist Britain was engaged in an 'anti-fascist' war (or so it said) with imperialist Germany.

The legalistic illusions sown in this period bore fruit in the post war period. For instance, after cheerleading US imperialism and 'moderating' its politics accordingly during the war years, the CPUSA under the leadership of Earl Browder liquidated itself into an 'education college', seeing no need to organise to smash such a 'democratic' state. Even the Communist Party of South Africa followed suit. As a result, militants from both parties were forced to undergo a painful struggle to refound their parties.

This situation affected different parties to different degrees, varying in accordance with the harshness of objective conditions and the intransigence and talent of some leaders. The Communist Party in Vietnam, needless to say,



UNEMPLOYED Thin End of the Wedge



The unemployed will be expected to work for their dole. The UWC say frght back now!

The fat cat bureaucrats who sit on top of the trade union movement first and foremost look to the preservation of their own privileges. They long for a return to the days of beer and sandwiches in Number Ten that they enjoyed up to Thatcher's election.

But they have been driven from quango after quango in recent years as the Tories have gone for straight class confrontation against workers. One of the last bastions of cosy collaboration that these traitors are still allowed to cling to has been the Manpower Services Commission. The price for this is to sell the unemployed and their own membership down the river. And this they do willingly, with precious few exceptions.

The Tories have pursued their class war quite admirably. Their policy has been the time honoured military tactic of divide and rule, by a resolute ideological struggle against the flabby reformist misleaders of our class, dividing it economically by creaming off an upper stratum of well off working class 'Thatcherites'.

The unemployed are now under a constant barrage of assaults by the bosses, who pick their time to take on one section of the working class at a time, as suits them, from miners to health workers, with the trade union and Labour Party leaderships playing their part as a fifth column in the workers movement.

Obviously, we cannot rely on the misleaders of the workers' movement to provide a strategy for resistance to the state's renewed offensive against sections of the unemployed. It is very much the thin end of the wedge, with the state taking on the most disorganised section of the proletariat, grinding it down further and further, and in doing so using it to weaken the organised workers. The Kinnocks, Willises and Todds of this world are hand in glove with the Tories here.

We must chart our own line of march against these attacks. What they pose is the need for workers' organisation around independent working class politics. In particular unemployed organisation.

The Unemployed Workers Charter, established by *The Leninist*, campaigns towards this end, fighting both to organise unemployed workers and mobilise them jointly with employed workers on a platform that fights for what workers need, not what the bosses' system can afford. We need work at trade union rates or full maintenance for the unemployed - precisely the demand for which the communist led National Unemployed Workers Movement of the '20s and '30s mobilised hundreds of thousands of workers.

The UWC is not interested in 'bishops to brickies' style class collaboration on a 'respectable' platform. It wants action and results. In January a group of UWC supporters disrupted parliament's 'debate' on Clause Four of the Social Security Bill with slogans and leaflets. We plan more activity to build to defeat the attacks on the rights of the unemployed.

But to defeat them the ideas of militant class struggle in defence of those rights, as argued by the UWC, must reach and activate many more workers, employed and unemployed. The next issue of the UWC paper, *Unemployed Organiser*, will hit the streets soon. Buy it, sell it and use its politics as a political weapon.

David Rhys
Secretary UWC

Unemployed Organiser No.2 30p (including p&p)
Orders over five 15p each - no charge for postage

"Toys threaten capitalism because they promote skills which can be directed to its overthrow and because they unmask its true nature." Just a snatch from a pretentious little article which argues for "conscious adults" to "break the destruction patterns" and "create new agendas for the toys." ... "Ah, what a bore Marxism Today is nowadays," our readers no doubt sigh. True, but this piece comes from the latest issue of *Communist*, the Straight Leftists' 'hard face'.

Eric Trevett, general secretary of the live-wire New Communist Party launched a drive for funds in the *New Worker* of January 29. In fact, Eric reveals that so cash-strapped is the poor old NCP, that it can only scrape together enough shekels to employ 15 full-timers! Oddly enough though, on the recent Bloody Sunday demonstration in London, the NCP contingent actually numbered 10! Where, we wonder, were the other five professional NCPers...?

