

# The LENINIST

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... plus 4 page supplement

## NHS: rank and file rebel!

**T**HE RENEWED action by health workers is an inspiration to all workers. The attempt to buy off nurses has failed. The Tories have provoked a wave of rank and file revolts against the imposition of the new pay grades and now they are waving the threat of the courts against the nurses.

Kenneth Clarke, the Health Secretary, claimed to have finally defused the long running dispute with nurses in October when he threw an extra £138.5m into the pot in order to fund a pay award that was claimed would mean a 17.9% increase for 187,000 nursing staff.

The Tories' 'regrading' exercise was a crude attempt to buy off a thin layer of 'top' nurses while comprehensively *devaluing* the work of the majority. This created considerable confusion in many areas during the initial period of 'regrading'. Many nurses were told informally what grade local managers planned to put them on, only to find themselves on lower grades after the Department of Health's cost-cutting 'validation' ploy pushed down the original regrading bill.

The Tories' pathetic manoeuvre has only fuelled anger. For far too long, successive governments, both Tory and Labour, have played on the commitment of health workers to patients to grossly underpay and super exploit them. In two waves of industrial action this year, nurses and other workers in the industry have told the Tories — enough is enough!

But it is vital that this second industrial upsurge in the health industry in '88 is not derailed in the same way as the first was. Our supporters in the health industry tell

us that the mood of demoralisation that spread through health workers' ranks earlier this year as the dispute began to drag on and on with no clear victory in sight has been shaken off. This is good. But if another stalemate is to be avoided a winning strategy is *needed now*.

As in March, the main strength of this upturn so far has been its spontaneity. With or without (and mostly without) the backing of the local union officials, many hospital workers have taken strike action of various kinds, including all-out. In most hospitals, however, the anger over the Tories' regrading con has expressed itself through nurses using the tactic of working rigidly to grade.

The extent of the exploitation of health workers is illustrated by the fact that simply by doing only what they are *graded and paid* to do, nurses find that hospitals quickly come to a grinding halt. Much of this type of action has been by those workers at the bottom of the pile, enrolled and auxiliary nurses placed on the lowest Grade A. Many, for example, have rightly refused to take charge of wards at night, because the grade specifications stipulate that they *must* be continuously supervised.

This is a good, if limited tactic. Several local managers have buckled and decided to revise upwards their initial decisions on the grading of staff. It is clear though that the health authorities are coming under considerable pressure from central government to refuse to allow appeals from those working to grade. The Tories want management to stick to the regradings and in the case of appeals drag the whole thing out for as long as a

year.

At the moment, the nurses have a number of things going for them. First, to a large extent they retain bourgeois public sympathy. In fact, they are just about the only group of workers in Britain today who can evoke this in any real measure. This cannot be relied on for long. The Tories are already attempting to shift public sympathy against the nurses. Secondly, that the spontaneous nature of their action so far has managed to keep the dispute one jump ahead of the health unions officials. But again the union bureaucrats are up to their old tricks. The RCN, Nupe and Cohse are all using the dispute as an opportunity for poaching and the Cohse and Nupe leaderships have insisted on organising separate days of action rather than organising a united action.

This sectionalism is crippling. It is the same as happened earlier this year when Cohse called a day of action on March 14 (the day before Lawson's budget day) and Nupe called on its members to stage their action the next day, on March 15 itself! Health workers cannot rely on union officials, public sympathy and spontaneity. What is needed is:

- Joint Strike Committees in as many hospitals as possible. Such rank and file bodies can cut across the union divides and organise militants into an effective workers' combat organisation. This will ensure that health workers' actions are coordinated and focussed and also ensure that militant union minorities — like the London-based members of the moderate Royal College of Midwives who are starting to criticise the no-strike policy of their union — are not isolated

and demobilised.

- Joint Strike Committees must be linked nationally into a Health Workers Militant Movement which must then hammer out a fighting political platform. Health workers are still paying the price for the failure to create such a national, fighting body in the course of the dispute in the early part of this year.

- Political lessons must be learnt. The responsibility for the lack of a rank and file body today rests not with militant rank and file health workers themselves: no, the fault lies with those false revolutionary alternatives which exercise influence over the militant rank and file. In particular we must single out the SWP. At the National Health Shop Stewards Combine held in Sheffield on March 26 of this year, the SWP consistently opposed moves that would have consolidated a national movement of militants organised on a clear political programme. It is this group with its self fulfilling 'down-turn' theory which is therefore responsible for the lack of an organisational heritage from the first round of the dispute earlier this year. Any organisation which does not believe workers can win in our conditions, that leaves things to the union bureaucracy because it refuses to let its members take leading positions in the trade unions is akin to an officer in a war deserting his troops. The SWP is a barrier to working class militancy and must be overcome.

- Working strictly to grade is a decent enough tactic in the initial period of the action, but it lacks the ability to properly cohere nurses and their supporters into a fighting united front. The dispute is still to

reach the head of steam it achieved in the early part of '88, but nurses and their supporters must look to quickly reach these levels and *qualitatively higher* again. The aim must be set for all out strike action with emergency cover being provided under workers' control. This can only happen if it is coordinated through a national rank and file body. It cannot be left to Nupe and Cohse officials.

But health workers should not simply be aiming to achieve unity and all out action from their own ranks. The health workers' dispute in March received solidarity action from, amongst others, Frickley miners, workers from Vauxhall Ellesmere Port, Halewood Ford, Thorn EMI, Lucas, UCW members and local government workers. This was only a hint of what is possible. The 'narrow' regrading focus of the dispute so far has less chance of drawing in illegal, mass solidarity action from other workers.

Health workers must consolidate their fight on an explicitly *anti-capitalist* platform: one which strikes out for workers' interests *as workers*, irrespective of the ins and outs of capitalist economics. That is the only programme that can bring other workers into the fight and direct it against the bosses' government.

This task is one for the cowardly and reformist union leaderships. What is needed is communist leadership. The health workers' fight is bubbling up once more; its energy, dynamism and bravery must not be allowed to be frittered away again by reformists and revolutionary groups which cannot provide a revolutionary lead.

Ian Mahoney

## Smash the poll tax

**S**INCE being defeated in the Govan by-election on November 11, Kinnock has been scrambling around for a scape-goat. He found one in the lack lustre candidate, Bob Gillespie whom he says lacked Jim Sillars's pazzazz.

Labour's real problem though is rooted in its very nature — that of a bourgeois opposition party which has gone from being the party of alternative government to a party of crisis. To retain its base north of Gretna Green it has to play radical. Militant workers in Scotland are itching to fight and are looking for a lead. This Labour will not give. Kinnock and Co are trying to convince (bourgeois) public opinion that they are responsible future ministers. As an aspiring alternative party of government it does not feel able to pick and choose which laws *not* to obey.

The Leninist is not mourning because the Labour Party was defeated. Far from it. The working class electorate of Govan ex-

pressed their disgust at Labour's cowardice by turning its 19,500 majority into a 3,554 majority for the SNP. The SNP was calling for a 'workers' republic' and crucially stood on a far more militant platform against the poll tax than Labour. Where Labour wants to stay within the law, the SNP is prepared to organise an illegal mass boycott. The Sillars victory shows Govan workers want to fight!

But as well as not being laid low by Sillars victory neither were we surprised by it. As our comrade Alec Long wrote in our last edition: **The refusal of the Labour Party to advocate an (illegal) boycott has left the field open for the SNP, which has grown quite rapidly — as could well be seen on November 11 — on the basis of its more militant opposition to the tax.**

Yet for all Sillars' 'socialist' rhetoric, the SNP is just as much a bourgeois party as Labour. It is not anti-capitalist but pro-Scottish capitalist. We are confident that the working class in Scotland —

with its fine internationalist history — has not fallen for the lies of left nationalism peddled by Sillars which portrays English and Welsh workers as holding militant Scotland back.

This is, of course, reactionary and dangerous nonsense. It not only ignores the lessons of the miners' Great Strike — which could only have been sustained on an all-Britain basis — but plays into the Tories' hands. The reason the poll tax was introduced in Scotland first was to in order to divide opposition off. This is complimented by nationalism.

Labour in Scotland has sought to embrace nationalism rather than fight it. As we predicted "a victory for Sillars ... will undoubtedly strengthen calls in the Labour Party in Scotland to abandon Westminster and turn to demands for separatism." (*The Leninist* No71, November 1). This is indeed the case. And the rest of the left rushes on behind.

The Euros fielded their own candidate — one Doug Chalmers,

who, during his stint as leader of the Young Communist League gained notoriety by calling the police on a group of young communists, seven of whom were black. Chalmers of the Yard jumped right on the nationalist bandwagon, trumpeting through his election literature that his party was "the voice of Scotland" (along with calling for more coppers on the beat, it should be noted). Standing on a bourgeois nationalist platform to the right of the SNP — he refused to advocate an illegal boycott campaign — it is unsurprising that this opportunist got a pathetic 281 votes in an area that has a strong communist tradition.

Other sections of the left were no more than advisors for Kinnock. The *Morning Star's* electoral autopsy urged that "Labour should play its part in harnessing the strong feelings held by Scots over home rule and the pole tax to take an active stand against the Tory elected dictatorship in Westminster." (November 11).

*Socialist Worker*, too, stuck its

oar in: "Labour is in an excellent position to turn the resentment of the Tories, which lies behind the nationalism, into a real fight." It urged Labour to campaign for a Scottish assembly and poll tax boycott, continuing: "The Scottish Labour councils, if they were serious, could ignore Westminster rule. They could refuse to have anything to do with the poll tax, saying they recognise only the rule of the Edinburgh assembly." (November 19).

