

## Comrades Rebel!

Roger Freeman

At the March meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party comrade Gordon McLennan, the General Secretary, won a majority to his strategy of beating the growing opposition threat.

It is this strategy which underlies the promise that the next EC meeting in May will see the beginning of a far reaching purge of "those involved in the production of *Congress Truth*", while no such threats will be waved at comrade Tony Chater and his close associates. By lancing the Straight Leftist 'abcess' the Euros hope that the opposition can be weakened in the medium term. On the basis of a purge of the Straight Leftists, taking into account their self-declared desire to bury themselves in Labourism, the Euros feel that a war of attrition, can be launched to oust Chater and co. from the *Morning Star*. Thus the main thrust of the Euro offensive rests on their mobilising all those inclined towards their radical petty bourgeois reformism, winning them to become People's Press Printing Society (PPPS) shareholders, in the hope that they can thereby gain long term ascendancy. Their first foray in this campaign will be at this June's PPPS AGM where they will, like last year, be fielding their own slate of candidates for the vacant seats on the Management Committee. They will also be proposing a motion that Tony Chater and David Whitfield be replaced by the Euros Chris Myant and Frank Chalmers, as editor and assistant editor. Victory at the PPPS AGM for the Euros will, they anticipate, put comrade Chater and his group in a quandary, and put them on the defensive. For although Chater would still enjoy a majority on the Management Committee, and although he could still constitutionally remain editor if the committee so wished, such a move would give the Euros a clear moral advantage.

To avoid this ignominious and embarrassing fate Chater and his oppositionist forces have been frantically signing up as many new shareholders as possible. Given that most of these will vote for him — and 1,500 new shareholders have registered since January — comrade Chater must feel that despite Euro appeals to Party loyalty and 'democratic

centralism' he is in an unassailable position. In 1983 the Euros' slate only managed to gain a measly 487 average vote; against this Chater's secured a 739 average, and now, with the rallying of the Straight Leftists to his cause, he can rely on their vote as well which averaged a respectable 283 last year. So it is clear that the Euros will have to pull out all the stops to vote down Chater.

Given the difficulties caused by this war of attrition why doesn't McLennan go all out for a quick victory by an immediate expulsion, or at least the threat of expulsion, against Chater and his supporters?

McLennan calculates that the expulsion of comrades Chater and co. would be premature and could lead to a dramatic schism in the Party which would not only see the departure of the majority of activists and trade union leaders, but if recent events in Spain and Holland are anything to go by, material and moral aid from the Soviet Union would be transferred to the "breakaway" group. Already McLennan has seen two portentous developments. At the March meeting of the YCL General Council news was broken that "the Soviets had withdrawn holiday facilities given to the YCL" which were said to be worth £6,000 per annum. The second straw in the wind was the fact that the Soviet authorities have handed a lump sum of £800,928 to the *Morning Star* in payment for one year's supply of the paper. What is more, McLennan could hardly have had his fears assuaged when he visited Moscow for comrade Andropov's funeral: reports suggest that his reception was frosty.

It is the possible role of the Soviet comrades that haunts the EC majority; so while McLennan's loyal hatchet man comrade Ron Halverson in his report to the March EC sniped at the *Morning Star* for not printing this letter, delaying that one, or cutting another, what really bugged him, got his goat, rankled is the *Star's* sudden rather transparent opportunist conversion to "pro-Sovietism".

Of course neither the EC majority nor the Chater group stand by the Leninist principle of unconditional defence of all socialist countries against reactionary threat. What motivates both factions is not the interests of the socialist countries, let alone the world revolution, but narrow short term advantage.

Such opportunism quintessentially defines the Eurocommunists; they have attacked every single es-

sential principle which goes to make a genuine Communist Party, they have sought to destroy every trace of Marxism-Leninism, and yet they dare now stand as paragons of Party virtue, the true defenders of the Party. We say: A EURO *MORNING STAR*, WILL BE AS USELESS AT FIGHTING THE CLASS WAR AS A BUCKET OF WATER IS AT STARTING A FIRE!

What about the Chater group? Well, their rebellion against Eurocommunism, as well as their "pro-Sovietism", is not only rather late in the day, but is totally lacking in principle. For while comrade Chater professes to be a true communist he claims undying loyalty to the revisionist programme, the *British Road to Socialism*, and has even branded the Communist Party as an "outside body" and a "powerful pressure group" which ought not to "interfere" in the PPPS. To us this is proof that he is following a liquidationist course, this means that:

COMRADE CHATER CANNOT SAVE THE *MORNING STAR* AS A COMMUNIST PAPER! Indeed the fact that he refuses to open up the *Morning Star* to a full debate of all the differences in the Party is an unmistakable sign of his bankruptcy, as is resorting to the use of the bourgeois courts to settle differences between the *Star* and the Euro comrade Beatrix Campbell.

What is especially tragic today is that in the face of the cracking up of the old right opportunist leadership, the divergence of comrades McLennan and Chater, the vast majority of the oppositionist forces — who in total represent the majority of Party activists — instead of standing independently, becoming a real pro-Party force, have fallen in behind Chater's right opportunist group; even the Straight Leftists have succumbed to the glitter of his editor's crown.

By gravitating towards Chater and his group the opposition has once again shown that we are right when we say it is gripped by centrism. This is what has prevented it uniting around a principled communist platform, what has diverted it from the task of raising the banner of a disciplined pro-Party revolt against Eurocommunist liquidationism. Given centrism and the Euro victory at the gerrymandered 38th Congress there has been a tidal wave of disillusionment sweeping over the

opposition; this has sent even those centrists furthest to the left scurrying to the right. Dropping their old leftism they now self justifyingly sit at the table of Chaterism, sing canned paeons of praise to the "positive developments in the *Morning Star*" and drink from the poisonous revisionist cup of the "positive interpretation of the *BRS*". But the bloc around Chater is rotten, unstable, and destined to disintegrate if it maintains its present course. Faced with the Euro proposal to expel the four Straight Leftists in January, Chater's supporters on the EC actually voted for the expulsions. What can we expect of them in May? We say there must be:

NO EXPULSIONS AND NO RECOGNITION OF THEM!

This is something some leading Straight Leftists (not suprisingly) now say they agree with, and yet at the March meeting of the YCL GC when the Euros proposed that those responsible for circulating a leaflet exposing Euro bureaucratic centralism, Euro gerrymandering, and Euro calling of racist police against communists (a number of whom were black) in Hackney, they agreed that the culprits should be hauled before the Euro dominated GC, just as they proposed and voted last year that support for *The Leninist* by YCL members was to be a "disciplinary offence".

Now while we must attack such vile behaviour by the Straight Leftists, while we are in total opposition to liquidationism from wherever it may emanate, we recognise that the opposition, despite its domination by centrism and its drift towards liquidationism contains many fine communists, comrades who have spared no sacrifice for the cause of socialism and who are determined to defend all gains made by the working class, above all the Soviet Union. We say to these comrades that before the Euros are successful in driving out all supporters of *Straight Left* from the Party, before they succeed in whittling down the opposition, we must organise a genuine pro-party fight back; you cannot fight Eurocommunist liquidationism with liquidationism. Comrades: let us organise a *disciplined communist rebellion*, let us organise *all communists* in this rebellion, including those expelled or barred from the Party by the Euros. We say: LEARN FROM SPAIN — FIGHT FOR THE UNITY OF ALL COMMUNISTS IN BRITAIN! ■



## THE LENINIST

### 'The Leninist' goes monthly!

This issue of *The Leninist* is the first as a monthly paper — as such it is an important new qualitative step in the fight to defeat the liquidationist threat to our Party. The decision to go from a quarterly theoretical journal to a monthly paper was taken at the First Conference of Supporters of *The Leninist* in the light of the Eurocommunist victory at the gerrymandered 38th (Liquidationist) Congress and the need to increase the influence and impact of Leninist ideas to begin the process of going from analysing the struggles in the CPGB to determining them. Our present eight pager will within the next couple of months become a twelve pager with the inclusion of theoretical supplements which will become a permanent feature; the first, to be included in the May or June edition, will be on the CPGB and World War II.