What a bunch of right-test drips the Proletarian sectlet are! On the recent Bloody Sunday demonstration in London a Prolet told a Leninist that our chant of "What do we want? Troops Out! How we gonna get it? Class War!" was "typically leftist!" Proletarian on the other hand showed the way to us wild-eyed leftists with a stirring example of revolutionary stoicism; which is a polite way of saying the twerps shambled in silence from the march's beginning to its end.

The Workers Power group, a small Trot organisation currently squelching around on the left of the Labour Party, took a reasonably principled attitude to the IRA's Enniskillen bombing, refusing to join most of the rest of the British left in condemning it. Now Workers Power has a clone in Ireland, the Irish Workers' Group. In No.3 of the IWG's *Class Struggle*, the editorial states that the organisation "unreservedly condemns" Enniskillen. We would suggest that if a split is not on the cards, then clearly one should be.

As Marx said it is not the 90 workers within the factory gates which dictate their wages, but rather the ten who stand without

GOVERNMENT statistics tell us that, overall, the standard of living is still rising. 'Overall', they're probably right. The bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the working class are undoubtedly better off, even with the demise of the much vaunted 'share owning peoples' capitalism' with 'Black Monday' in October 1987, when the shares plummeted.

The Tories have not won elections on the basis of Margaret Thatcher's endearing charm but on their ability both to beat their adversaries ideologically and to provide a material basis for 'Toryism', not only within the middle class, but also the working class.

Obviously, this overall picture is in sharp contrast to the situation of a section, large and growing, of the working class which is being crushed financially and seeing what little rights it has eroded.

This section of the working class, in general terms, is the section which has least to lose. For instance, low paid workers, the nurses being a well publicised case at the moment. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers, encompassing many working class youth, are being forced to the wall. A report in the *Financial Times* of January 4 indicates a large-scale increase in the income gap in British society, with the lowest 20% considerably worse off.

Possibly the hardest hit stratum of the working class is the unemployed. As British capitalism slid further into crisis through the 'seventies and into the 'eighties, it has tried to claw its way back to profitability on the backs of, to a very large extent, the unemployed.

This is done through what are laughingly known as 'government training schemes', initiated by the Callaghan Labour government in the late 'seventies as the Youth Opportunity Programme, as *The Times*, that great champion of workers' rights, described it at the time as a combined cheap labour scheme and anti-riot device.

Under the Tories this has been superseded by the Youth Training Scheme, Job Training Scheme and others. The duration of the youth 'scheme', by whatever name, has

been extended from six months to two years and expanded numerically.

The function is obvious. We are not, as is said, being trained for a labour market which is changing in accordance with developing technology. The labour market is being 'modified' not in the interests of the silicon chip but in the interests of capitalist profitability. This is done through intimidation of employed workers through greater numbers of unemployed (jobs are no longer 'safe', workers can be 'replaced'). As Marx said, it is not the 90 workers within the factory gates which dictate their wages, but rather the ten who stand without.

The YTS *et al* also force the unemployed into jobs which pay little more than benefit, thus hiking up capitalist profitability. So it is obviously in the interests of the bosses to hike up the strength of their attacks on the unemployed. And in 1988 this looks like happening as never before.

One of the delights aimed at the unemployed by the bosses is the new Social Security Bill going through parliament at the moment. Tucked in among the clauses on sick pay and various fringe benefits - all of which 'amendments' are not very beneficial for any worker, young or old - is 'Clause Four'. This clause withdraws the right to benefit from 16-18 year olds (albeit with a few minor exceptions) and dragoons unemployed youth onto these cheap, and often dangerous, schemes. If you don't work for peanuts, you don't eat.

And its not just unemployed youth who are getting it in the neck. Adult unemployed are also going to feel the Tories twist the knife between their ribs in the growing squeeze for profits. The government plans to introduce a new 'adult training scheme'.