Workers in Scotland will we are sure reject such poisonous nationalist rubbish. The only answer for workers throughout Britain is to fight the attacks on our class on a Britain wide basis. This demands the fight for a genuine Communist Party. Then, and only then, can we make talk of socialism a reality. Communists are not interested in preserving the United Kingdom but will fight for workers' unity with every ounce of our strength. Divided we fall, united we win!

Sean Quinn



Fortnightly paper of the Leninists:  
for a genuine Communist Party

ON November 9 the *Morning Star* carried a favourable article on the launch of a National Unemployed Charter. This body was voted into being by a tiny meeting of the National Unemployed Centres Combine. Clearly the *Morning Star* considers this of major importance. Its editorial welcomed it as the fighting organisation the unemployed need.

If this were the case we would certainly offer it our unstinting support. Unfortunately it is nothing but a crude effort to steal the thunder of the Unemployed Workers Charter which was founded by *The Leninist*. The *Morning Star* knows this full well. It is embarrassed by the abject failure of the official labour movement to do anything about the crime of unemployment and equally embarrassed by the UWC's string of well publicised successful actions.

To divert from this, the *Morning Star* backs non-starters like NUC and flings around words like "unrepresentative" and "ultra leftist" against the UWC. This is, of course, a backhanded compliment. Nonetheless in all sincerity we say that instead of silly accusations it should tell its readers what it thinks about the UWC's actions and its charter. Let's have the differences clearly stated and out in the open.

The *Morning Star's* sectarianism does a grave disservice. Indeed it shows contempt for unemployed workers. This is the truth. For the *Morning Star* has us believe that a national unemployed workers' organisation can be created without the unemployed.

It is the National Unemployed Centres Combine which is really "unrepresentative". It is not an organisation of the unemployed. It is an organisation of the petty bureaucrats who run the government/TUC financed tea and sympathy centres. Such a body cannot produce anything more than a mouse.

Its NUC offers the unemployed the standard tired reformist promise of "a decent standard of living for all". But not surprisingly its 'charter' makes no call for the independent organisation of the unemployed as a militant auxiliary in the revolutionary struggle for communism - the only society that can provide a "decent standard of living for all". For NUC the unemployed are to be the grateful recipients of the good works of the 'next Labour government'. In line with this, leading NUC spokesman and Merseyside Unemployed Centre coordinator, Kevin Coyne, places great emphasis on winning the backing of "the labour movement" and "prominent politicians".

The last Labour government doubled unemployment and frankly the unemployed have had quite enough of "prominent politicians" of the likes of Michael Meacher MP, who graced NUC's launch and gave it his seal of approval. By their friends do we know them.

The unemployed have been cynically used, patronisingly lectured to and callously dumped by this type of "prominent politicians". NUC is clearly from the same mould as the vote catching stunt Jarrow '86 and the stomach turning Hands Across Britain. As such it is doomed to failure.

The official labour movement is in disorganised retreat. Its only use for NUC will be as a cover for its bankruptcy. Its "prominent" leaders do not want militant struggle, they want new realist class collaboration. The recent decision by the TUC general council to junk its formal opposition to ET proves this. As it does, the UWC's assertion that the unemployed must organise themselves on an explicitly anti-capitalist, revolutionary platform rather than relying on Norman Willis, Neil Kinnock and the official movement.

NUC is a sop not a modern version of the National Unemployed Workers Movement which the UWC is determined to build. The unemployed want action, this they will get from the UWC not NUC.

*The Editor*

Six month subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £5; Europe £8; Rest of World £10 (airmail £17.50). Annual subscription rates: Britain and Ireland £10. Institutions £20; Europe £16. Institutions £26; Rest of World £20 (airmail £35). Institutions £30 (airmail £45). Back copies: Issues 1-6 (theoretical journal) £1 each plus 25p p&p. All cheques payable to November Publications Ltd. Printed by: Morning Litho Printers Ltd. (TU), Unit 5 St Marks Industrial Est., 439 North Woolich Road, London E16 2BS. Published by: November Publications, BCM Box 928, London copyright November 1988 ISSN 0262-1649

## LETTERS

### Brent

There has been a positive willingness by workers in the London Borough of Brent to fightback against the cost and job cutting Labour council. However, the Labourites' attitude to the workers has also hardened. The strikes at Social Services Area 2 office and at the Housing Needs Unit stand as the longest strikes in Brent Nalگو history so far and have provided a focus for the anger of all Brent workers. The strike in Social Services was settled with a victory for the strikers, while the dispute in Housing Needs continues. An important step forward has been made by the willingness of workers to act independently of the openly pro-council Nalگو branch leadership. At the Housing Needs Unit, council management recruited scab labour to cover the work of strikers. Despite the fact that our friends in the SWP were "amazed" that the Labour Council acted so "treacherously", to their credit, they tried to organise striking social workers to join the HNU picket. Unfortunately only 50 pickets could be mobilised and then they were hopelessly out manoeuvred by the police. Nonetheless because this was an unofficial and so-called secondary action it has to be praised; as was the decision of the CPSA at the local job centre to black further attempts by the council management to recruit more scabs. What recent actions in Brent confirm is the correctness of *The Leninist's* insistence that the Labour council is an enemy of the workers and in essence no different from any other employer. The next issue of *Brent: Unite and Fight!*, the bulletin of Brent Nalگو Leninist supporters is now out. Order copies of issue No2 (5p each plus sae) from BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.

Dick Keogh  
Brent

### Pales-tine

I've decided I no longer wish to support *The Leninist*, and have cancelled my standing order payments. Although our disagreement on Palestine is a tactical one relative to the British revolution, I feel it reflects a difference in attitudes to communist internationalism. Also, I feel that *The Leninist's* 'pitch' is aimed very much at the Trotskyist left, and was even before the CPGB/CPB split undermined the idea of 'defending and reorganising the CPGB'.

*The Leninist* No.66 carried a letter by myself, and Alan Merrik's response, (*Palestine - Solidarity and Communists in Britain*). I'd like to reply to Alan Merrik's arguments.

Supporting PLO policy for an independent state on land liberated from Zionist control is recognising the right of the Palestinians to national self-determination. It does not mean granting the right of the oppressor nation to oppress. Neither is it in contradiction to the hope of a single secular, democratic state in all of Palestine.

The economic advantages of large states are beyond question. The freedom to secede, and the freedom to struggle for secession, is nevertheless to be supported by communists.

Alan Merrik drew a false parallel with Ireland in 1921, when part

of the Irish nation was left to British colonial rule, with disastrous consequences for both the north and south of Ireland. This represented a threat for Irish nationalism. However, the Irish were, and are, faced with colonial rule from another country.

The Palestinians are faced with an entire settler nation who at present are their oppressors, but with whom they wish to live without oppression. I would argue that denying the Palestinians the right to secede would have been parallel to insisting that Ireland struggled not for independence, but for some sort of equality within a federated state of Britain and Ireland. The partition of Ireland is not a parallel for the Palestinians.

I'm reminded of the attitude of the *Militant* Tendency towards Irish Republicanism; that it doesn't matter because they'll all be granted freedom in *Militant's* United States of Europe.

By referring to the Jewish nation, I don't mean that this gives them the right to occupy the land of another nation and set up a racist, apartheid state. In this sense Israel has no right to exist. However, the Jewish nation does exist, and has an inalienable right to do so. This poses vital tactical questions for the PLO. It is unfortunate that most Israelis equate their nationality with Zionism and thus racism.

This is, however, starting to change; just as the Palestinians have never been so united, Israelis have never been so divided. Though anti-Zionist Israelis are still a small minority, the uniform hegemony of Zionism has gone forever. This applies equally to Zionism's allies and supporters internationally. PLO policy has been successful in fostering these divisions, which strengthen the uprising and further the Palestinian cause.

Of course we must be realistic about the economic prospects for a small Palestinian state. It is difficult to see how the Palestinians themselves could be anything else. However, we should also be realistic about the economic prospects for the Palestinians under occupation. Paying taxes and receiving next to nothing in return; being forbidden from sinking new wells while settlers have free access to water; and olive growers do perform better when their trees are not uprooted by soldiers. Or would *The Leninist* agree with the Israeli right in wanting annexation of the occupied territories?

Alan Merrik almost implies that the uprising happened in spite of the PLO, a slanderous attitude. It's no coincidence that the uprising began a few months after the reunification of the PLO factions; it would have been unthinkable without Palestinian unity.

The right of an oppressed nation to struggle for secession is, in practice, as important as their right to actually secede. It is a pity that *The Leninist* does not feel able to give the Palestinians this right.

Phil Sanderson  
Herts

Alan Merrik replies:

Sanderson's accusation that we deny the right of the Palestinian people to self determination is laughable. The point that we emphasised in both issue 64 and 66 was that 'self-determination' through the creation of a Palestinian mini-state in the occupied territories was no self-determination at all. It can have no independence, economically, militarily or politically. And to cap it all, it leaves out the vast majority of Palestinians.

What of the estimated half million Palestinians in Israel, the one million plus in Jordan and the mil-

lions of others scattered throughout various Arab counties? Are they supposed to cram into the bantustan on the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

Our articles made our defence of Palestinian self determination - real self determination - abundantly clear. We stated that this must entail the destruction of the Israeli imperialist state. Unless this happens a Palestinian state is precisely left in the same position as Kwazululand and Ireland (though it's more like Free Staters accepting six not twenty-six counties). We can't take Sanderson's facile comparison of *Militant* and *The Leninist* seriously. If there is a similarity with *Militant* he need look no further than his own stagist position.

The problem with the PLO is that it is a bourgeois nationalist movement, which with Gorbachev's encouragement, is retreating from bourgeois democratic demands. This and the Menshevik and stagist approach of the Palestinian Communist Party Sanderson so admires must be openly criticised by communists. No wonder Sanderson tells us he has "a difference in attitudes to communist internationalism". Unfortunately he does not elaborate this.