A monthly edition of *The Leninist* will act as a powerful engine for pro-Partyism, it will enable us to strengthen our disciplined rebellion against bureaucratic centralism, make more effective and more organised our fight against opportunism and factionalism, make more certain the victory for genuine democratic centralism, proletarian internationalism and a reformed Communist Party with a new revolutionary programme. For only with this victory can the CPGB perform its historic task of leading the working class in Britain to smash warmongering monopoly capitalism and usher in the dawn of communism.

The Editor

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## LETTERS

### Open Letter to 'Straight Left'

Dear comrades,  
We read with interest the article by comrade Cahit Baylav published in *Straight Left* February 1984. We are pleased that you have taken the positive decision to air the subject of Turkey in your pages because, as we have stated previously, it is one that is rich in lessons for the international working class movement as a whole.

But on the negative side is the fact that the writer still apparently subscribes to views and positions that disabled the progressive and revolutionary movement in Turkey and led to its eventual defeat. Also the fact that the comrade appears under the banner of the splinter campaign the Solidarity Committee for Trade Union Rights and Democracy in Turkey (SCTURDT) effectively means that *Straight Left* is aiding an attempt to split Turkey solidarity work in this country for factional political reasons.

Comrade Baylav correctly points out that most of the violence that gripped society in Turkey was unquestionably the work of the paramilitary 'grey wolves' — youth wing of the fascist Nationalist Action Party — the striking force of Turkish finance capital. Yet then the comrade goes on to claim that:

"Police-infiltrated ultra-left groups escalated the spiral of terror".

This claim parrots the justification that the fascist generals themselves use for their intervention. The "spiral of terror" that the comrade refers to is presumably the revolutionary situation that existed in Turkey prior to the fascist counter-revolution.

However, where we really wish to take issue with the comrade is in his claim that:

"We also lay great stress on the development of the solidarity movement outside of Turkey".

This claim is disingenuous. While the writer lays "great stress" on the growth of the solidarity movement, both he and his committee are actively engaged in trying to split and thus disable solidarity work in this country. SCTURDT was established some months ago to directly rival the existing six year veteran the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey (CDDRT). The CDDRT's list of sponsors reads like a who's who of the British left and democratic movement, yet despite repeated calls for joint action from the CDDRT this SCTURDT splinter campaign has refused to even discuss such work. As the CDDRT itself has pointed out, it must be concluded that the SCTURDT is in fact an anti-solidarity movement in that:

1. It has been set up against the existing solidarity movement for factional political reasons,

2. In the words of Cahit Baylav himself, in response to the CDDRT's principled calls for unity and joint work it has refused to have "any relation with the CDDRT" (*Turkey Today*, No. 64, p22).

Comrades, we wonder how your supporters in the CPGB

would respond to the knowledge that you are helping to split and cripple Turkey solidarity work?

We would appreciate it if *Straight Left* could clarify its position on this question. Do you plan to ape the tactics of the Trotskyites in their factional manoeuvres inside the solidarity campaigns? Or perhaps you feel empathy with the Eurocommunist pretender to the Morning Star crown, comrade Chris Myant, who has been so diligently pursuing the policy of wrecking solidarity work by promoting this new anti-solidarity organisation. While we recognise there is truth in the old adage that politics makes for strange bedfellows, do the comrades around *Straight Left* feel entirely comfortable with their leadership's current choice of sleeping partners?

We await your reply with interest.

Yours on behalf of *The Leninist*,

William Hughes.

### Grist to the Mills

Dear Comrades,  
I am a rank and file Communist Party member, with I would add extreme opposition to the opportunist programme (the British Road to Parliamentary Reformism) and the popular frontist tactics of the present leadership of the CPGB and the *Morning Star*, who claim to be the "left", yet with the patronage of Costello and Chater (who not so many years ago were not very politically distinguishable from McLennan) continue to pump the Carter-style "Brickies to Bishops" line on nearly everything as well as pandering to left-Labour "little England nationalism".

I have read *The Leninist* nos.5 and 6 and am in broad agreement with your principles on: (1) liquidationism and tailism, (2) Democratic Centralism and (3) the critique of opportunism in third world communist parties and the Soviet encouragement of this via their "peaceful coexistence" idealist policies.

I read your article on Turkey with great interest since I have a partial background in the Middle East. The liquidationism of the Party leadership in Turkey seems the same in essence as the dissolution of the workers and peasants into bourgeois nationalist movements elsewhere in the Middle East eg Lebanese communists into the Muslim national front, the Israeli CP into left Zionism, Iraqi CP into the Ba'athists and before that initially into Kassem's government, and the Iranian Tudeh Party and the Fedayin Majority into the Mullahs, although both the latter have been forced by repression to end their forms of class collaboration.

There are two points, however, which I would like to discuss. Firstly, with regard to the question of national liberation and the right of nations to self-determination, I am unsure of the Comintern theses. Some of Rosa Luxemburg's criticisms I feel are valid.

Secondly, with the question of the defence of the Soviet bloc I feel that despite criticisms of the Soviet internal bureaucratic form of socialism (which is

largely inevitable while the USSR is surrounded by a hostile capitalist world which now includes China also) and its opportunist pacifistic foreign policy, it is essential for communists everywhere to defend the socialist countries against the West and against reactionary internal movements eg Solidarity, and the Afghan mujahidin. I defend (with criticism) the Soviet/communist interventions in E. Berlin in 1953, in Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Afghanistan and Poland recently, in the same way that communists defended the Red Army when they crossed the ice to crush the rebellion in Kronstadt. Such events are tragedies for the workers' movement and are caused partly by bureaucratic mismanagement but must be defended.

I would like to have your attitudes to the Soviet Union and Luxemburg's anti-nationalism. I am prepared to sell *The Leninist* since I feel that it is a good theoretical journal for genuine communist revolutionaries.

Yours fraternally  
Chris Mills  
Leeds, Yorks

Roger Freeman replies:  
We welcome comrade Mills' letter and trust that the shortness of our reply will not deter him from writing again.

On the right of nations to self-determination we stand with Lenin and the Comintern and against Rosa Luxemburg and her followers. To oppose the right of nations to self-determination is to objectively support the oppressor nation against the oppressed, to excuse national chauvinism. While we consider the nation state to be increasingly an anachronism the unity of nations must be voluntary. Thus for us the aim of a United Socialist States of the World presupposes self-determination. What is more the struggle for national freedom can be used as a powerful weapon against the imperialist bourgeoisie at 'home', thus the rebellion of the Irish is a constant threat to social stability in Britain itself, and can be used to win British workers against their 'own' ruling class or vice versa imperialism can divide and disarm the class by winning sections of it to support its foreign policy. As a result we advance the slogan of unconditional defence of all national liberation movements.

Secondly on our attitude towards the Soviet Union. We like you defend it against all reactionary threat, whether internal or external - unconditionally. We have our criticisms naturally, and we have published them on a number of occasions. In the future, perhaps next year, we hope to produce a pamphlet on the question, where we can extensively explain our views.

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

# Leninists in Conference

Richard Hardy

The key to developing a real opposition to liquidationism within the Communist Party of Great Britain must be the struggle to lay a sound ideological basis. *The Leninist* has always been at the forefront of this struggle and already this year its supporters have carried pro-Partyism to a higher stage. Two days of intense and open debate marked the First Conference of Supporters of *The Leninist* in January, two days which were of historic importance for our Party.

The Leninist's First Conference faced up to the heavy responsibilities confronting Leninists in this country. It was a conference in which no holds were barred in the way of political debate, which made it a distinctly different experience for those attending it in comparison with our Party's 38th Congress.

Participants in the First Conference were leading supporters of *The Leninist*, who were in no way democratically elected but were appointed to attend. This particular weakness, whilst not detracting from the correctness and validity of the decisions arrived at, is one which further growth of *The Leninist* will overcome. Those who directly participated in the First Conference did so with many decades of accumulated experience in communist politics. Nevertheless, the First Conference was certainly none the worse for its inclusion of comrades who have been but a comparatively short time in working class politics.