This is modelled on the US 'workfare' work-for-dole type scheme and will create 620,000 'training places' every year. This breaks down into three sections: firstly, everyone of the 225,000 people between 18 and 24 who have been claiming benefit for between six and twelve months will

be forced onto the scheme; secondly, 150,000 people claiming benefit between 18 to 50 will suffer the same fate and lastly 170,000 unemployed workers will be forced onto the successor to the Community Programme.

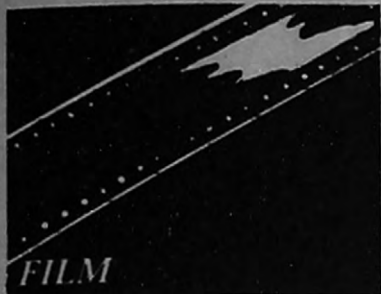
The level of pay - if you can call it that - will be about £10 on top of previous benefit, with the schemes lasting on average for six months. And back to the dole queues after, of course. Again, here, as the *Financial Times* points out, there is no escape: "anyone who refuses to apply for or accept a place on an approved training scheme without good cause can be disqualified from unemployed benefit for six months, or have their entitlement to supplementary benefit reduced by 40 per cent." (January 5 1988).

So much for the government's claim that such a scheme would be voluntary! In reality these schemes actually increase unemployment and decrease the aggregate standard of living of the working class, quite apart from undermining trade union rights. The employer, instead of having to pay out the trade union rate for the job, whatever this may be, need only now pay out £25 a week to the government.

Put yourself in his (and it almost always is a he) place: who do you employ? The cut price government supplied 'trainee' of course. So in reality unemployment increases even faster in the interests of the bosses' profitability.

Given the fact that this situation - the massive expansion in unemployed based cheap labour schemes - means a general attack on the rights of employed workers, at first glance you would expect the TUC to be incensed at the prospect, even from the narrow sectional perspective of guarding the conditions of their own individual unions.

Those who have seen the TUC bureaucracy brown-nose the government time and time again as their own rank and file and the unemployed go to the wall will not be surprised at the TUC's reaction to the latest round of attacks. Its education and training committee on January 11 voted in support of the proposed introduction of the new scheme in September.



Biko

Cry Freedom Richard Attenborough (Director)

BOB GELDOLF says it is "Perhaps the most caring film I've ever seen". *Time Out* agreed. It is "political film at its best". And if that is not enough to put you off, the fact that it is directed by big SDP buddy Richard Attenborough is not likely to send our readers rushing to their local cinema.

Older communists will certainly find some irony in the title *Cry Freedom* when recalling *The Angry Silence* which Attenborough co-produced and starred in.

He played a scab in this 1960 virulently anti-communist film sent to 'Coventry' by his work-mates for refusing to take part in an unofficial strike. They and the strike are manipulated by a nasty cold-blooded communist infiltrator, played by Alfred (Frank 'Public Eye' Marker) Burke. The Economic League loved it.

Now Attenborough is a friend of the South African revolution! Not likely!

He is firmly in the camp which rightly fears a far reaching and genuine revolution in South Africa. He certainly fears the effects a working class led revolution would have on his beloved Britain. Indeed, towards the end of the film there is a plea for a 'moderate' future black leadership of South Africa - "God, I hope it's the likes of Steve Biko", one of the good guy characters says. He is really saying, "God, I hope they're not nasty cold-blooded communist infiltrators." This is Attenborough speaking.

For all that, *Cry Freedom* is an important film, worth seeing and capable of keeping the South African revolution in the public eye at a time of difficulties. It will certainly have a huge audience, bigger by far than any anti-apartheid demonstration. We must criticise it but not dismiss it.

The detentions and repression under the state of emergency have bitten hard into the revolutionary forces and there has been a downturn on the industrial front.

At the moment, the major struggle is within the black population. Buthelezi and his reactionary Inkatha movement are acting as an enemy within. The townships around Pietermaritzburg in Natal - a stronghold of the UDF - have become a battleground between blacks. It cannot be denied that such a struggle (and naturally we fully support the UDF against Inkatha) creates confusion in British minds - something the mass media in this country do everything to encourage, nothing to clarify.