We are, whatever Sanderson says, committed to reorganising our CPGB. This is something Sanderson is formally abandoning - although calling himself one of our 'supporters' he was unwilling to give anything to our Summer Offensive. Clearly he is not willing to struggle for revolution in his own country - the central task of proletarian internationalism. Instead he seeks to retain self respect by latching onto the coat-tails of a nationalist organisation far, far away.

### Royal visits

The Workers Theatre Movement staged a militant protest against Elizabeth Windsor's visit to the newly renamed Royal National Theatre.

We objected to the National Theatre becoming the 'Royal' National Theatre. It gives up any formal commitment to be a theatre for all the people of this country. Any hope that the use of the word 'Royal' can prevent Thatcher and her ilk from attacking the National Theatre, will prove to be futile. There is only one way to stop the rule of profits over the arts and all walks of life, that is to smash the system based on profits before needs.

This cause, the cause of the working class, is what we, as members of the Workers Theatre Movement, serve. We performed a hard hitting sketch called *Their Theatre and Ours* from 1932. It summed up what we stand for: 'We are building a weapon, a weapon in the struggle for the freedom of our class! A weapon in the fight against poverty, starvation and war!'

Tom Cormack

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.

# Time, gentlemen, please

**The middle ground that Time To Go attempts to occupy does not exist. The only position for the working class to fight from is to unequivocally oppose the British occupation of the Six Counties and all British 'solutions'. That means demanding troops out now and self determination for the Irish people**

ON SATURDAY November 19 the 'Time To Go' campaign held a 'delegate conference' in London. This, apparently, was to brief 'activists' with the arguments to take on Time To Go's own shopworn brand of 'withdrawal' politics.

And what politics! The show kicked off (an hour late) with a panel of three speakers, one of whom was Bob Rowthorn, Cambridge economist, self confessed Euro reformist and co-author of the recent book *Northern Ireland: the political economy of conflict*. Rowthorn started by telling the assembled crowd of about 400 that "there are many different ways to withdraw". He went on to outline these different ways, and then to take his pick.

The first option was to leave immediately — troops out now. Alas, he said, this would lead to a "power vacuum ... anarchy" and hence to the inevitable "blood-bath". This 'Vietnam type solution' with 'Britain leaving from the skids of its helicopters' — his phrase here — clearly would not do. Perhaps this was a lapse into Rowthorn's past as a member of the International Socialists (now SWP). But we Leninists would most certainly regard Vietnam as a victory for the working class. For communists, unlike Rowthorn and Time To Go, there could be no better solution for the 'Irish question' than the one that the Vietnamese people achieved through their heroic self sacrifice.

The 'solution' which Rowthorn advocated was one of getting a "commitment" from a British government to withdraw in a given period of time. But Britain must consent to prop up the Six Counties economically. This would, he argued, create a situation where the Twenty-six County state could take control over the Six Counties. To enable the Twenty-six Counties to do this, Britain should arm it.

Of course, the last time British imperialism armed the Twenty-six Counties, in 1922, it used those arms to drown revolutionary republicanism in its own blood, sealing partition with the murder of many of Ireland's finest freedom fighters. In the real world this is exactly what a British armed Dublin government would do again. The liberation forces in the Six Counties — which having been fighting a revolutionary war against Britain for nearly two decades — are as much a threat to the bourgeoisie in the south as they are a threat to the British imperialists. A British sponsored Thirty-two County state could only but be a

counterrevolutionary state.

Rowthorn seems to recognise this. He argued that if there was any resistance Britain should use "coercion" to enforce its 'solution'. This he termed the "carrot and stick of British withdrawal". A more concise term might just be 'counterrevolution'.

Time To Go's principle 'front', Labour MP Clare Short, who gave the closing speech, made the same essential points in an interview in the same day's *Morning Star*. More, she implicitly justified the intervention of British troops in 1969, "because the local security forces weren't neutral, somebody else had to go in and intervene." That 'somebody else' was the British imperialist army!

The Time To Go initiators presume British imperialism to be neutral — in fact, potentially benevolent. It is looked to to sort out the 'troubles' and unify Ireland. The only thing that prevents this is that British imperialism is being a little silly, and just needs to be convinced of how sensible the arguments of Short and Rowthorn are. This, as more mainstream bourgeois politicians know, is nonsense.

The occupation of the Six Counties is politically of great importance to the ruling class in Britain. The Six Counties, unlike other colonies, is part of the United Kingdom state. As Enoch Powell so wisely commented, the possession of the Six Counties ensures Britain's will to be a nation. Clare Short may say that she doesn't "believe that there's any benefit for either Britain or Ireland in Britain remaining", but more astute imperialist politicians know better.

The middle ground that Time To Go attempts to occupy does not exist. The only position for the working class to fight from is to unequivocally oppose the British occupation of the Six Counties and all British 'solutions'. That means demanding troops out now and self determination for the Irish people — which, despite what Short and Co may believe, cannot be exercised from Labour Party committee meetings in Britain.

The reaction of many British leftists to this is very revealing. Back in 1978, when, with Young Liberal backing, another Time To Go campaign was launched, much of the revolutionary left opposed its chauvinist platform and organised a distinct contingent on the final march around the demand for troops out now. In 1988 they have almost universally adopted the ground of the Young Liberals ten years ago.

Thus we find strange political

bedfellows. CPB general secretary Mike Hicks and his NCP counterpart Eric Trevett find themselves alongside the likes of *7 Days* editor, Chris Myant and their *bête noire*, Martin Jacques himself, not to mention well-known Trotskyites ('handmaidens of fascism' according to these centrists) like Tariq Ali and Paul Foot. A broad opportunist alliance, and no mistake!

Ten years ago the organisations that Ali and Foot were associated with, the IMG and the SWP, marched in an independent anti-imperialist contingent. Now they have jumped on the Time To Go bandwagon with both feet.

The Troops Out Movement, while formally standing against the platform of Time To Go, have nothing to pose against it. 'Deflated' is the best way to describe its low level performance at the conference. It has nothing practical to oppose Time To Go with. The only leaflet handed out by TOMers at the conference advertised an East London TOM Christmas party!

Lastly, another group to formally oppose Time To Go, the WRP (*Workers Press*), handed out a leaflet outside the conference, titled 'British Labour Must Take Sides'. It has, time and time again ... with British imperialism. This problem aside, the leaflet proposes no practical action to challenge the chauvinism of Time To Go.

The communist approach is very different. We link our revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice. This means fighting for an organised political challenge to Time To Go's pro-imperialist stand. This is why we are taking the lead, under the banner of Hands Off Ireland!, in organising an anti-imperialist contingent on the Time To Go march in August 1989 — to defeat its politics on the streets and to lay the basis for the solidarity movement the revolutionary masses of Ireland deserve.

We will not fawn before Labourite luminaries as they lecture the Irish against violence. Hands Off Ireland! unconditionally supports those who daily risk their lives on the streets of Belfast and Derry to make a reality of the demands 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self determination for the Irish people as a whole'.

Hands Off Ireland! will turn the reformists' implicitly chauvinist stunt demo on its head. We call on all genuine anti-imperialists not to stand aside from Time To Go or merely to gripe about it: support Hands Off Ireland!

Alan Merrick

On November 24, thousands of students clashed with police in central London during a demonstration against the Tories 'top up' loans attack on student funding. A breakaway from the main demonstration, 2-3 thousand strong, attempted to march on parliament over the Westminster bridge. Police blocked their route and then launched waves of mounted attacks on the student's ranks. Around twenty people, nearly all students were officially known to be injured and there were 60 arrests. At the height of the protest, several bridges across the Thames were blocked and traffic was brought to a standstill. We warmly welcome the students determination to fight. Unrest among students is often a barometer of the state of the broader class struggle. However, students must learn important lessons from this day. They should note the ease with which the police brought disarray and chaos to their ranks when they attacked: clearly, we need to take the *organisation* of our defence more seriously. They should take note of the role of NUS bureaucrats — who were more concerned to dampen down the protest than making it effective — and the Parliamentary Labour Party. Benn naively demanded the police commissioner account for the conduct of his men, while Kinnock contemptuously attacked militant students. Students should seek allies from the ranks of the militant working class.

On December 18, the results of the NUM's ballot on an overtime ban over British Coal's refusal to negotiate a 1988 pay increase will be known. No matter which way this particular vote goes, militants in the union have a desperate fight on their hands not simply over pay, but to make sure the union does not fragment further as a coherent national body. An overtime ban is clearly not adequate. BC is moving in for the kill in preparation for the industry to be privatised. Haslam has recently announced plans to close a further 20 collieries at a cost of 20,000 in order to streamline the industry and BC clearly has ominous plans for the remaining pits. The management is attempting to fragment the union by bypassing national negotiations with the NUM and directly introducing more performance related bonus systems. Miners need a fighting strategy. This is not to be found in the national leadership of the NUM, one section of which seeks survival through a merger with the TGWU, the other through some sort of bureaucratic unity with the UDM. Instead, what is required is the building of a militant rank and file movement in the NUM. It must commit itself to breaking through the area barriers in the NUM, reaching out to the UDM membership, fighting for the creation of an industrial union for all energy workers and the struggle for socialism.