The arrangement of the First Conference contrasted strongly with the previous main Party event: the 38th (Liquidationist) Congress in November. Every effort was made, and not just as a matter of formality, to enable every comrade present at the First Conference to express themselves freely and at length. Proposers of motions on either day were given sufficient time to make introductions; occasionally this meant that Conference granted extensions of time. Contributions could be made up to three times by any one floor speaker on each and every motion at the First Conference. Every request for a fourth contribution was granted by Conference. Each contribution was normally up to ten minutes though this limit was extended on request on several occasions. Thus no effort was spared, indeed Conference bent over backwards, in encouraging all present to participate. It was gratifying that most comrades present at the First Conference each spoke several times during debates.

Even before the First Conference, and indeed when it was sitting, no limit was placed on the number of amendments which comrades could submit. No amendments were omitted from consideration by Conference: a large majority were incorporated within the resolutions agreed.

The 38th (Liquidationist) Congress of our Party does not compare at all favourably with the

First Conference of Supporters of *The Leninist*, especially in the manner in which business was conducted (see *The Leninist* No.6, Editorial). Unlike the First Conference, the platform at the Congress in November stifled all debate and exchange of opinion, severely restricted floor speakers' time, and generally set its seal on a Eurocommunist takeover. Whereas, as stated above, First Conference floor speakers were allowed ten minutes on each occasion they spoke and sometimes more by permission of Conference, the Congress closed session saw a farcical one minute limit imposed with swingeing restrictions on speech content within that time. Some delegates to Congress were prevented from speaking at all in the closed session.

In the manner of its preparation, its proceedings, and its decisions, the First Conference roundly answered the bludgeoning crudity of the Euro hijackers who ruled the roost at the 38th (Liquidationist) Congress. The First Conference was a shining example of communist discussion, communist discipline, and communist morality. It was a lighthouse to comrades about to be wrecked on the rocks of the Euro victory at the Congress. As the antithesis of liquidationism, the First Conference proclaimed that this is our Party, the party of Leninism, and that all pro-Party forces must shoulder the burden of reclaiming it.

In contrast to the upsurge surrounding the launch of *The Leninist* as a monthly paper following the decisive First Conference, a wave of disillusion has spread amongst the ranks of Party centrists since Congress. Such centrists are despondent because they believed their own misleading propaganda. The centrists' view that they would 'win Congress' has been sorely disappointed.

Even *The Leninist* has not been totally immune from the negative influences emanating from the Congress. At the First Conference, one comrade who had violated communist morality and exhibited serious political weakness had to be removed from our leadership; we eventually had to part company with this comrade and two others. Despite the weakness exhibited by this comrade and its effect on the beginning of the First Conference, by the second day there were very good grounds for expecting *The Leninist* to advance, with its comrades united like the fingers of a fist, rallying round the new leadership, and being encouraged by its bold perspective of reorganising the Communist Party.

Open discussion as the means of resolving difficulties was the great strength of the First Conference. In comparison with the manoeuvrings of opportunists at the Congress and the victory of the Euros, the First Conference provides a sounding board for the battles that lie before Leninists.

One decision of *The Leninist* First Conference which immediately promotes the fight against the liquidation of our Party confronts every reader of *The*

*Leninist*. That decision is the one to produce *The Leninist* in this new format as a monthly paper. *The Leninist* has previously concentrated on theoretical questions and especially those affecting the inner-Party struggle. Its new form will still enable this role to be fulfilled by means of supplements. However, its extra thrust will now be toward filling the role of propagandist of Leninism as well as its ideologue.

The Leninist First Conference thus concretized the current paramount question of pro-Partyism. It was the debate on pro-Partyism at the First Conference that produced a concluding decision fully recognising what is daily more evident: *The Leninist* must become the motor of pro-Partyism. Nothing is immutable, especially in politics, however, and all pro-Party elements should realise that success for *The Leninist* spells success for pro-Partyism. The crisis in our Party cries out for Leninism to be put squarely before it constantly. Thus

*The Leninist* must be sustained at least as a monthly. This was the perspective of the First Conference, and that *The Leninist* participate ever more decisively as the Party crisis deepens. The courageous efforts of all supporters will be required to achieve even more frequent publication of *The Leninist* to match the requirements of the Party situation. As the First Conference underlined, *The Leninist* in its new form is set fair to make the urgent and crucial contribution essential to saving our Party for Leninism.

The historic First Conference of Supporters of *The Leninist* makes a strong call to all communists, to all pro-Party forces, to unite to wage an ideological struggle against liquidationism and all forms of opportunism in order to develop our Party into a vanguard party.

Let us open up the fight against liquidationism on all fronts. And let the pro-Party forces stand together to save our Party. ■

## A Tale of Three Funds

William Hughes

Communist Party members are being presented with a choice of three funds to which to contribute their hard-earned money.

The first, the annual Party fund, has this year been set at an ambitious £100,000. 'Ambitious' because, as the leadership of the party must know, the continuing crisis in the party is polarising political trends to the extent that it is doubtful whether there are many Communist Party activists who have the political will to raise money for what they quite correctly see as a minority Eurocommunist leadership pursuing its own factional interests, not the Party's interests as a whole.

'After all,' some comrades may reason, 'Why should we pay the postage for the disciplinary and expulsion notices that are going to be flowing out of 16 St John Street?' Or 'Why should we pay to subsidise the Euros' factional rag — *Marxism Today*?'

Consequently, many comrades seem to be contributing more heavily to the second fund, the *Morning Star's* special £100,000 shares drive. There is little doubt that the fact that both of the first two funds set their target at £100,000 is no coincidence.

Setting the *Morning Star* fund at £100,000 is an effective way of putting two fingers up to the Euro faction in St John Street and of gauging concretely as the two funds totals swell (or don't) just what percentage of party activists comrade Chater is sucking behind him in his liquidationist wake.

The *Morning Star* fund does not exist to make the *Morning Star* financially independent of opportunism in the Communist Party — the more effectively to do

battle with it. This fund will be used to make the *Morning Star* independent of the Communist Party and of communist politics — the more effectively to pursue comrade Chater's cherished ambition of becoming the press agent for Congress House.

The third fund is a rather different affair. In *The Leninist* No 6 we launched our £10,000 Development Fund to enable us and all pro-Party forces to take a qualitative "leap forward in the struggle against Eurocommunism and all forms of liquidationism".

The money from our readers and supporters will be used to wage an uncompromising battle against all forms of liquidationism, to finance the struggle for the Communist Party to reestablish its revolutionary credentials and reforge its links with the militant vanguard of our class. We feel it would be money well spent. ■

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Today when our Communist Party stares liquidation in the face, when rival opportunist factions stake their claims to our Party's revolutionary traditions, a genuine understanding of the how's and why's of our Party's founding will show why it must be saved, why it must be reformed.

The outbreak of World War I split the workers' movement asunder, the definite passing of the opportunists into the camp of their 'own' ruling classes necessitated that the revolutionary Marxists break from the rotten corpse of the Second International. "The Second International is dead," declared Lenin, "long live the Third International, purged not only of 'turn-coats' ... but of opportunism as well." For the war and capitalist general crisis squarely presented the international working class with the task of socialist revolution, a task that needed close coordination, and one that could never be successfully completed while unity with the opportunists was maintained.

The Bolsheviks trailblazingly fulfilled the tasks demanded of them by the general crisis, leading a revolution which for the first time in human history saw state power triumphantly pass into the hands of the proletariat and all attempts at counterrevolution come to an inglorious naught. The October Revolution had a liberating effect on workers throughout the world; fired by it they sought to learn its lessons and follow its path, as a result Communist Parties came into existence and in March 1919 they united to form the Third (Communist) International.