For instance, on Sunday January 31 Buthelezi was given time on Channel Four (described as the moderate Black leader) to voice his reactionary bile. He was able to pose as an opponent of the apartheid regime, and as such he praised how "statesmanlike" Thatcher had been over the sanctions issue. Is he the sort that Attenborough hopes to see leading South Africa someday? As much as he would deny it, this is the logic

of his liberal politics. We must make this clear.

Without falling into the vortex of doom and despair which has sucked down so many anti-apartheid activists, we must recognise that the level of solidarity with South Africa in our country is not high, to say the least. Correct politics are vital along with solid ground.

When the South African revolution takes its next, potentially decisive, upswing, the call for direct assistance, for workers' sanctions in this country, must find a mass response. Some believe this film can do the job. Without dismissing it out of hand, we do not agree.

Frankly its major problem lies in its insipid liberalism. Its attempts to weld together two personal stories which have increasingly less and less in common is a mirror image of Attenborough's belief that the white liberal bourgeoisie has common interests with the black working class masses. They do not.

If you know that Donald Woods did get out of South Africa and did get his books published and help make this film, your interest is unlikely to be held by the long, long escape sequence taking up most of the second half of the film. But Attenborough's film is more than an adventure story. Alongside the highly personal adventure story of a rich white liberal family there is another story altogether different which portrays life in the townships in the period leading to the Soweto massacre of 1976.

For all his concern for the squalid conditions in the townships, his disgust at police terror and his hopes for a just future, Attenborough has no understanding that the masses, not well meaning individuals, make history. He keeps politics to a minimum by ending the film at the very point when the revolutionary situation exploded into life - Soweto 1976.

Indeed, any mass gatherings, such as Biko speaking surreptitiously at a football match, but especially his funeral, are portrayed with an incredible lack of any sense of the black masses' militancy and burning revolutionary spirit.

There are two big set piece sequences of state violence topping and tailing the film. They are brilliant film. Unfortunately they are moving in a sentimental way. We should be moved to anger rather than pity. Thus the shooting of hundreds of children at the film's close is chilling, sending you out numbed rather than angry.

The presentation, at the very beginning of the film, of life in the Crossroads settlement is also brilliant film but again the masses are presented merely as victims, not the potential makers of history. Their shackles are torn apart, the brutality of the security forces terrorises and again we are meant to feel pity, not anger.

In contrast to Biko, Donald Woods, the film's central figure, comes across as incredibly naive. Although this is surprising considering his position as editor of a major liberal bourgeois newspaper, it may not be far from the truth.

One of the major successes of the South African regime has been its ability to keep the white minority living in blissful ignorance of life in the townships. Obviously most of Woods' friends have an interest in keeping their eyes closed. But, as we know, this has become increasingly more difficult as the revolutionary situation has developed and drawn all classes and strata into the whirlpool. In Attenborough's film Woods' awakening is accidental, not the result of profound socio-political developments.

The presentation of incredible opulence in which whites live, on a par with anything you may have seen in the movie star life style of Beverley Hills, shows very clearly the gulf between the minority and majority in South Africa. Their love of the country and fear of losing their hold on it is a love of privilege. For Attenborough, this excuses the Africans' intransigent attitudes. Attenborough clearly identifies with them.

This is no slander. Every white of British origin is presented as a reasonable chap who would love to see the end of Apartheid - from the judge at Biko's trial, who nods a lot in agreement with him, to the representative of the British High Commission, who helps Woods escape because "any friend of Steve Biko's is a friend of ours."

In fact, all except the police chiefs and their henchmen are portrayed as willing to change, but seemingly in a state of paralysis when it comes to confronting the irrational institutions of Apartheid.

The film's attempt to reconcile the interests of these nice chaps, ie South African capitalism, to the aspirations of the black masses inevitably fails because the two are irreconcilable.