•Scargill: determined to stand and fight, but no winning strategy

The TUC GCHQ day of action on November 9 was a success despite, rather than because of, Willis and the union tops. CPSA rank and file in particular played an honourable role, voting to take action despite the sabotage of their rightwing leadership. On the day, over 200,000 civil servants demonstrated opposition to the GCHQ sackings along with Frickley miners, dockers in Hull and Tilbury, South London teachers, Coventry Dunlop workers and Tyne shipyard workers. Undoubtedly, the response to the TUC's tame calls for protest tapped into a vein of genuine anger in our class, and also reflects an upturn in the confidence of workers and their willingness to fight. This should be an encouragement to all working class partisans. But we must always be wary of the TUC's role. It may have 'organised' the November 9 action (in spite of itself), but in fact the battle to reinstate GCHQ workers was lost in 1984 when the TUC wasted the potential of the strike action of one million workers who stopped work in protest at the ban. In the run up to November 9, Willis made it clear that the TUC were backing away from any confrontation with the Tories anti-secondary action legislation and simply calling for workers to 'demonstrate'. If we leave the leadership of any upsurge of workers' struggles in their treacherous hands, then we can look forward to more defeats of the like of P&O and GCHQ.

## To the limit



Again we have surpassed our £600 monthly fund as our readers have responded well to our calls for extra efforts over the last month. But only just! Our total stands at £614. So again we must remind readers that we still not only have to achieve our monthly fund, we must also wipe out the £800 shortfall we accumulated during the Summer. Rather than taking chunks out of it, at the moment we are just nibbling away at its edges, as with the £14 excess this month. We thus still have around £750 to find alongside our monthly £600 target. We still desperately need to make up the shortfall.

**C**OMRADES, Turkey is rapidly advancing to a revolutionary situation of unprecedented violence. The internal contradictions of the bourgeoisie are much more profound than in 1980 [the year when the army launched a fascist coup to negatively resolve the revolutionary situation]. The referendum very clearly reflects the impasse which the bourgeoisie has hit.

While they are fighting each other, in order not to aggravate the situation they are getting into an absurd situation. They are bringing onto the agenda problems which do not in any respect concern anyone but themselves. This actually aggravates the situation. Moreover, while the depth of the cracks are still not visible, they have begun to draw weapons on each other, blood is flowing.

In other words, because the roots of the contradictions are so deep the contradictions are assuming extremely sharp forms even though they have not fully matured.

The suffering of the working class and working people have reached unbearable levels. The activity of the working class too is developing at a much higher level than in the period before 1980. The record of strikes and actions last year has surpassed that of the years before 1980. But we see recently that there has been a relative pause. Why?

### Pause for preparation

This is a pause of preparation. The working class movement is preparing to raise its activity. It is trying to eliminate something which is bothering it. It is making preparations for this.

Fascism came and dealt severe blows to left wing organisations. It is not possible to say that fascism did no harm. It did great harm to left wing organisations. Some suffered less, some were dealt much more severe blows. Some continued to work because they were communists. Some put a stop to their work after being dealt a few blows. They are a separate topic. Here it is clear that fascism dealt heavy blows to left wing organisations.

But subsequently fascism began to disintegrate without having put down deep roots. The situation began to relax. The speed at which this happened and the speed at which the left wing organisations arose to meet the new situation did not match. The left wing organisations could not achieve the *organisational* strength to fulfil the tasks demanded by the new, more relaxed atmosphere and inevitably they lagged behind the new situation *organisationally*.

I emphasised the word *organisational*. There are also organisations who lagged behind the situation politically. But even those which do not lag behind politically lag organisationally. For example, it cannot be said that we lag behind politically, but nevertheless our organisational strength is still not enough to take advantage of the opportunities in Turkey. This is a fact, and the problem arises from this.

A political vacuum appeared; a political vacuum in respect to the vanguard organisation. Our working class had gained a great deal of experience. Its level of consciousness was much more advanced than in the 1960s and 1970s. For this reason, we say that the present pause is not a result of backwardness but because the working class is more advanced. It is making preparations to solve the problem.

We will return to this below. But first, in order to make this question clearer, let us look at it from another point of view.

### Subjective obstacles to activity

Now, you know that the programme of action drawn up by the Turk Is trade union confederation [Turkey's TUC - which was threatening to call a series of actions up to and including a general strike] was going to be applied stage-by-stage. At a certain juncture however things stopped and got stuck. Why did things get stuck? There are two groups of reasons. The first are subjective reasons - that is reasons that are connected with the intentions and attitudes of various political forces.

If Turk Is implemented its programme for action it could have resulted in an uprising, barricade struggle or even a civil war, and the bourgeoisie sees this. That is why it has

This the second part of the speech given at a rally in L...  
of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of T...  
revolution

# We will defeat

obstructed the actions: "Stop, don't go any further!" it said.

If favourable political soil for this influence had not existed, this influence would certainly not have been so effective. But because the political soil was favourable, this influence of the bourgeoisie could be effectively exerted and the programme for action was put on the shelf and has been postponed.

This shelving of the programme for action has been profoundly resented among the workers. This resentment can show itself in two ways: First, it could remove the Turk Is leaders who are not liked and bring in new leaders - it is that simple. Secondly, resentment could accumulate and with some of them beating the drum things could go towards dividing or splitting Turk Is. It could be said that nothing can be done within this confederation, let us find another confederation for ourselves. The accumulating resentment could be channelled in this direction.

While it went out to get its programme for action put on the shelf, the bourgeoisie is at the same time calculating on splitting Turk Is. In any case it is not just the bourgeoisie but several other forces which are working in this direction. Among these are both traitors like the 'United Communist Party of Turkey' and leftists who we do not call traitors.

With their mistaken or wrong policies they are helping the bourgeoisie. They are continually saying that Turk Is is not changing and that nothing can be done with it. They are continually referring to the blocking of the programme for action in order to agitate for a separate confederation. These are the stupid friends of the working class.

The programme for action is such that it can only be implemented as a whole. A split in Turk Is would mean that this programme would remain on the shelf. Unlike its stupid friends, our working class sees this. We see that it is not channelling its resentment primarily into changing the trade union leaderships or into splitting the trade unions. It is moving to a different end.

### The objective obstacle to action

Before we come to this, let us look at the second group of reasons for the failure to implement the programme for action. To this end, let us briefly recall the past.

You will remember that when our Party was advancing, when it was pursuing a militant line, DISK [the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions] was also rapidly advancing. But when opportunism began to predominate in the leadership of our Party, when this opportunism brought the disease of trade unionism into the Party, then we see that this disease did not even benefit the trade union movement. We see that this halted the development of DISK. DISK began to go backwards, to come under the control of the social democrats. When DISK was closed it was an organisation which was under social democratic leadership and going backwards.

Who then are we going to accuse, who was responsible for this? The main responsibility lies with opportunism in our Party. Because, comrades, this was a trade union - good or bad, revolutionary or non-revolutionary, progressive or reactionary. A trade union can only conduct trade unionism. A trade union cannot fulfil the tasks of a political party. If a political party which should be the vanguard throws the ball to the feet of a trade union because of its opportunism, all this does is smother the trade union.

While the opportunist leaders were trying to stop the Taris uprising together with the Republican People's Party MPs [the social



The revolutionary wave, which saw workers in Turkey organise a million strong May Day de

democratic party], could it be expected that DISK would turn it into a nationwide uprising? This was a task beyond DISK. It could not have done it and could not do it.

Now let us look what those who are moaning that Turk Is cannot do it today are doing themselves. Today, all of these splitters have their own private shop, whether it be Tursan Is, Demokratik Teksif Union or Otomobil Is, Laspektim Is, Genel Hizmet Is [trade unions not affiliated to Turk Is] ... When it comes to talk they have very fine words but when it comes to action they don't do anything.

Today, the time of these 'progressive' trade unionists is devoted to going from factory to factory to placate the workers; "Oh let us not do it, don't do anything, it would be a provocation, they would shut down the union". They are preventing every type of revolutionary activity. Many more examples could be cited, ranging from Laspektim Is to Otomobil Is, the rank and file of which at this moment wants to go out on strike against MESS [Metal and Engineering Employers Federation].

DISK could not do it before, the 'private' trade unions of those who are complaining that Turk Is cannot do it today can't do anything either. As we said above, if its programme of action was implemented up to a certain point, it is not clear whether the outcome would be an uprising, barricade struggle or a civil war. The situation in Turkey, the anger within the working class and the nature of its programme of action would have this result. As a trade union confederation, Turk Is cannot shoulder the consequences.

### Our working class is creating the solution

It is very obvious that Turk Is as a trade union - even a giant trade union - cannot undertake actions which will become highly political on the first or second day and will become political in a revolutionary way. It cannot lead these actions. This is an objective phenomenon because these actions which need to be undertaken to the same extent require a political leadership. This is the situation.

Our working class sees this and for this reason does not favour splits nor does it give

prime importance to overturning the set up in the trade unions. A struggle is continuing against the conservative leaders of the trade unions, but the main energy is being channelled into solving the main question. For if this question is not resolved, it would be both difficult to improve the trade union leaderships and also it would be for nothing even if that could happen.

When we said above what the main question was we spoke about the political vacuum which has arisen as a consequence of the organisational blows which fascism dealt to the left wing organisations. We looked at the same question from the point of view of the situation in the trade union sphere and we have arrived at the same point. Today in Turkey there is a need for a revolutionary political centre.

Thus it is that recently our capable working class has been creating a solution to this problem during the relative stagnation or halt that has appeared in the working class movement. It is establishing *workers' commissions* in various branches of industry. Made up of progressive workers, these commissions are undertaking the role of a revolutionary political centre and are emerging as a means of eliminating the political vacuum.

Comrades, the workers' commissions are an extremely important development. Just as they developed in the Soviet Union, we are seeing before us the seeds of a similar phenomenon in Turkey as well. We cannot say now whether or not these seeds will develop and sprout in a healthy way, but these are organisational forms, are the seeds of the phenomenon we have mentioned - that is certain.