In Britain a Joint Committee for the Communist Party was formed in 1920; inspired by the October Revolution it declared in its *Call for a Communist Party* that, "Social revolution, formerly an empty phrase, has become a real live force," which ousted old concepts and exposes parliamentary democracy, "for what it in reality is, an instrument of class oppression to be engineered and wielded in the interests of the bourgeoisie." Against this "sham" the *Call* emphasised, "the workers' republic places the method of direct representation and recall, as embodied in the Soviet idea". To achieve this and, "to hasten the world revolution occurring a *Communist Party* is wanted, a party of action. One that will wage the class war up to the point of revolution, rejecting with disdain all compromise and truck with capitalist reform, but ever seeking to organise and rally the working class to the standard of International Communism." Amongst a Communist Party's "fundamental principles," insisted the *Call*, there must be the lesson taught by history, "that dominant classes never yield to the revolutionary enslaved class without struggle, the Communists must be prepared to meet and crush all the efforts of capitalist reactionaries to regain their lost privileges... In other words the *Communist Party* must stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat."

It was these Marxist-Leninist principles that were the solid foundations for our Communist Party when on January 29 1921 communists in Britain were finally united. These principles constitute the kernel, the essence, of a Communist Party, to which its rules and leadership must be subordinated.

Thus in our Party's current *Aims and Constitution* what is fundamental, what constitutes the essential core which our organisation was designed and built to serve is the aim, "to achieve a socialist Britain," which, "necessitates a revolutionary transformation of society," and for that what is needed is a revolutionary party which is, "guided by the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism". The other aims, the Party rules themselves, and above all the political tactics, strategy, and trajectory of our leadership and all trends must be viewed according to these founding and essential principles, *adherence to or deviation from* them being the key to how we judge everything in a Communist Party's theory and practice.

We communists can take no other stance if we are to remain communist in more than name. Thus for us there can be no sympathy for ideas that the Party is everything, the final aim nothing. On the contrary, *we must ensure that the Party unswervingly serves the final aim, something only possible if it rigidly, firmly adheres to Marxism-Leninism.*

### Who Defends the Party

The only tendency in our Party today that defends the essence of our Party is that around *The Leninist*.

We are the only tendency that is uncompromisingly committed to smashing the bourgeois state, including its parliament. All others adhere to one version or interpretation of the utterly reformist *British Road to Socialism (BRS)* which envisages the victory of communism through "transforming" the bourgeois military bureaucratic state.

The high priests of Eurocommunism are already inching towards a new interpretation of the *BRS* which would have amongst its aims the construction of an "anti-Thatcherite" government". Based on the fallacious idea that 'Thatcherism' is a form of semi-fascism it is meant to include not only Labourites, SDPers, Liberals, and anti-Thatcherite Tories but, they hope and pray, with luck, with PR, with a purged and eminently respectable (to the bourgeoisie) Communist Party, themselves.

This has allowed comrades Chater and Costello to claim that the Euros are breaking from the *BRS*. They therefore present themselves as the true defenders of that truly revisionist holy book; comrade Chater even quixotically champions his *Morning Star* as the "daily living embodiment" of it. To excuse this revolting loyalty to revisionism his rather uneasy centrist disciples have concocted what they call a "positive interpretation" of the *BRS* in order to provide a left cover for its rightism.

What about the faction around *Straight Left*; surely these comrades stand by what we call the essence of our Party; don't they after all dismiss the *BRS* as revisionist just as the Leninists do?

Unfortunately this is not the case. Its leadership is fully committed to their own version of the *BRS* which is different from the current one above all because of its greater prostration before Labourism; for them it was only in 1967 that the then "new draft" abandoned "revolutionary positions of earlier versions". But anyone, except it seems a Straight Leftist

leader, reading the 1951, 1952, and 1958 editions would reach exactly the same conclusion as we do — all the *BRS*'s are revisionist, all have exactly the same approach to central questions such as the state, parliament and democracy, all deny the necessity for the proletariat to exercise its dictatorship.

Leninists are in fact distinguished from all other trends on all fundamental questions; we stand with Marxism-Leninism, while the others stand with opportunism.

Thus if we take proletarian internationalism, Marxism-Leninism defines it as seeing the struggle in your own country as part of and subordinate to the general fight on a world scale, it means working wholeheartedly for revolution in one's own country, and supporting this line and only this line in every country. So for us, being part of the world communist movement, being part of the world army of proletarian revolution, demands of us a revolutionary line in Britain, it demands that we advocate this line for all countries, it demands unconditional defence of the socialist countries and fraternal discussion up to and including fraternal criticism.

Few would 'accuse' the Eurocommunists of fidelity to proletarian internationalism; they call for a non-nuclear 'defence' policy for imperialism, praise the counter-revolutionary Solidarity organisation in Poland, refuse to support the national liberation movement in Ireland in its struggle with the British state, while in contrast over Afghanistan they demand that the Soviet Union *does* withdraw its troops — something that can only lead to the victory of counter-revolution.

Despite the *Morning Star*'s recent rather transparent opportunist toying with 'pro-Sovietism' the paper has willingly followed every Euro attack on the socialist countries which, far from being fraternally motivated, are one thing and one alone — a desire to ingratiate bourgeois influenced opinion. Comrade Chater also allows Chris Myant, the Euro contender for his editor's crown, to pour forth reactionary diatribes against the national liberation movement in Ireland, which would not be out of place in Fleet Street's rabid, Irish hating, gutter press.

As to those Straight Leftists: well, their pretensions to be loyal to proletarian internationalism are nothing more than centrist huff and puff — diplomatic internationalism which leads them to excuse important mistakes in one fraternal party after another. Oh yes, they attack those parties who are overtly anti-Soviet, but when it comes to communists in Iran, Argentina, Poland, and above all the USSR, they uncritically, blindly, and determinedly tail, monstrously proclaiming this as their 'internationalist' duty.

On the need for our Communist Party to play a vanguard role and the need for democratic centralism, we Leninists are again the only genuine advocates; all other trends go no further than clapped out hypocritical rhetoric.

The Euros, comrades Chater and Costello, and the Straight Leftists are not only all hell bent on tailing the Labourites but their present political orientations point to liquidation; all they differ on is which liquidationist path to take.

When these trends are underdogs they innocently protest

What is the essence of our Communist Party, who defends it, and is it worth saving?

# REFORGE OUR PARTY

James Marshall

against the use of 'democratic centralism', even resorting to the bourgeois courts to settle disputes; but all the while they curse to themselves that "if only we were on top, if we were in control of the machine, then god help the others". Of course what all these comrades have complained of and what they all wish to operate is a million miles from democratic centralism: it is bureaucratic centralism. Real democratic centralism not only presupposes the struggle for a revolutionary programme (an anathema to our various opportunists) but the possibility of important differences. Democratic centralism is the organisational principle within which they are debated and resolved in order to unite the Party, and its shades, as the five fingers of a hand into a fist in order to deliver the knockout blow to the bourgeoisie.

So in answer to the question "who defends the essence of our Party?" there can only be one answer: *The Leninist!*

### The Trends

Political trends cannot be separated from social and economic factors — this is a general law from which our Party is not exempt. Only by seeing the various trends in our Party in this light can we come to understand them and their significance. Marxism rejects with a vengeance talk which reduces trends in the Party and their differences to the ambitions, whims, or mere cussedness of leading personalities.

We can get an idea of what lies behind our trends if we again look at the Second International. Behind its historically unprecedented betrayal had been several decades of economic development which had seen the emergence of labour aristocracies in a number of

they adopt social-pacifism while insisting at the same time on the need to maintain unity with the social-chauvinists. Only the communist tendency, the extreme left of the Second International, was faithful to the long term interests of the working class as a whole. This tendency, exemplified by the Bolsheviks, although minute in relative terms compared to official social democracy (in some countries consisting of no more than a handful of dedicated revolutionaries), declared from the beginning of hostilities 'turn imperialist war into civil war'.

Taking this outline of the tendencies in the Second International as our guide we can locate the source of our trends and by doing so the shifting sands of the inner-Party struggle will become decipherable. While recognising its limited and general nature we would describe the main trends in our Party as follows:

1. The hard core Eurocommunists represent the camp followers of the workers' movement; it is epitomised by *Marxism Today* and its petty-bourgeois radical politics.

2. The right opportunists represent a section of Britain's labour bureaucracy. As this has found its support inside the Party evaporating it has diverged. One section based mainly on Party officials and a few trade union bureaucrats has thrown in its lot with the Euros; as a result the latter now appears to dominate the Executive Committee. The other section based on most of the *Morning Star* staff and most of the communist trade union leaders, finding the Euros and their petty-bourgeois antics unattractive, have sought satisfaction for their ambitions by promoting the *Morning Star* as the paper of the broad labour movement and by distancing themselves from the Party, calling it an "outside body".