Gavin Kyle



Muddle and Marxism

Marxism in the USA - from 1870 to the present day. Paul Buhle, Verso 1987, pp299, £8.95

WHEN IT WAS dissolved, the International Working Men's Association, the First International, had its headquarters in New York. Today the capitalist country with the best educated and the largest number of proletarians is the USA.

In spite of this Marxism has proved unable to gain supremacy in the US workers' and progressive movement. Indeed, far from producing a mass bourgeois workers' party, like the Labour Party in Britain, US workers have tailed the Democrats and the Republicans. Because of the ability of imperialism to create a massive labour aristocracy, because of a pervasive pro-capitalist ideology and state sponsored terror, revolutionary groups exist on the margins of US political life. Even here separatist, idealist and metaphysical ideologies have held sway.

Buhle himself, being a product of the 1960s 'new left', values highly the "freakish conglomerates" which have resulted, seeing Marxism as one strand in a creative ongoing development of ideas, and criticising as dogmatist or sectarian anyone who fights for scientific theoretical accuracy.

He is sympathetic to the illusions of generations of petty bourgeois radicals, but cannot explain their failure. He admits that each generation, including his own, makes "historically inevitable" mistakes (p1).

What he does not accept is that, using the science of dialectical and

historical materialism, a revolutionary party can transcend the socially and economically determined personal and subjective limitations of individuals like Buhle.

Through mastering the laws of development a Party can construct a strategy which, if the working class is won to accept its leadership, can transform it from a class in itself into a class for itself (a potential ruling class). Buhle's book makes no contribution to this.

What should we expect from a writer claiming to be a Marxist historian? Firstly, as a minimum, some sort of an account of events. Although Buhle's book claims to be "brimming over with historical detail" the limited information it contains needs to be disentangled from his preconceptions and pretentious intellectual jargon.

Secondly, we expect a clear materialist analysis of the causes and consequences of events, in the framework of the transition of the world from capitalism to communism. We need an examination of the role and effect of imperialist bribery in making the US working class so conservative. We need a serious study of the constant waves of immigration, the unparalleled mobility of the labour force as well as the marginal position which revolutionary groups have in the US labour movement. This is almost entirely lacking.

The book is confusing precisely because Buhle fails to interpret his subject in the context of historical development. Instead, his book is an apology for a diversity of radical groups who "implied without ever adequately stating that Marxist ideas had a place in American life." (p178)

The third thing we expect from such a book is an insight into how leaders and militant activists - from the International Worker's of the World to the Black Panthers - interpreted the world, their successes and failures, what they were striving for and what lessons they hold for those committed to the struggle for socialism in the heartland of world imperialism.

In this, at least, we would expect an author like Buhle to have a lot to contribute, especially since in gathering material for the book he interviewed numerous veterans of American Marxism.

In fact, the book is very patchy. Buhle's own world view often obscures that of the people he writes about. Events which do not fit in with his world view are dealt with briefly if at all. Although he does finally have the honesty to admit that "the non-dogmatists", like himself, "had no better answers when the political lights went out." (p257)

His 'new left' prejudice against

any kind of structured organisation is evident throughout. When the Communist Party of the USA was a loose conglomeration of uncoordinated 'ethnocentric' groups literally speaking different languages, he approves. When a centre attempts to impose some kind of discipline and unity, he is offended.

This is symptomatic of one who has given up all hope of transforming the world, and retreated to the ultimately hopeless search for "cultural, personal, solutions" (p186). Hence he condemns 'Leninists' for heavy handed suppression of ethnic fractions but he can justify his own rather condescending admiration of ethnic culture only by his own preference.

The chapter on the New Left gives a certain insight into the motives and actions of his generation of petty bourgeois student radicals. Everything is clear except why he and they claimed to be Marxists.

At different points he states that they found the distinctions between historical materialists and idealists "outmoded" and "uninteresting" (p219); that they "purposely counterposed" "participatory democracy" "as an organisational principle" "to the 'bureaucratic' Old Left ideal of democratic centralism" (p231); and that their Marxism lacked the elements of economic crisis and working class combativeness.