Our working class knows that nothing can be achieved by blind actions. It learnt this very well in the period before 1980. Without a political leadership and a revolutionary centre gains are not permanent. It is with this aim that the working class is establishing revolutionary centres.

It appears that, if these commissions are not derailed or deflected, the question of leadership of the working class will be determined on the basis of class struggle and in a struggle between policies in these commissions. Just as the Bolshevik Party in Russia concluded the process of winning leadership by gaining the majority of the soviets, it appears that it will be the same in Turkey. Our Party will wage a determined struggle in these commissions.

London on September 10 1988 by comrade Emine Engin, Turkey. This section concentrates on the prospects for in Turkey

# at the enemy!



monstration in 1977, is on the rise again

This struggle has already begun. In fact there are those who are trying to smother these commissions before they have sprouted. On the one hand, the SHP [Social Democratic Populist Party] and the UCPT – that is, all the new social democrats – are waiting in ambush. On the other hand, the stupid friends of the working class make one long for intelligent enemies.

In order not to undermine the confidence felt in them by the stupid friends of the working class and in order to secure a strong position for themselves, the SHP and the UCPT have stuck their noses into the initiative but for the moment are not saying too much. More than that, they are trying to restrict the workers' commissions to a trade union opposition. In other words, instead of trying to lead the commissions to a higher level, to a political level, they are restricting them to the role of opposition – not even aspiring to the power of trade unions for them.

How are they doing this? There is a higher, or umbrella, organisation of the workers' commissions and they are calling this the higher organ of the Workers' Trade Union Opposition. The name of these organisational forms among the rank and file is workers' commissions. In various places they are also called workers' councils. They emerged with a function which goes far beyond that of a trade union opposition. But, nevertheless, the higher organisation of these commissions, the Istanbul-wide organisation, is called the Workers' Trade Union Opposition. The spread of this name from top to bottom would mean to denigrate or to smother the function of the rank and file organisations, to put the workers' commissions into a strait-jacket.

These organisations can definitely not be restricted to the role of the trade union opposition, or even parallel leadership, take your pick. These organisations are not an alternative to the trade unions. These organisations complement the trade union struggle by the unions. In various places they guide the oppositions which exist in the trade unions but they go much further beyond this and are organisations of a revolutionary political centre. To restrict this organisational form to the role of the trade union opposition means to kill it before it is born. This creative initiative belongs to our working class and it will certainly not allow it to be smothered in such a way.

It is not necessary to establish workers'

commissions in order to conduct the trade union opposition struggle. Whoever wants to do that can come together in trade union halls and conduct some opposition. The workers' commissions can guide this opposition but they cannot be restricted to this role.

## The result will be determined by struggle

The workers know very well what is needed. These commissions will develop in the way we have indicated because we are in fact simply pointing out a function, the need for which is felt in real life. We are stating the *raison d'être* of these commissions. We are not creating anything new in our own minds, we are not making anything up. In connection with this we propose that the name 'the Istanbul Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition' be changed immediately.

In contrast, some revolutionary friends, for example the TDKP [Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey], are creating confusion. They are opposed to Turk Is, they are opposed to DISK, they are opposed to the concept of trade unions. But they support the idea of these commissions undertaking the role of a trade union opposition. This is inexplicable. They are opposed to trade unions, but the point at which they have arrived does not go beyond trade unionism. It is clear that they have placed too much hope in the trade unions, that their hopes have been dashed and they are still looking for new hopes within the same framework. It is a mistake to be opposed to trade unions and it is another mistake to be restricted within the framework of trade unions.

As we said already, there will be an intensive struggle within and around these organisational forms. Their name and function will cease to be 'trade union opposition'. The result of all this will be determined by struggle. We have limitless confidence in the common sense of our working class which has sown this fine seed.

With both its rank and file organisations and its higher organisations this phenomenon will develop in the direction of filling the vacuum which exists. It is a very important beginning – very important. It is the most

important development in Turkey in recent times: the birth of such a workers' organisation which can serve as the nucleus of a working class state in the future. The fact is that it has been born even before a revolutionary situation has emerged.

We have said that a revolutionary situation is approaching; we have said that this approaching revolutionary situation will be the most violent revolutionary situation in the history of Turkey. Is it not in any case clear from the fact that even before the revolutionary situation emerges the workers have already created an organisation which can become a state organisation in the future!

Now we come to the conclusion and the shortest section of this speech.

## The tasks of our Party

Comrades, the type of path that will be followed by our Party has been set out very clearly in our organisational strategy. Here I want to touch upon two things together: First, another characteristic of the situation in Turkey and secondly in connection with this, the importance of the two points set out in our strategy.

## A discipline organisation and gaining new members compliment each other

The bourgeoisie has tried everything and has been unable to solve the problems it has been struggling with. It is at an impasse. While struggling it is decaying and this decay spreads to the whole of society. Undoubtedly it is also preparing once again to use the weapon of fascism. But for the moment the most effective weapon it is using against the working class movement is laxity and slackness caused by its spreading decay. These diseases are even able to find their way into our Party.

We must not permit this. Only our working class can save this society which is surrounded by the smell of decay emanating from the bourgeoisie. In order for it to be able to accomplish this glorious historical task, it needs an iron disciplined general staff which functions perfectly and does not allow any slackness to enter into it.

The organisational strategy of our Party emphasises both the importance of winning new members from the advanced sections of the working class and also the importance of strengthening centralism and discipline. Relying on the lessons we have learned while applying this strategy, I want to stress the importance which these two points bear together.

Comrades, communist discipline and centralist operation are a skeleton which can hold flesh only in close union with the working masses, with the people. This is directly connected not with being a 'mass party' in the opportunist sense, but with being able to hold a definite number of members. Various reasons can be cited for this.

Communist discipline is a product of consciousness and belief. The correctness of the policy of the Party is confirmed in the last analysis by whether or not it is able to establish itself among the workers. Consequently discipline too becomes profoundly convincing primarily at that time. It develops from being a personal characteristic into a collective characteristic.

If we give another very practical example, the cadres are few and there is a lot of work. This situation is a factor which inevitably provokes slackness even among the most disciplined comrades. In the face of so much work

mistakes are made, promises are not kept and there are delays. Even if these are well intentioned and there are excuses they are still slackness.

Gaining new members is a necessary condition for the strengthening of centralism and discipline. Comrade Yurukoglu explained the criteria very well last year. At the same time as accepting new members, the type of organisation into which we are taking them is also vitally important from the point of view of developing and ensuring the continuity of the Party's communist culture and preventing slackness from entering into the Party. We must embrace our communist values and Party norms and must never counterpose them to gaining new members. Any member who we gained by sacrificing these norms would not really be gained for the Party at all.

## The revolt is growing

The values and norms which the new social democrats find stale and dogmatic retain their freshness for us communists because these are the necessary condition for waging a struggle as one fist.

Joining the Party is an unforgettable turning point in the life of a person, and so it should be. A person's heart should beat faster throughout his/her life whenever he/she remembers that moment. Communists do not recognise 'personal' friendship with *enemies* of the Party. If anyone considers this to be contrary to 'civilised behaviour' then we must consider him or her to be a 'little' liberal.

Cell meetings must proceed regularly, dues must be paid regularly and education on the basis of the newspaper must be conducted under all circumstances and failure to read the newspaper should never enter into our wildest dreams. These are really faults which deserve to be punished. However, the most important thing is that comrades strive not to make these mistakes.

We could say more, but there is no need. Let us gain new members to such an organisation and to ensure that we have such an organisation let us never forget for a moment the aim of our strategy of gaining worker members. These are necessary if we are to struggle against the decaying bourgeoisie. Our comrades who do not blink at any kind of self sacrifice and undertake it with laughter will meet these requirements.

Comrades, the Communist Party is a tool for destroying the system and for changing the world. To think that this situation could be accomplished in a situation like a rose garden without thorns would be liberalism not communism.

We will come under various attacks and fall into various traps and struggle with various difficulties. These are the features of our profession, features which we have accepted with determination and honour when choosing this profession; features which we have accepted and have expected when choosing this profession.

We are not one of those liberals who circulate in the guise of communists. We are not one of those who leave aside the great struggle between classes and begs the enemy for 'freedom'. We are communists. Attacks and difficulties do harm in the short term. I do not say they don't. But in the long term, our skin which has become thickened through many experiences will become a bit more thick. Our comrades know this and in the face of difficulties are continuing this struggle with great determination. So it is.

This is the central September 10 meeting, but September 10 is not being commemorated only here. All Party organisations celebrate September 10 with militant actions in Turkey today. They distribute leaflets, stick up posters and hold meetings. September 10 is also being commemorated in the prisons and the barracks.

On the 68th Anniversary of the founding of our Party, we commemorate our young comrade Inanc with the respect, love and spirit of determined revolt which is appropriate to her. In its 68th year our Communist Party of Turkey is closer to and is more convinced of the victory of revolution.

Comrades, let me conclude with these fine words from comrade Yurukoglu: "No one can defeat us but ourselves." We, however, are determined not to defeat ourselves but the enemy.

Long live communism!

The only weapon is the Party, the only path is revolution!



# Fighting reaction: East and West



Two of a kind

'Rats and Sinking Ships', part 2: Last issue we reported that Dave Cook, onetime Euro National (dis-)Organiser was leaving to cycle to Australia - with or without the aid of alternative water transport, we do not know. Now news has reached us that Chris Myant, ill-starred editor of the appalling 7 Days, is deserting his post to run off and write a book on Ireland (its west of Liverpool, Chris). We wish him all the best - not out of personal good will, but in the earnest hope that this is a precursor to the death rattle of one of the most boring papers we have ever had the misfortune to come across.