3. The centrists lead the majority of Party rank and file activists; they are also divided amongst themselves. About half have followed the *Morning Star* rebellion, despite all the signs that it is set on a course that points out of communist politics. The other half of the centrist body is the more organised; this is the Straight Left faction who show every indication of rat like desertion of the proverbial sinking ship. Our centrists, unlike those in 1914, not only straddle reform and revolution but can seek advantage from tailing living socialism, something *Straight Left* has taken to a high form with its neo-godbuilding worship of the CPSU which rivals its fawning before the mainstream Labourite bureaucracy.

4. The Leninists despite being at present a small force represent the majority of the working class against not only the bourgeoisie but also against the narrow sectional interests of the labour aristocracy and the camp followers. We implacably oppose the treacherous labour bureaucracy and the centrists who cover conciliation with them by using Marxist phraseology. The Leninists are therefore objectively the proletarian trend in our Party.

With this understanding of the various trends we can see that the struggle between them is the continuation of the class struggle on the plane of the workers' party, the Communist Party, its politics, organisation and ideology.

Because of the rightist sins of the

leaders of the Second International the anarchists were able to capture ideas such as the necessity of smashing the old state machine; Lenin's *State and Revolution* was at least in part written to recapture this idea and restore it to its rightful place as a central principle of Marxism. Likewise today because of the rightist sins of our opportunists a whole range of fundamental concepts have been handed *gratis* to Trotskyism and other forms of leftism on a plate. Thus when we stand on the principles of Marxism-Leninism they have accused us of being 'ultra-leftist'. They attack us *because* we stand for violent revolution, *because* we stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat and not some utopian form of parliamentary democracy! But didn't Lenin? *Because* we oppose chauvinist schemes like the AES, *because* we believe that the only solution to the capitalist crisis that can be in the interests of the working class is socialist revolution! Didn't Lenin? *Because* we are committed to real proletarian internationalism which places on us a duty to criticise communists in other countries for what we believe to be important mistakes, *because* we extend this principle to communists in the socialist countries! Wasn't Lenin the fiercest critic of mistakes in Comintern and in the Soviet Union itself? *Because* we dare to use the term "Labour bureaucracy", *because* we seek to break the influence of the bourgeois party of the working class, the Labour Party, over our class! Didn't Lenin? *Because* we use the term uninterrupted revolution! Didn't Lenin taking Marx's theory of permanent revolution advance this very concept in 1905 and proclaim the October Revolution a living example of it? *Because* we conduct open ideological struggle against opportunism, including centrism! Didn't Lenin?

These attempts to hamper the growing influence of the Leninists only reveal the sins of the opportunists and exposes their claims to be loyal to Marxism-Leninism. We on the other hand are determined to recapture the ideas, so easily given away by the opportunists, for our Communist Party, for genuine Marxism-Leninism, where they rightfully belong; by doing this, the bankruptcy of Trotskyism and other forms of leftism will be exposed, as the Bolsheviks exposed the bankruptcy of the anarchists.

### Is It Worth Saving

The struggles in our Party have excited much comment in the 'quality' bourgeois press. We have even witnessed *The Times* reporting a 'secret' resolution from the EC the day after it had met. The petty-bourgeois revolutionary papers and journals have also been buzzing; after years of dismissing the Communist Party as irrelevant, they have been reluctantly forced to report its debates.

Like their colleagues in the bourgeois press they describe the conflict in our Party as simply being one between "Gordon McLennan's Eurocommunists" and "Tony Chater's 'Stalinist' *Morning Star*". *Socialist Worker* monotonically declares that as the *Morning Star* backed Jaruzelski and the smashing of Solidarity(?), and the Euros, who had for years been written off as finished, are liberalistic, "socialists" should declare a pox on both houses. *The Next Step* for all its self-proclaimed originality carries exactly the

same essential message. *Spartacist Britain*, while being better informed about comrade Chater's politics and despite its extensive polemics with *The Leninist*, is equally damning to all tendencies. *Neus Line* actually sides with Eurocommunism on the basis of a facile argument about the sanctity of formal democracy. But all are agreed that the decline of the Communist Party is good news and that the sooner they can at last use their always premature, oft-written, obituaries, the sooner they can joyfully dance hand in hand with the bourgeoisie over its grave.

For us the Communist Party is most certainly worth saving. It is still the party of the working class and a component part of the world communist movement, dominated by opportunism yes, but no sect. The formation of the Communist Party has been the most important gain for this country's working class to date and should be defended along with all other gains of the working class, from its pay and conditions of work to our greatest world achievement, the socialist countries, above all the Soviet Union. *Defence of gains never demands abstinence from criticism*, far from it. *Principled defence demands principled criticism* and a serious struggle to remove leaders who falter, those who do not fight for the long term interests of the working class as a whole, and especially those who actually act as the lieutenants of the bourgeoisie in our class and Party. To defend trade union rights in no way binds us to support the likes of Frank Chapple, David Basnett, or Len Murray; defence of the Soviet Union to support for Joseph Stalin; or defence of the Communist Party to support for Gordon McLennan, Martin Jacques, Tony Chater, or Fergus Nicholson.

We apply the same principles to our struggle, to our Party, to our world movement, as the Bolsheviks. They were an integral part of the Second International, an organisation which contained the likes of Kautsky, Bernstein, Millerand, MacDonald, and Adler, but which also contained Luxemburg, Liebknecht, McLean, Connolly, and Gallacher; they also experienced periods of organisational unity with the Mensheviks, Russia's opportunists, the final split only coming in 1912, something determined by the necessities of the class struggle, as was the split from the Second International in 1914. Yes, our communist movement contains Carrillo, Berlinguer, and Deng Xiaoping, but also Castro, Yürükoğlu and Le Duan. The fate of our Party is not sealed, it will be decided by struggle, the experience of which can and must see the phoenix like re-emergence of a genuinely Marxist-Leninist party. Such a party is the heir to the future, for what our working class needs for the demanding conditions of the 1980's and 1990's and the conditions of a new general crisis is not bankrupt Eurocommunism and its idiotic parliamentary alchemy or revamped Labourism but a fiery red mass vanguard Communist Party.

The inner-Party struggle is fast turning our Party into a molten mass; our task is to reforge it, to turn it into a deadly Leninist weapon with which to deliver the death blow to moribund war-mongering capitalism in Britain — our greatest service to the defence of the socialist countries and the cause of world revolution. ■

Coard is now a prisoner of imperialism, tortured, despised and on trial for his life. Should we defend him?

## The Flaw in the Jewel

Michael McGeehan

"... at dawn, fifty NJM comrades, the genesis of the Peoples Revolutionary Army struck against the main barracks of the Green Beast Army at Trueblue. ... By sunset, with people out cheering in their thousands with cutlasses, sticks, knives and old firearms or anything they could muster, with the police stations in their hands ... the first revolution in the English-speaking Caribbean was a day old and a new beginning had opened wide for the Grenadian people." (C. Searle, *Grenada — the Struggle against Destabilisation*, pp.31-2)

In the 4½ years following March 13 1979, a wave of revolutionary measures swept away the old order. Grenada's dramatic transformation embraced myriad reforms in health and education, the idea of a system of mass participatory democracy was mooted, a revolutionary army and militia was formed, attempts were made to restructure the ramshackle economy and break its dependence on imperialism.

Then came a bombshell. The political crisis involving the expulsion of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop from the NJM and his subsequent death. Using the crisis as an excuse, US imperialism swooped to strangle the young revolution and impose its neo-colonial rule.

Horror, dismay and confusion swept through the revolution's supporters worldwide. What went so suddenly wrong? Why and how were Bishop, Whiteman and Creft killed?

We cannot produce a definitive account that completely unravels the tangled knot of events that culminated in the October 83 crisis and tragedy, but by careful inspection of the available literature, from discussions with NJM supporters, including an interview with spokesmen of the NJM Support Group (UK) March 13th Secretariat, we have been able to draw some conclusions.