As he says, what motivated them was, in fact "surely a religious idea", the "ubiquitous 'peace and love' sentiment". (p222). Certainly the 'revolutionary' upsurge in the USA during the late 1960s was a direct product of the anti-war movement. Yet, for all the NLF flags and Ho...Ho...Ho Chi Minh chanting in the name of 'love', the rebellious youth were also indulging in very un-revolutionary hedonistic practices. They were not organising against capitalism but "the tyranny of the alarm clock and the paycheck". (p6)

Failure to grasp the need for ideological clarity and the necessity for Leninist party organisation meant that their rebellion quickly fizzled out along with their organisations. All that is left is a middle aged, middle class memory of the joys of a mispent youth.

It is understandable but regrettable that radicals in the US, like Buhle, can and do pass themselves off as Marxists. It says everything about the poverty of theory that exists in that great country and nothing whatsoever about Marxism. Buhle's book is in reality the muddled ramblings of a confused radical. A history of Marxism in the USA still waits to be written.

Mary Goodwin

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If Soviet armed forces are withdrawn the forces of counterrevolution, and their imperialist backers, will have scored a major victory. The forces of progress will have suffered a major reverse

Afghanistan: no sellout!

SOVIET foreign minister Shevardnadze, has offered to begin the pull out of all Soviet forces from Afghanistan starting on May 1. What a way to mark international workers' day! A Soviet withdrawal under present conditions can only be considered a sellout of the Afghan Revolution and a betrayal of communism.

True, a Soviet withdrawal has not happened yet. But it is on the cards. Precisely because of this, now is the time to speak openly. Afghanistan is in the front line of the struggle against reaction and imperialism. Until the forces of counterrevolution are crushed, until they represent no danger to the gains of the 1978 Saur (April) Revolution, there should be no talk about a Soviet withdrawal. Shevardnadze should be told in no uncertain terms: Afghanistan – no sellout!

Proletarian internationalism demands this. True proletarian internationalism, as opposed to diplomatic internationalism of toadies at the top of organisations like the NCP, Straight Left and the CCG, will not hail treachery.

Recalling the humiliation of the US in Vietnam, Soviet officials are quoted as saying: "We will leave Afghanistan, but we will not leave clinging to the skids of helicopters lifting off the roof of our embassy." Maybe, but clearly the Gorbachev leadership has in mind a Vietnam in reverse.

The Afghan Revolution is considered reversible and desertable. There have even been suggestions that the monarchy – overthrown in a palace coup in 1973 – will be restored. This is totally counter to the spirit of communism. Moreover Soviet troops and citizens might well retreat in good order but can the same be said of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan? Frankly, no! Whatever deal is concocted with the reactionary Zia and his imperialist backers all PDPA members and supporters are being placed in mortal danger.

The forces of counterrevolution shoot communists on sight. These barbarians take no prisoners. Without Soviet troops how long will an internationally agreed interim government last? Months or weeks? How long will the forces of reaction take to seek out and exterminate the 'infidels'? No wonder there have been rumours of plans to uproot the entire PDPA membership and resettle them in Uzbekistan or one of the other Soviet central Asian republics.

This might save the PDPA membership but not the gains of the Saur Revolution. Women will be re-enslaved, all working class organisations, such as trade unions, will be destroyed and a new Iran, ruled by reactionaries and clerics, will emerge from the chaos. Abandoning the Afghan people to such a fate is criminal. These are harsh words. Neverthe-

less they have to be said.

The Soviet Union has no right to horse trade the Afghan revolution. It is a living revolution, not a piece of real estate. The Afghan Revolution was not facilitated by the presence of the Soviet Army. The revolution was the work of Afghan revolutionaries organised in the *Khalqi* wing of the PDPA. A proletarian dictatorship was established through local daring and initiative. The *Khalqi* won power, they were not given it.

The Afghan Revolution was a great victory for the world's working class. It lit a flame which pointed the way forward for the working people of all backward capitalist countries. In its own long term interests the Soviet Union should continue its defence of this gain of the world revolution. And given its enemies it certainly needs the most determined and selfless defence.