Pitter-patter, pitter-patter ... splash: sinking ships and fickle rodents revisited. Latest to join 'official communism's' equivalent of the 'Grand Order of the Water Rats' is Dave Whitfield, late of the Morning Star. David has cut his losses and high-tailed it out of Tony Chater's leaky vessel before it slips gently beneath the waves. The small armada of lifeboats bearing faithless ex-apparatchiks of 'official communism' is threatening to become a danger to shipping.

Leonid Abalkin, head of the economics institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a leading economic adviser to the Soviet leadership, announced that the 13th five year plan "would not run from top to bottom. It must not be vertical - it must be horizontal". What this means is the prevalence of the market. The example which Abalkin uses as a model is Sweden, with which apparently the Soviet Union "has a lot in common". Like what for instance? Lots of snow? After 71 years of socialism, it will be interesting to hear the Soviet sycophants like the NCP and CPB justify the Soviet Union turning to the model of social democracy for answers.

On November 11 Bernadette McAliskey spoke at a Troops Out Movement meeting in London. The fascist BNP attempted to attack the meeting. Seven of them tried to get in. Red Action and others responded to this by smacking their teeth in. Bloody good too, say we all. Well, not all really. Some TOM stewards were heard to bemoan the ungentlemanly conduct of those who were doing their job. Members of the SWP tried to stop the kicking the fascist scum got! No doubt if the fascists had got in, TOM and the SWP would have wreaked their revenge by striking the BNP off their Christmas card list.

THE 'official communists' at the head of the Polish party and state were eager to have Thatcher visit them. They wanted her help in easing their massive debt problem. For the leaders of Solidarnosc this was a heaven sent opportunity which they used to full effect.

Thatcher's visit came at an important moment in the political development of both the Polish United Workers Party and Solidarnosc. It threw into relief the bankruptcy of Jaruzelski and Co as well as confirming yet again the explicitly pro-capitalist, anti-socialist nature of Lech Walesa and Solidarnosc. But perhaps more starkly, it showed just how confused 'official communism' and most petty bourgeois revolutionary groups are.

The majority of the British left have been compromised by their support either for a counterrevolutionary movement, ie Solidarnosc, or for a bureaucratic caste of 'official communists' which has no solutions for Poland.

Let's begin with the ilk of the Morning Star, Straight Left and the New Worker - which support the Jaruzelski leadership. They have been confused and excruciatingly embarrassed by Thatcher's Polish sojourn.

The New Worker, paper of the crusty old centrist New Communist Party, starts its editorial of November 4 by making the fairly mundane point that the talk of Thatcher's "hypocrisy" in attacking and proscribing trade unions at home while bearhugging Solidarnosc in Poland is just cant. In fact, there is a consistency here. Thatcher's administration has steadfastly pursued anti-working class and anti-socialist policies: which is precisely why she loves the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc and why Solidarnosc loves her, of course.

Quite right, New Worker. Well spotted. But now, how do you account for the fact that the leadership of the PUWP have if anything been even more fawning in their praise of Thatcher than the yellow leadership of Solidarnosc?

So when Polish Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski assures journalists "I would very like to be a pupil in [Thatcher's] school. I would like to emulate her resoluteness and firmness in dealing with unprofitable companies", why are there no words of criticism from the representatives of 'official communism' like the NCP or the Morning Star/Communist Party of Britain?

Or when Poland's recently

appointed industry minister, Mieczyslaw Wilczek announces that he holds Maggie's policies "in great esteem" and plans to ask her advice on how to "rein in the rampant trade unions", why don't these forces even whimper a protest? Why have they not even reported these scandalous statements?

The Polish government's growing infatuation with market forces is perfectly in line with Gorbachevism, that's why.

Walesa's warm sympathy for Gorbachev is also unreported in the 'official communist' press. Echoing this, one of his main advisors, Adam Michnik, claimed in a recent interview that: "Current developments in the Soviet Union offer a real possibility of changes for the better throughout the communist bloc ... The worst actions today would be those which blocked changes in the Soviet Union."

Politics makes for strange bedfellows!

Let us now turn to the revolutionary left groups in Britain.

The SWP's Socialist Worker and the Revolutionary Communist Party's the next step come from the same International Socialist stable. It is therefore not surprising that they have essentially similar views on developments in Poland. The old leadership of Solidarnosc, they suggest, has been compromised and found lacking in the confrontation with the regime and that a new generation of younger workers are beginning to assert their strength.

Thus, Socialist Worker of November 12 notes that "pressure from below forced Walesa to change his message at the beginning of this week by threatening to call a national strike in defence of the [Lenin] yard."

ms, on a similar theme observe that "today's movement, led by a new generation of workers who have known nothing but austerity, is more desperate. Young militants led the two major strike waves this year, operating largely outside the control of the Solidarity leadership" (November 11).

Both the SWP and the RCP laud the new generation of young Solidarnosc activists, 'untainted' as ms puts it, with the stigma of 'collaboration' with the PUWP regime. But conveniently, both organisations fail to deal with the problem that this new generation is, if anything, even more viciously anti-communist and pro-imperialist than the old stalwarts of Solidarnosc.

The SWP at least attempts to

imply that the objective logic of the Polish workers' struggles will overcome their counterrevolutionary ideas: "... as their struggles develop to ever higher levels so more opportunities will rise to challenge these contradictory and false ideas." (November 12)

We would certainly welcome that. But we do not think it will come through trade union activity. It will come through communist leadership and a break with Solidarnosc. The SWP's economic faith in workers' strike activity to spontaneously overcome backward ideas at least has the 'merit' of recognising the fact that there is a 'problem' here, that Solidarnosc's young and old generation are under the sway of reactionary ideas. The RCP, the 'SWP with hair gel' as we have dubbed them, simply ignore the intrusion of tangential features like 'reality' into their 'analysis' of the question.

Either way, both cop out. The increasingly explicit nature of Solidarnosc's pro-capitalist stance, thrown into stark relief by Thatcher's visit, has at least provoked organisations like the SWP and the RCP into looking for forces other than the old 'union' leadership to take on Poland's 'official communists'. Others, however, have not even bothered to be that 'subtle'.

Come hell, high water, explicit calls for the restorationism of capitalism in Poland, the anti-communists of Socialist Organiser pledge Solidarnosc their unshakeable support: "Whatever illusions Solidarnosc's leaders and members have in the West, Solidarnosc represents the workers against the privileged, exploiting bureaucrats." (Socialist Organiser, November 3)

In fact, support for the scab Solidarnosc movement has helped precipitate the evolution of these Trotskyites from a worthless 'defence' of the USSR and Eastern Europe to a position which is best described as a left Kinnockism. In theory and practice, Socialist Organiser prefers capitalism to living socialism.

They explain away their support for the openly counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc, a movement which declares itself a fan of the vicious Cold War warriors, Reagan and Thatcher, thus: "In the West we condemn workers' illusions in Jaruzelski or Gorbachev, but we still support those workers against the bosses. The same principle should hold in the East."

According to this bunch of Cold War socialists, whatever the nature

of the ideas that dominate the Polish workers' movement - clerical nationalism, religious mysticism, fascism - it doesn't matter. At least they are against the communists!

"... Solidarnosc is the Polish workers' movement. Socialists should support Solidarnosc, unequivocally and without reservation against Poland's ruling bureaucrats ... When we see a picket line, we don't ask what the religion of the workers on that picket line is, or which way they vote, or what they think of international politics. We see workers in dispute with their exploiters, and we support the workers."

With this type of terribly 'principled' and 'militant' approach, we could find ourselves on some rather funny picket lines for 'socialists'.

• Like standing alongside Protestant workers in the occupied Six Counties imposing an 'Ulster Workers' Strike'.

• Or linking arms with racist workers from the southern states of the USA or South Africa demanding that black workers are sacked.

• How about joining picket lines directed against the employment of gays, women, or the Irish, SO? Frankly, Socialist Organiser's position is "bullshit". But don't take our word for it ...

In spite of not actually being a supporter, Paul Whetton, leading NUM member in Notts, writes a regular column in Socialist Organiser. In the issue of November 10, he reiterates a correct point he has made in several interviews with The Leninist when he says: "[Solidarnosc is] an anti-revolutionary movement ... there's a lot wrong in Poland, but to try to compare [Britain and Poland] is bullshit".

Whetton's gut reaction rejection of the yellow Solidarnosc is one that many class conscious workers in Britain feel. And that is a good thing. It is a good response that the likes of Socialist Organiser cannot fight by calls to automatically support the strikes and protests of other workers just because they happen to be workers. As comrade Whetton recognises only too well with the UDM, Solidarnosc and other bosses' unions, politics do matter. There are trade unions and trade unions.

Of course, revolutionaries do not simply sign a blank cheque agreeing to anything this or that section of the working class does. We recognise that workers can hold all sorts of deeply reactionary and backward prejudices, as is precisely the case in today's Poland.

For Leninists, Thatcher's trip behind the Iron Curtain has provided no problems. We have always evaluated events in the socialist countries not as petty bourgeois moralists or apologists for counterrevolution. Our principles have never been up for sale like those of the centrists. We have looked at developments in Poland from the interests of the world revolution.

Consequently, this is why we have opposed the scab Solidarnosc movement. And that is why we today call for communists in Poland to win the leadership of the working class so it can carry through a sweeping political revolution against those who so admire Margaret Thatcher.

Ian Mahoney

# Film as a weapon

*Eisenstein, his life and work*, Hayward Gallery, London (until December 11, 1988), Cornerhouse, Manchester (December 29 - February 5, 1989), entrance £3.00 (concessions £1.50).

"REVOLUTION is the only lawful, equal, effectual war. It was in Russia that this war was declared and began." This quote from Lenin opens Eisenstein's most famous film, *Battleship Potemkin*. It is fitting, Eisenstein - truly a modern renaissance man - was made by the revolution. Because of the October Revolution Eisenstein was Eisenstein. It fired and inspired him and ran through all the facets and complexities of his art like a red thread.