### The Revolution

To properly understand the events that unfurled, we must appreciate the nature of the New Jewel Revolution. Apart from various groups like the SWP and the RCP, who have labelled the uprising a 'coup', most on the left acknowledge a real revolution. We remind those with 'Bonapartism' on the brain of the smashing of the old state machine and the construction of the new, the transfer of state power from the island's bourgeoisie and 'plantocracy' to a revolutionary government. And though the assault on the Trueblue barracks

was carried out by a mere 40-50 NJM militants, the masses nevertheless flocked to support the sweeping aside of the brutal and corrupt Gairy regime, revealing a clear political majority for the revolution.

"Our primary objective at this point of time ... is not the building of socialism, quite frankly, but simply trying to get the economy ... back on its feet. In that sense we are in a national democratic revolution". (B. Coard, *Let those who labour hold the reins*, p.11-12)

That interview of July 1979 matches Bishop's comments in *World Marxist Review* (April 1982) that Grenada was "in an anti-imperialist, national democratic, socialist-oriented stage of development".

The central question was which direction was the revolution going to take, for it is impossible to sustain indefinitely a transitory regime, the question of capitalism or socialism had to be faced. And this in turn must hinge on the political aims of the revolution's leadership, the NJM and their ability to lead the working class and its allies.

### The Party

The view that there were no major political differences within the NJM nor between Coard and Bishop, appears to be widespread amongst NJM supporters, particularly within the NJM Support Group (UK) for example, its Secretary — Denis Bartholomew declared that: "ideologically there was no difference between the comrades in the NJM on the level of the direction of Grenada, on the face of it there would be no conflict within the leadership" (interview — February 1984).

We find such a view hard to accept, firstly because the alternative hypothesis — that Coard used his links with OREL (an early component of the NJM) to assist his Machiavellian schemes to become leader of the Party — is so superficial and does not fit with his track record of an incredibly hard-working and selfless leader, and secondly because there are strong indications that political differences *did* exist within the NJM.

In an extensive interview in *Intercontinental Press* (Vol.21, No.25), Don Rojas, Bishop's Press Secretary, admits that serious differences did in fact emerge "somehow the notion that this (the revolutionary-M. Mc) process was not going fast enough entered into the ideological discussion in the party and led to a kind of cleavage." Furthermore, "Bernard and his people said they were calling for a more Leninist orientation for the party." These are not

mere "nuances" or questions of "leadership style" as Rojas claims. These are indications that Coard and his supporters were being forced to look to transform the NJM into a Communist Party. The "cleavage" was related to the pace of the revolution, and thus the attitude towards the island's bourgeoisie.

Though it was the question of inner-Party organisation that was the most prominent and sharpest difference; the underlying division, although not fully articulated within the NJM, was around the pivotal question of capitalism or socialism. While Coard was being drawn towards the trail that Cuba blazed in the period 1959-63, in implementing sweeping programmes of agrarian and industrial nationalisation and control, Bishop wanted to retain the 'mixed economy' ie capitalism.

### What Happened

The NJM had not always been open about its policy and both its strengths and weaknesses: "we have never revealed to our people... the serious internal problems that have taken place within our party, especially during the past year." (Statement — Central Committee of the NJM, October 15.) According to the Central Committee, Bishop had "deeply resented collective leadership, wanted to exercise full and exclusive power and authority" In autumn 1982, Coard has resigned from both the Political Committee and the CC because he had become the focus of Bishop's fear that "members of the leadership ... may be trying to seize power from him." Apparently Coard intended to show that he had no wish to replace Bishop as Party leader. But the situation worsened, when PC and CC members disagreed with him, Bishop became "angry and increasingly hostile."

By late 1983 (September) the CC decided to resolve the Party crisis, and proposed Coard and Bishop as joint leaders of the Party. Bishop apparently refused to accept the CC's decision, so it was taken to a meeting of "all members of the party" (the NJM had about 500 members) where the proposal was "unanimously" adopted "including Comrade Bishop himself." But Bishop (and we note Whiteman and Louison) left for Hungary, and on his return had changed his mind.

By October 12, a rumour hit the streets that Coard was plotting to have Bishop assassinated. An emergency full meeting of the NJM was again held, with "hundreds of party members attending". At that meeting evidence was presented, including from Bishop's personal security unit, which established that Bishop had been the progenitor of the rumour. As a result the

meeting voted to remove him from the CC and expel him from the Party itself.

Now to our knowledge, none, including Rojas (a supporter of Bishop) have contradicted that description of the basic sequence of events. So it appears that there was no "Coard Group", there was no "clique" manipulating behind the scenes; in reality Coard had the support of the majority of the Central Committee and the great majority of the Party.

This is borne out by Bishop's actions in attempting to take matters out of the party "on to the streets, weaving an ugly loom in order to whip up the masses and claim on the love of the masses for him which he did not develop as a result of his own but as a result of the work of the entire party over the past ten-and-a-half years." (*Ibid*) This unfortunate action should reveal to all, the petty-bourgeois essence of Bishop's politics, his tragic failure to accept discipline and democratic centralism. If any one individual was responsible for the crisis that exploded, it was Maurice Bishop. Furthermore, it becomes clear that Coard and his supporters were not "hyenas", but honest revolutionaries.

We must clearly state that those responsible for the death of Bishop made a terrible tactical mistake. Despite this we must support Coard for all the evidence indicates that Coard and the majority of the NJM were moving away from seeing the NJM as a "broadly-based socialist organisation" (which was in fact affiliated to the Second International!) towards the idea that it must become a Communist Party. For the lack of a Communist Party in Grenada proved to be the fatal flaw in the jewel, for only by creating such a party could the revolution be consolidated, a dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the urban and rural poor built, the power of the bourgeoisie broken, and the country embark on the road of socialist construction. Bishop's "middle course" between capitalism and socialism was untenable and in the end could only lead to counterrevolution, this was something Coard and the majority of the NJM came to realise, the fact that this might have been "late in the day", the fact that they made important mistakes, and that US imperialism was able to crush the revolution, must not be used as an excuse to opt out of defending Coard and his comrades.

For today, Coard and other leaders of the NJM are on trial for their lives, accused of "murdering" Bishop and others and of "terrorism". They are being tried by a puppet court of US imperialism. These leaders of the revolution and of the resistance against the US invasion must be defended unconditionally. ■

## REVIEWS

"Questro" and the Crisis of Straight Leftism

"Questro", Which Way For Our Party? July 1983

James Marshall

Such "samizdat" publications as "Questro's" are becoming increasingly common in our Communist Party, dominated as it is by Eurocommunist bureaucratic centralism. "Questro" forcefully exposes the state of the Party, the dramatic fall in membership, the collapse of branch organisation, the derisory level of dues payments, the pathetic electoral results, and the danger of extinction faced by not only the *Morning Star* but also the Young Communist League.

But "Questro's" pamphlet is no simple tale of gloom and doom, the frustrated cries of a rank and file activist, for it is written from a distinct section of the Party once in close alliance with the faction around *Straight Left*. Following the June 1983 PPPS AGM and the Straight Leftists failure to assert their hegemony over the opposition, the misfiring of their plan to isolate comrade Chater, and the ironic result that it was they who were isolated, the likes of "Questro" questioned their closeness with the Straight Leftists and began to make tentative steps away from them and towards the pro-Chater/Costello grouping.

"Questro's" pamphlet is a document of a transition period which is only now being completed. Thus much of it is a thinly veiled polemic with the positions of Straight Leftism later "concretised" in the "Charlie Woods" pamphlet (see *The Leninist* No. 6) and their political practice at the time of the PPPS AGM. Central to the polemic is an attack on the idea that the entire pre-38th Congress leadership had to be equally opposed. It is "neither helpful nor correct" to call those who "take a stand opposed to Eurocommunism on a number of crucial questions... opportunists," declares "Questro". Instead of this the "aim should be to win such comrades for a united opposition to Eurocommunism" — the "revisionist trend in our Party" the routing of which is "the main task".