The opportunist leaders of socialist China, the imperialists of the US and Britain, have joined their bloody hands with the equally bloody hands of Khomeini and Zia in an attempt to strangle the infant Afghan Revolution. Thanks to this unholy alliance and the lucrative heroin trade the forces of counterrevolution are awash with money and possess the most advanced light weaponry.

Groups in Britain such as the SWP, *Socialist Organiser*, the WRP and the RCP have refused to unconditionally defend the Afghan Revolution against the forces of reaction. This shows they are trapped in a reactionary Little England rut. Such sects pay lip service to world revolution but turn their backs on its living reality.

Afghanistan stands in the front line of the world revolution. Because of this it is beholden on all internationalists to stand four square with it in its life and death struggle with imperialism and black reaction. Those who refuse to do so should be branded with infamy, if not a bullet.

A convenient fig leaf for abstentionism has been found through dismissing the Afghan revolution as little more than a "Third World coup". This arrogant chauvinistic nonsense is, of course, a cynical self-serving lie.

A military or palace coup reflects a struggle within the existing state, not a struggle against it. The term 'coup', in the scientific sense, should only be used when dealing with an insurrection launched by a narrow circle of conspirators or a bunch of stupid romantics. Such attempts can only leave the masses left in passivity.

A genuine revolution can, it is true, take the outward form of a coup. Obviously revolutionary ideas can gain considerable influence in, say, the armed forces, from which certain elements can seize the leadership of a living revolution.

This is what happened when in 1952 the Free Officer movement

and Nassar led the overthrow of the British backed king in Egypt, and in Ethiopia where the army struck the final blow against the wobbling Haile Salasie regime and installed the Derg in power. Although these revolutions took the form of army coups they were, for all their non-proletarian lineage.

The revolution in Afghanistan was not, though, led by petty bourgeois forces. There was a genuine working class vanguard party, the PDPA. This separates the Afghan Revolution from revolutions like those in Egypt and Ethiopia. Like the Mongolian Revolution of 1921 it must be put into the same category as the October Revolution (which was itself dismissed as a coup by a whole gabble of petty bourgeois dilettantes).

The proof of the pudding was in the make up of the revolutionary government – it was headed by Tarakki, the Party's general secretary, and besides him the overwhelming majority of the first Revolutionary Council consisted of Party members. To call the Afghan Revolution a coup is to call the October Revolution a coup.

The *Khalqi* forces in the PDPA, like the Bolsheviks, organised sympathetic sections of the army as the cutting edge of the revolution. On April 27 1979 an insurrection was launched on the instructions of Hafizullah Amin, one of the main leaders of the Party, according to a plan he had previously worked out within the *Khalqi* wing of the PDPA.

The plan worked. The revolution smashed the old state and ushered in a new order, a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin said that after a revolution the forces of reaction intensify their efforts "tenfold", he also said that "not a single great revolution in history has taken place without civil war." (CW Vol 26 pp 118-9) This is a profound truth. Because the Afghan revolution was a genuine revolution the forces of reaction, the aristocratic tribal leaders, the bourgeoisie and the clergy flung themselves into launching a bloody civil war. They had nothing to lose, everything to regain.

For communists there can be no question of surrender in the face of counterrevolution. What must be done is to win the civil war using all the possibilities that state power offers the proletariat.

During the bitter civil war in Russia following the October Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not entertain any notion whatsoever of handing back power to either the Tsarists or the bourgeoisie. They expropriated the expropriators, gave the land to the tillers and organised the commanding heights of the economy to supply the heroic Red Army with the wherewithal to crush White Terror with Red Terror.

This was the programme of Amin – the true leader of the revolution. After the removal of Tarakki and with Amin at the helm,

true there were some centrist waverings and unprincipled compromises but no talk of surrender. Like the October Revolution, the Afghan Revolution introduced sweeping socio-economic changes; all important industry was nationalised, land reform was organised and the social standing of women was given a tremendous boost with literacy classes and a ban on the selling of brides.