Any exhibition about Eisenstein should therefore be considered by communists as a major event. Indeed there is much in this particular exhibition that challenges us in the here and now as well as offering a deeper understanding of the man and his talents. Nonetheless this does not mean that it is not without flaw.

Frankly, the basic problem is that the organisers of the exhibition are not partisans of the revolution, but grandees of the art establishment who have no desire whatsoever to see a revolution in Britain or anywhere else for that matter. This is no small point. Because of it they cannot breathe any life into Eisenstein. The exhibition, despite the wealth of material, has a sterile and lifeless feel.

This is hardly surprising. The aim of the bourgeoisie is to gut the work of revolutionary artists of their revolutionary content. The Hayward Gallery, consciously or unconsciously, aids and abets this with their treatment of Eisenstein. Once more we see a revolutionary artist turned into a harmless - though valuable - icon. Like last year's showing of Diego Rivera's works at the same gallery, the Eisenstein exhibition tries to turn a revolutionary artist's achievements into nothing more than a saleable commodity.

To facilitate this the Hayward presentation pushes the personal to the fore and leaves the political dimension as a secondary question. It is Freud not Marx. What becomes key in understanding Eisenstein is psychology not the October Revolution.

This philistine nonsense is reinforced using the book published to accompany the exhibition. *Eisenstein at ninety* makes clear how the bourgeois art world wants to treat him. The article by the book's joint editor, Ian Christie, states that he was "grappling with issues which are still 'live' in our culture". This is undoubtedly true, the task of making our 'October' is the issue which lies at the heart of our culture today. And yet Christie does not even mention revolution! This is like not mentioning the fact that Eisenstein was a Russian! Christie prefers to dwell on Eisenstein's homosexuality and the fraught relationship with his father.

Eisenstein's recognition that aesthetics must be dealt with from a dialectical, materialist standpoint with the primary aim of guiding the spectacular into action is not to the taste of the Hayward art bourgeoisie, nor is his vision of making films not only for the masses, but also

about the masses.

Yet in spite of all its faults the exhibition is well worth spending time over. It throws light on aspects of Eisenstein's work which had previously been hidden. This is particularly the case with his drawings. His many wonderful caricatures which often depicted humans in animal form show why in the early 1920s he was considered one of the most promising satirical cartoonists in the Soviet Union. Eisenstein developed this technique as a film maker, particularly in *Strike*, where the venal characteristics of the agent provocateurs were brilliantly illustrated by superimposing a fox, an owl etc on them.

One of the seven video monitors distributed throughout the exhibition showing aspects of his work (mostly in a rather facile way) points up his work in theatre prior to the making of *Strike*. The acting techniques were employed initially in agit-prop sketches by workers' theatre groups - big, broad but economical movements which our own Workers' Theatre Movement could learn much from.

As a complement to the Eisenstein exhibition there is a showing of the work of Nam June Paik, looked upon as the foremost video artists in the world today. What this makes clear is that although contemporary artists have with modern technology enormously powerful instruments in their hands, all they can produce is art for art's sake. The excitement generated by the fast moving images has no substance. It is only instant effect. This can only but lead us to speculate what Eisenstein would have done with the incredible possibilities offered by video.

We can hardly blame the bourgeoisie for attempting to appropriate our Eisenstein. Indeed, the extent to which they want to is proof of his genius and world influence. For example in 1941 in a survey in the US listing the persons most written about in cinema, Eisenstein, a Russian, came fourth, ahead of Al Jolson, Mae West, DW Griffiths and only behind Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford! (This was, of course, prior to the cold war, at a time when communism exercised considerable influence in Hollywood).

The bourgeoisie uses every trick under the sun to claim Eisenstein as their own. A particularly devious one is by painting Eisenstein as the isolated, individual victim of Stalin. It is, of course true, that there is a qualitative difference between early films like *October*, in which the masses make history, and *Ivan the Terrible* where 'great' leaders come to the fore. This can only be understood in the context of the deformations of socialism and Stalin's use of Eisenstein to win backward sections of the population to the war effort.

Crocodile tears over his artistic anguish should not divert attention from the very considerable opportunities accorded him in the Soviet Union. Without hiding the difficulties he faced with the bureaucracy, he produced outstanding films in the USSR. When he tried to work in Hollywood and Mexico, all that was produced was frustration. There could be no Eisenstein in the cinema of the west.

The failure to develop Eisenstein's revolutionary art must lie at the doorstep of 'official communism'. Today 'official' Soviet art lacks all life, it wallows in syrupy pacifism, its 'unofficial' art is frankly reactionary. What I've seen of recent Soviet films and plays oozes religious symbolism, something which Eisenstein exposed and vilified in every one of

his films.

In Britain, our young CPGB fully understood the worth of Eisenstein's film. In the late 1920s it organised secret showings of his *Battleship Potemkin*, which was banned by a fearful ruling class. Party members were encouraged to use art as a weapon in the struggle for revolution. What a contrast with the 'designer' opportunists who use the name of the CPGB today.

The fear which *Battleship Potemkin* caused in the British bourgeoisie is something we want to see again. This will not be done for its own sake, that is simply puerile, but because we begin again to use art in the service of revolution. This will be the most fitting tribute we can pay to our comrade Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein and his work.

Gravin Kyle

# Shoddy nationalism

Tim Richards, *What's so Great about Britain? The case for a socialist Wales*, Cymru Goch, Plaid Sosialaidd Cymru, 1988, pp16, pbk, no price.

WHY review this pamphlet? Frankly, not because of its intrinsic worth. Tim Richards has produced a bad pamphlet. A really bad pamphlet. Nonetheless politically the publishers, Cymru Goch, are an example of the retreat of much of the left in Britain into the politics of parochialism and despair. That is why a review such as this can serve a useful purpose.

Cymru Goch, the Welsh Socialist Party, was formed in September 1986 by uniting "ex-Socialist Republicans, Plaid Cymru, Communist Party and other activists" (press release, undated). Richards' pamphlet is designed as a platform to present their fundamental aim: the separation of Wales from Britain. This is something which apparently will lead to the establishment of a "Welsh socialist state".

This is classic left nationalism. Communists fight for the rights of all nationalities, we want to see the fullest flowering of the Welsh culture and language. Nevertheless while we defend the right of nations to self determination, we advocate separation of nations only in the most exceptional circumstances. Even then we do so only as a prerequisite to unity on a higher - socialist - level.

Our starting point is not the nation but the world revolution. There is nothing of this in the 'socialist' Richards. Indeed he does not seem to have any grasp whatsoever of what a nation is and the difference between a nation (which Wales is not) and a nationality (which the Welsh are).

Because these elementary concepts seem beyond Richards, it is hardly surprising that his pamphlet makes up for its lack of rigour with half baked leftism (and very British reformist leftism at that).

Richards starts by pompously lecturing the "British left" on its failure to understand the national dimension in British politics. With a heavy sigh, he finds it "necessary to explain the position of the British state and where Wales fits in". As he refuses to accept Britain is a nation consisting of a number of nationalities, not least the Welsh, Richards can hardly succeed in the task he sets himself. Indeed as we have indicated he shows that far from standing above the British left he is a perfect example of its

political backwardness, narrowness and softness.

Under the heading of "the forces of law and order", Richards churns out the Little Britain position of the likes of Benn that "Britain" - one of the world's leading imperialist states - is a "colony of the USA". Why? Because of the large number of US bases and armed forces personnel stationed here (p6). This would also make Japan, Federal Germany and Canada colonies. But still, even if Wales was the colony of a colony (not entirely impossible) this hardly justifies Richards' call for the separation of Wales from Britain.

To prove our contention that Cymru Goch is merely a version of British reformism here's another quote:

"The trend away from community policing has weakened the support given by the community to policing. Rapid reaction to emergency calls results in lightning raids by patrol cars which often appear to be invasions of the community who suffer them. The antagonism and distrust (sic) which the modern police force cause by their heavy-handedness leads to a vicious circle". (pp6-7)

Genuine socialists in Wales, such as those who formed the CPGB in 1920, have never seen the police as a force for good. The police are an arm of the bosses' state machine. Whether they drive about in armoured cars or on bicycles makes not a jot of difference - except that is to left reformists like Richards of course.

For him if we can get more bobbies on the beat (with Welsh accents, of course) everything will be hunky-dory. Richards casts himself as a left advisor to the police. He is not a revolutionary determined to smash the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There is a tradition of left social democratic bombast in Britain. Richards is a product of it. Hence in place of serious argument we are given rubbishy claims, such as that Britain is a "kind of totalitarian government" (p8), that we live under "Thatcher's Third Reich" (p16), all this the product of Thatcherite "philosophy" and "beliefs" - in other words the typical wild exaggerations of left reformists the length and breadth of Britain ... Cymru Goch's case for Welsh exceptionism falls.

The Thatcher government has dramatically restructured the terrain of the British class struggle. With the collapse of the effectiveness of reformism, certain of these forces, in both Wales and Scotland, have retreated into petty bourgeois nationalism. Richards makes clear the despairing rationale that underpins this discovery

of the 'national element' in British politics:

"[Thatcher] ... looks likely to remain in place well into the 1990s. Far from being concerned about the divisions she has opened up within Britain, Mrs Thatcher is perfectly happy with the state of affairs so long as she can maintain her majority". (p10)

While some sections of labour reformism have responded to the single minded attacks of Thatcher's government by adopting 'new realism' and open class collaborationism, others despaired of ever being able to make a dent in the Thatcherite shield. They thus advocate that Welsh or Scottish workers abandon class struggle on a British level. Most damning of all, however, these so-called socialists blame English workers for the problems that affect our class nationwide. Richards pens these truly disgusting words on this theme:

"The fact that the English working class has flocked to the Tories is supposed to be quietly forgotten ... How long are we supposed to wait for the English working class to catch up with us? The reality is that they are going in the opposite direction and it is time that we cut loose." (p15)

Communists blame the continued hold of bourgeois ideology - reformism - for the backwardness of our class, not Englishness. Richards may rubbish the Labour Party as "a truly British party" (p13), but let us not forget that its heartlands have always been in Wales and Scotland. Ramsay MacDonald, Kier Hardie, Roy Jenkins and of course Neil Kinnock, 'truly' British politicians to a man ... they are also 'truly' Scottish and Welsh.