On the basis of our reading of "Questro's" pamphlet there can be no doubt about the comrade's commitment to the Communist Party; it certainly contains none of the revolting Labourphilia of the "Woods" pamphlet. Despite this we must question the diagnosis of the Party and the proposed treatment. For what threatens our Party is liquidationism. This stems from revisionism, something which far from being confined to the Euros as "Questro" maintains, grips all major trends. Given the current terrain of the workers' movement in Britain, dominated as it is by Labourism, the decline of the Communist Party has produced liquidationism from all its revisionist trends, the Euros yes, but also the pro-Chater/Costello grouping and the Straight Leftists. What distinguishes them is neither their revisionism nor their liquidationism but which form of liquidation should be imposed on

the Party, and while this may seem a "detail" it is for them far from being unimportant; the future of all factions depends to a great degree on who will come to inherit the mantle of the Communist Party, on how the "estate" is divided. Because of this deep fissures open up, old groupings and factions are torn apart, as the battle for survival throws everything into the centrifugal vortex.

"Questro" seems oblivious to all this not only doggedly maintaining that revisionism is confined to the Euros, but fantastically that:

"On most important issues (the fight for jobs, wages, peace, defence of social services, racism, etc.) there is general agreement throughout the Party. On these issues the Party acts unitedly, which makes it particularly effective."

It is this rose tinted, John Gollan-reared revisionist view, which underlies our comrade's confused simple minded optimism. For it is an incontrovertible fact that not only does our Party stand by essentially reformist positions on all the above questions but because of the growing crisis in its ranks unity is becoming ever harder to obtain even inside factions.

By refusing to squarely confront this truth "Questro" reveals all the classic features of a centrist who, however sincere in pro-Party motivation, seeks to ignore or even deny deep political differences. This and the overall shift to the right in the Party causes the likes of comrade "Questro" to pursue the "possible" at the expense of the "principle". Thus the neat footwork away from Straight Leftism and the moves to what is conceived of as the less isolated, less vulnerable, and more effective path of the pro-Chater/Costello grouping, and the delights of the "positive" interpretation of the revisionist *British Road to Socialism*.

Interestingly, after maintaining what "Questro" called a position of "purity" and "refusing to be tainted through unity with doubtful comrades", the Straight Leftists suddenly cast aside all their anti-Chater/Costello "principles" at the 38th Congress, declaring in their *Congress Truth* that: "There is no political division" amongst the opposition, as if there had been no past, as if the differences of tactics and strategy were somehow "unpolitical", which of course they are not, but of course for the Straight Leftist leader they are. After standing against the Chater/Costello position at the PPPS AGM, after orchestrating their militants in a concerted campaign against comrade Costello and his supporters in the pre-Congress discussion, after publishing the fiercely anti-Chater/Costello pamphlet *The Crisis in Our Communist Party* (something for which comrade Charlie Woods paid for with his Party membership); how can the Straight Leftist leadership out of the blue declare that there is "no political division"?

Is it possible to find a clearer indication of the crisis of Straight Leftism, a more stark illustration of its leadership's hypocrisy, its subordination of its politics to expediency, and a clearer proof of its contempt for its own theory and above all its own supporters? ■

Workers' Self Defence

Eve Rosenhaft, *Beating the Fascists?* Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp276, £24.00

Richard Hardy

The KPD was forced to respond to the Nazi threat in a way that could be reconciled with the 'leftist' period of the Comintern: the so-called 'Third Period' commencing in 1928 when communist antagonism toward social democrats was deliberately heightened, and the phrase 'social fascism' was coined. Although the perceived 'certainty' of the KPD (and the Comintern and its parties, including the CPGB) was that social democratic parties would join a broad fascist front of the bourgeoisie, by 1930 the KPD considered the main threat of establishing fascism emanated from the Nazi Party.

The KPD's first defence formation was the Red Frontfighters' League (RFB), founded in 1924 to keep together the Proletarian Hundreds of the 1923 Revolution. It was banned two weeks after the bloody May Day of 1929. The RFB was indeed a force to be reckoned with: in early 1928 it had 11,000 members in Berlin alone, compared to 800 in the Nazi SA (Brownshirts).

1929, the year in which the RFB was banned, marked the beginning of a great increase in political violence. Official figures show violent confrontations between members of opposing political groups more than doubling every year until 1933. However, although the RFB had continued to work illegally, it was losing members. The fact that the KPD's membership zoomed from 135,000 in 1929 to 381,000 in 1931 enabled its leadership to produce a series of

Women Take Sides

Alexandra Kollontai, *Selected Writings*, Alison & Busby, London, 1978 pbk, pp335, £3.50

Rebecca Sachs

In the commentary that precedes Kollontai's writings the author, Alix Holt, makes it clear that she is claiming Kollontai for the feminists when she states, "feminists have recognised Kollontai as an important figure in their history." On reading Kollontai herself Holt's claim seems not a little ironic. Holt embraces this Russian revolutionary as part of the history of the 'women's movement' on the basis that she fought for the rights of women. But surely when one looks at history it is apparent that two movements of women have emerged: that of bourgeois women and that of working class women.

Kollontai unequivocally belonged to the women's movement of the proletariat, a fact which is illustrated by her blistering attacks on bourgeois feminism and by her commitment to revolution.

"The women's world is divided, just as is the world of men, into two camps; the interests and aspirations of one group of women bring it close to the bourgeoisie class, while the other group has close connections with the proletariat... Thus although both camps follow the general slogan of the 'liberation of women', their aims and interests are different..."

Holt seeks to throw a veil over this central concept in Kollontai's writings on women by claiming that it is now a largely irrelevant debate as this sort of

legal formations designed to take over the duties of the RFB.

The substitutes founded by the KPD after the RFB was banned, like the Antifascist Young Guards (AJG) and the factory based Proletarian Self-Defence (PSS) and Red Factory Guards, did not resolve the difficulties of the antifascist struggle. More successful was the Kampfbund, whose membership went from 38,000 on foundation in mid-December 1930 to 95,000 by the following March. The Kampfbund, allowed much local initiative, organised the ideological fight against the Nazis in the factories, at labour exchanges, and in the neighbourhoods, as well as fighting strikebreaking and defending meetings and workers' taverns. It was used early in 1932 in a mass self-defence push by the KPD in competition with the newly-formed Iron Front and Hammerschaften antifascist bodies of the SDP.

The ultimate failure of the KPD was a direct result of the 'leftist', so-called 'Third Period' and its neglect of and spurning of social democratic workers. The Party's (and Comintern's) consequent isolation from a large part of the working class compounded its inability to control or satisfactorily develop its fighting formations. This experience is rich in lessons and in the light of Warrington is something we must learn from quickly if we are to develop effective forms of defence against the capitalist offensive. For if our KPD comrades failed to 'beat the fascists' despite their RFB, their AJG, their PSS, and their Kampfbund, what chance do we have with pleas to the bourgeois state to ban the National Front and dreamy calls for community policing! ■

feminism is more or less extinct. Well, in a way of course, she is correct — the feminists of Kollontai's days showed a much more serious attitude towards working women than modern day feminists! Kollontai's definition of feminism as "the struggle of bourgeois women to unite, to rely on one another and thus to rebuff the common enemy — men", was never more true. This is something that Holt is unwilling to grasp because of an ingrained belief that all women concerned with 'women's liberation' must in some way be feminist sisters.

From a different angle this misconception was a problem for the Bolsheviks, many of whom suffered from a suspicion that all activity by women was somehow feminism. The problem extends into our Party to a more serious degree. The centrists have offered no concrete alternative to the ideas of the feminists who consequently have free rein over this issue. This is not just an indication of the theoretical bankruptcy of the centrists it is also due to the fact that they do not recognise the women's issue as of central importance or as worthy of detailed analysis. The question is regarded as a 'side issue' and any non-feminists who protest too loudly at the negligence of their comrades risk being tarred with the feminist brush, the retort often being a banal "women have got equality in the Soviet Union".