Those who say that these changes went too far, too fast, only betray their own opportunist cowardice. If anything it was the other way round. The pace of change was too slow. The revolution had to move fast if it was to win the loyalty of the peasantry which made up the majority of the population.

As to the charge that the revolution was too violent, this is pious moralising. Revolution is not a game. The PDPA had to reply to counterrevolutionary war with revolutionary war. This was correct and necessary, as was the call for international proletarian solidarity.

It is an indictment of the leadership of the CPSU that it only supported the Afghan Revolution in a half-hearted way. Tragically the *Khalqi* leadership had to ask thirteen times for large scale Soviet military assistance before it came. And after standing virtually unsupported against the forces of counterrevolution, when large scale Soviet assistance did at last come, in December 1979, it did not take the form of selfless proletarian internationalism but great power bullying.

Isvestia let it be known that "as a great power" the Soviet Union could not tolerate a hostile regime on its borders. Afghanistan was seen to be within the Soviet Union's "sphere of influence". Against all the principles of communism Amin was thought of as nothing but a wayward satrap. Because of this when Soviet troops entered Afghanistan they were used to overthrow his leadership. He and 97 leaders of the PDPA were butchered in cold blood and a pliant *Parcham* regime fronted by Babrak Karmal was installed. This was a real coup, an opportunist coup.

The now discredited Karmal branded him a "satanic operative and tyrant", who was a "CIA agent" under whose orders AQSA – the Afghan Checka – "massacred true Muslims". Far from this slander satisfying the forces of black reaction they smelt blood and, with the aid of international imperialism, intensified their counterrevolutionary war.

The subsequent removal of Karmal (on 'health grounds'), the offer by Dr Najibullah to replace the 'non-Marxist' PDPA government with one of 'national reconciliation' is the logical outcome of opportunism and the Soviet leadership's putting the pursuit of a non-revolutionary 'peace' above the

interests of the revolution (the only way to guarantee a lasting peace). Such a combination can only lead to rotten compromises with the forces of counterrevolution.

In *The Leninist* No.2 I wrote that "we consider the killing of Amin and 97 other PDPA leaders as representing the extinguishing of the flame of the revolution". I also said that unless this was recognised and rectified "the revolution will either have to suffer major amputations or face death." It brings me no pleasure to have been proved right.

Soviet willingness to desert Afghanistan must be put in context, the context of world revolution. The fact is that the world revolution has reached a particularly complex interregnum.

The official world communist movement is disintegrating, and as for the monolithic unity (albeit imposed with an authoritarian iron hand) of the world socialist system, it has long gone. For all Gorbachev's talk of unity in diversity what we are seeing today is the decay of living socialism from within (we only need look at Rumania, Poland, Hungary, China and the turn to 'market socialism' in the USSR to see that) and a growing danger of the erosion of the socialist world at its periphery, at its weakest links. And what is Afghanistan if not a weak link of socialism?

The fact that this is happening is primarily due to the growing influence of opportunism. This is particularly dangerous in the Soviet Union. It is the world's revolutionary centre and hence commands tremendous influence and prestige. Gorbachev sees its interests in narrow, purely national, terms. Hence, where the Soviet Union was once prepared to selflessly and heroically fight for the world revolution, now, faced with a US imperialism set on a redivisionist World War III winning war drive, Gorbachev has turned to appeasement.

In the name of 'New Political Thinking' and *perestroika* he treacherously used the platform of the 27th Congress of the CPSU to offer the US cooperation in defusing so-called international 'hot spots', ie countries in the forefront of the world revolutionary struggle, like Afghanistan, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua and South Africa. If the Afghan Revolution is allowed to go under, which revolution will be next?

The Soviet Union's long term interests do not lie in using living revolutions as bargaining counters to appease US imperialism. No, the world's revolutionary centre can only become invincible through the victory of revolutions in one 'hot spot' after another. If Gorbachev refuses to recognise such a basic Marxist-Leninist truth he should go, and go quickly.

Jack Conrad