The struggle to take the women's issue out of the clutches of the feminists in the Party is not just a struggle for women it is a struggle for all comrades. The women's question is not only important it is vital to the success of revolution and demands a serious approach. ■

As opportunism has eaten away at our Communist Party's revolutionary Leninist traditions over the years, having long ago seized ideological and political control, it has insidiously embraced the bourgeois pacifist attitude towards the question of war and peace. In the most recent period, in which the growth of opportunism has come to fruition with the Party's organisational disintegration, the three major liquidationist factions to emerge around the publications *Marxism Today*, the *Morning Star* and *Straight Left* have all meekly and ignominiously tailed behind the growing mass movement for peace, taking up the 'Disarmament' slogan in its most blatantly pacifist form — meaning opposition to war in general and refutation of all violence.

The campaign which has been most effective and persistent in popularising pacifism and non-violence is, of course, the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham Common. They have become a *cause célèbre* for the broad peace and labour movements in general and the opportunists of all varieties in our Party in particular, being fêted and revered by organisations as disparate as the Quakers and the petty bourgeois radical RCG — almost to the point of being idolized like a holy icon. Moreover, many in the Communist Party have adopted the most unhealthy and uncritical attitude of fawning on and pandering to the Greenham Women, without even pausing to question the futility and reactionary nature of their pacifism and feminist liberalism. Rather than concentrating our fire on the Greenham Women, however, who after all, should not be castigated for demonstrating sincerely felt sentiments for peace through activism, no matter how pious and utopian, and for honestly admitting to be nothing other than pacifists, we reserve our sharpest barbs for those who peddle the same politics, but under the false label of "communist".

## Class Collaboration

The Womens' Peace Camp at Greenham Common has been invigorated by its domination by feminism, achieving for itself a cult status by being based upon the pseudo-religious and tribalistic ethic of celebrating 'motherhood', rather than the militant campaign for social equality which characterised the halcyon days of the 1960s and 1970s.

The organisation of women from "radical feminists to Tory ladies" around the issues of gender and peace and the legitimisation of "women-only activity" has attempted to resolve and smooth over the class antagonisms between the workers and bourgeoisie and is, in essence, *class collaborationist* and thoroughly reactionary. Lenin's view, on the other hand, was that slogans for peace "must be brought forward so as to enable the masses, through propaganda and agitation, to see the unbridgeable distinction between socialism and capitalism (imperialism), and not for the purpose of *reconciling* two hostile classes and two hostile political lines, with the aid of a formula that "unites" the most different things." (V.I. Lenin CW, Vol.21, pp290-1). Yet we find our Eurocommunist comrades Jon Bloomfield and Sally Davison welcoming the Greenham Women's feminism as emphasising "the common links among women"

While the threat of World War III looms over the horizon the majority of communists have fallen in behind CND and the Greenham Common women

# Pacifism or Revolution

Frank Grafton

(*Marxism Today* April 1983) and "having some kind of capacity to reconstruct humanism" (*Marxism Today* February 1983); the Straight Leftists go one step further and declare; "all those working for peace — from the Warsaw Pact summit to the Greenham Common women — need to redouble their efforts and reinforce their unity".

Such pernicious opportunism disguises the class basis of why wars have been incessantly waged since the beginnings of civilisation and can only explain the drive to unleash the devastation of a nuclear war as the work of madmen and malfunctioning machines.

The attraction of the Greenham Women to all opportunist and centrist forces inside our Party is that it demonstrates the 'broadness' and in essence, the class collaborationism of all their schemes, whether they be 'interpretations' of the present *British Road to Socialism* with its broad democratic alliance, or the equally reformist formula of anti-monopoly alliances of past versions. They all distract the most class conscious workers away from the task of sharpening class antagonisms and divert them away from the only practical means of securing world peace. This fundamentally boils down to organising the working class masses for the overthrow of the capitalist state and replacing it with the *armed workers* themselves.

## Non-Violence

The women at Greenham Common have propagated more effectively than anybody else in recent times the idea of rejecting and refuting all forms of violence. They argue that violence is attributable to men exhibiting their virility, that women are *naturally* non-violent and that even Margaret Thatcher, because she is responsible for promoting the arms race, cannot be a *real* woman. This view totally ignores and is disrespectful of the role played by women in the armed struggle for revolution from Vietnam to Southern Africa to Latin America and to Europe. An observer of the Paris Commune in 1871 paid an unintentional tribute to the heroism of women when he said: "If the French nation consisted entirely of women, what a terrible nation it would be!" Britain will be no different despite the whining despair of those feminists who have never bothered

to honestly look at the role women have played historically, given their disadvantage in having been held back by the double oppression of class society.

Non-violent mass movements have always been encouraged by the bourgeoisie in preference to violent ones, as the latter are simply more effective in challenging their state power. It is imperative for the stability of any class society that the ruling class secures a monopoly of violence and that the oppressed classes accede and submit to that principle.

This has all been grist to the opportunist mill in our Party who lap it up after having been profoundly shocked by the outburst of riots in 1981 and moreover, *repulsed* by the violence of oppressed masses, as it disrupted the Eurocommunists' and centrists' locally sponsored community policing projects and rocked the peaceful perspectives outlined in the *British Road to Socialism*. The non-violent direct action of CND and the Greenham Women has subsequently been extensively promoted by the *Morning Star* and *Marxism Today* even *Straight Left* advertises it without critical comment — and all three supported its inclusion in the Party's policy on peace at the last Congress.

Although the opportunists all promote non-violence in the working class and peace movements, the same cannot be said when it comes to the bourgeois state itself. While the editor of the *Morning Star* viciously and treacherously equated the violence of the Provisional IRA with that of Margaret Thatcher in a sanctimonious sermon of an editorial which upheld the pacifist Greenham Women and two jailed Catholic Peace Action activists as the true bearers of "Christmas Spirit", he also informs us that "Britain will need a certain level of armed forces". In *Marxism Today*, comrade Bloomfield paid tribute to the non-violence of Greenham Women in that it is necessary "to avoid violent confrontations" (*Marxism Today* April 1983) with the police, as well as stating, "There are alternative, non-nuclear foreign and defence policies which would be both more effective and more in tune with the country's resources". If you think *Straight Left* is any different, then look at the July issue in which a hopelessly utopian article entitled *Jobs not Bombs* creates the illusion that the bourgeoisie is going to allow the arms industries to be converted into peaceful work as outlined in

various trade union publications such as the TGWU pamphlet *A Better Future for Defence Jobs* but which at the same time carried an article by the deputy editor who said, "The need for a strategy for defence without relying on nuclear weapons is absolutely clear" (*Straight Left*, July 1983).

What all these opportunists are doing is effectively supporting the capitalist monopoly of violence and are actually disarming the working class in the face of that violence. None of them call on the working class to learn the lessons of Saltley Gate, Grunwick and Warrington, and begin to organise their own class defence against the forces of the capitalist state and to look to smashing and replacing that state with the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the call for 'alternative defence policies' is no ordinary opportunism but a sign of incipient *social chauvinism*. Just to show how nonsensical and naive *Straight Left's* promotion of the TGWU pamphlet is, and how it leads to the emergence of social chauvinism, we only have to look at how the TGWU campaigned in practice when the Royal Ordnance Factories were threatened with privatisation.

We have already seen where social chauvinism leads to, when in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I and the collapse of the Second International, the opportunists in the workers' movement backed their own national bourgeoisie. We are again seeing the signs of it being repeated in the future, and it is therefore absolutely necessary for Leninists to stiffen their resolve in the inner-Party struggle against opportunism and liquidationism. Instead of following the bourgeois pacifists at Greenham Common, we must endeavour to combat the pernicious ideas that a new world war can be prevented by relinquishing the use of violence altogether and of uniting the whole of humanity. On the contrary, we say to the working class that it is imperialism which is driving to war and that the way to stop it is not by resolving our differences with the bourgeoisie or with its opportunist and reformist mouthpiece in the workers' movement, but through the development of the class struggle and the overthrow of capitalism. To begin to carry this out, our message to women workers, as opposed to that of Greenham Common is this:

"The whole of social life is now being militarised. Imperialism is a fierce struggle ... for the division and redivision of the world...How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only by demanding disarmament? The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept this shameful role. They will say to their sons: 'You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie.'" (V.I. Lenin, CW, Vol.23 pp.98-9). ■