Cymru Goch and their ilk advocate that Welsh workers break their ties with their class brothers and sisters the other side of the Severn bridge, and instead tell us that we "need unity within Wales [to] overcome the divisions" (p16). In other words, a cross class alliance on the basis of 'Welshness'.

Strange then that Richards recognises that the miners' Great Strike of 1984-85 was defeated by its isolation, and that "its only chance of success lay in the unified support of the labour movement, which failed to deliver." His 'solution' though is to compound the problem.

How exactly wrenching Welsh workers away from proletarians in England and attempting to create a self sufficient state is meant to be a contribution to the liberation of humanity remains a mystery. Workers, as Marx observed, have no country. The liberation of the proletariat has to be international or it is nothing.

Ceri Rhys

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**What US workers need is a genuine Communist Party. It will not be built through supporting Jesse Jackson and the Democratic Party but on the streets and in the workplaces. It will be built to smash the bourgeois parties and their system, not to sow illusions in them**

## A pox on both houses!

**I**NCORRIGIBLE election watchers probably sat up till the wee-wee hours of the morning on November 9 waiting on the US Presidential election results, and later still to listen to the autopsy. I, and no doubt most others, made an early night of it. But still, the election and the political context in which it took place has an importance which belies all the tacky Las Vegas style showmanship and the two non-personalities of George Bush and Michael Dukakis.

Those political animals who might have hoped for the cut and thrust of debate between the contenders must have been sorely disappointed in a campaign where one of the major issues was the fact that Dukakis was considerably shorter than his opponent. Short-arses, it seems, are bad news in the eyes of the US electorate.

But would things have been any different if Dukakis had made it into the White House? To say the least, no. In truth, there was precious little to choose between the candidates. Where there were differences – such as on the death penalty or abortion – they were overshadowed by issues better suited to the mass circulation Sunday papers' blather on the royals or Eastenders. There was little enough 'meat' to get one's teeth into, when far more united the candidates than divided them. Such apolitical campaigns are now accepted fare with the press, whose major complaint was that the casting for the two leading roles was so bland.

Has the election changed anything? Not really. The major difference between Bush and Reagan is that the former has greater aptitude but less entertainment value. Murdoch's *Times* trusts that "he will do a thorough and competent job, if perhaps an unspectacular one." (November 3). For his class, that is.

Of course, the Democrat-dominated Congress and Senate will act as a constraint on Bush as it did over Reagan, if not more so. In short, there's not much to write home about vis a vis any radical shake up in the White House.

The political forces underlying the election, though, are worth studying. The basis of Bush's vote was, according to the *Independent*, "whites, college graduates, 'baby boomers' ... young professionals ... Protestants, salaried workers and in rural areas." (November 9). This expansive grouping is roughly equivalent to the middle class and better off members of the working class who have provided a substantial base of electoral support for the Tories in Britain in the last three elections. In Britain and the US these strata have fared reasonably well in the past few years.

There is a flip side to this, however. Social inequality is the US 'boom industry'. Some workers might have done alright under

Reagan. But in the past ten years real wages have fallen by over 10%. The 'Workfare' scheme – on which ET in Britain is modelled – is a major factor in ensuring this.

Like in Britain, the brunt of this drop has been borne by lower paid workers and blacks. Statistics show that, whereas unemployment among the total US workforce rose from 6.7 to 8.4%, among blacks it went from 15.6 to 19.5%. Through the rhetoric of 'reverse discrimination' the Reagan administration gave its anti-working class offensive a racist cutting edge.

To a great extent the 55% turnout for the election – low in comparison with Britain, but higher than the last US election – reflects a strong disillusionment within the worst off sections of the US workers. But the fact that increasing deprivation of many US workers is leading to apathy rather than class conflict and a radical expression of workers' discontent indicates a stable and secure ruling class.

This view is further reinforced by Reagan's remarkable ability to withstand the sort of crises which laid the likes of Nixon low. 'The teflon president' sailed through the bombing of the US marines base in the Lebanon in '83, Contra-gate and Iran-gate; and if he and his administration did not exactly come out the other end 'squeaky clean', he certainly weathered the storm.

Of course, it cannot be because Reagan is any lightning intellect or slick wheeler-dealer. The reason is that the reactionary offensive carried out by Reagan and his entourage through the eighties has welded a strong national consensus between the ruling bourgeoisie and other sections of the US population, not least the working class. What in the early and mid-seventies would have – and did – throw the bourgeoisie into fratricidal paroxysms hardly ruffled Reagan's brylantine-sculptured hair.

Reagan's ideological 'brief' was to reverse the 'Vietnam syndrome'. The defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese revolution in 1975 and its ailing economy left the US ruling class in desperate need of a tonic. As the *Wall Street Journal* remarked; "The 1970s are taking on an eerie resemblance to the 1930s ... At the risk of being melodramatic, today we see the world order coming unglued ... The spiral into disorder can be averted only if the US starts to assert itself again." (February 21 1979).

This has been achieved in the 1980s, through such acts as the bombing of Libya or the Gulf intervention, underscored with the odd "evil empire" speech. It may seem to some that Rambo has replaced Henry Kissinger as the US model international statesman. Unsubtle though this is, it has worked for the ruling class. These developments ensured Bush's victory, and were of far more signifi-

cance than the Republican slander campaign or the fact that Bush stands taller in his jockey shorts than the wee Dukakis.

But, if the Republicans can claim success on the ideological level, the economy is something different altogether. Since the end of the 'mini-recession' in 1982 it has kept afloat only by a massive foreign debt. Like it or not, 'Reaganist' prosperity has been founded on selling the future, the OECD forecast for the US current account balance for 1989 puts it in the red by 132 billion dollars, in comparison with Japan's 80 billion surplus. And, in trying to reverse this, all that can be done is to weaken sectors of domestic industry and hit out at workers' living standards on an ever greater scale. Obviously, this will provoke increased conflict domestically.

The growth rate of the US economy is declining too; from 2.9% in 1986 to a projected 2.5% in 1989. Compare this with Japan's growth of 2.4% to 3.75% per annum in the same period and things look very bleak, with inflation creeping forward to add to these problems. George Bush may don a leather headband, flex his pees and bomb the hell out of another small Arab state, but this can't resolve the sharpening contradictions in the economy. Sooner or later the whole thing will blow, and the road is far from smooth now.

This was implicitly acknowledged by the *Wall Street Journal* last year: "Mr Reagan aimed to reverse half a century of history, but in important ways the world still works pretty much the same way it did when he came to office." (October 16 1987). Read in the light of the previous quotation from this paper, we may surmise that the US ruling class is none too secure.

Such circumstances dictate a furthering of the 'Reaganist' project: more attacks on the working class domestically and an increasingly aggressive stance internationally. For the American bourgeoisie there is precious little choice. It is Bush's greater willingness to pursue such a course, the fact that this makes him better suited to the tasks of the day than his adversary, which ensured him victory – indeed, it was the Republicans who dictated the political terrain on which the election took place, much the same way as do the Tories in Britain.

Looking at this situation in the presidential elections, the essentially bipartisan approach of the contenders, and the lack of economic and political manoeuvring space for whoever won, it is interesting to see the attitude of the left in the US to this.

In Britain the left is plagued by the 'lesser of two evils' approach. Taking a completely ahistorical approach to the tactic adopted by the communists in the early '20s, to vote for the Labour Party to ex-

pose it, many leftists still urge a vote for Kinnock's party because "it's better than the Tories". If in Britain our movement has a bad dose of this anti-Marxist rubbish, the US left has a chronic case.

Initially, the left dived on the Jesse Jackson bandwagon in the contest for the Democratic presidential candidate. To justify this, the Communist Party of the USA and others painted Jackson as some crusader for workers' rights, battling the forces of monopoly capital. "Victory to Jackson – Victory to the Working Class" cried the banner headline of *Rally Comrades!*, the paper of the Communist Labour Party (a group well to the left of the CPUSA) in May 1988. Given the strength of bourgeois ideology in the US, this is taken as self evident rather than proven.

It was argued by many sections of the left that the Jackson campaign (the National Rainbow Coalition) would undermine the two party system, giving rise to a radical mass alternative. The radical independent *Guardian* weekly newspaper justified this stand thus: "With its working class perspective and constituency, the Jesse Jackson campaign is certain to sharpen the class contradiction within the Democratic Party ... This process will help lay the basis for the left's longer term goal: the development of an independent, anti-capitalist political movement. In the meantime, blacks and other oppressed groups, workers and their allies are gaining important experience struggling for empowerment in the electoral arena." (quoted in *Proletarian Revolution* No.32).

The reality is somewhat different. Jackson's appearance on the odd picket-line and platform of this or that worthy cause does not a working class politician make. Though there is no denying that he stands to the left of the principle candidates, his stand is still an unambiguously bourgeois one. He holds some extremely reactionary positions in places. For instance, Jackson has jumped on board the reactionary 'anti-drug' crusade.

In Britain similar political standpoints have provided covers for increased raids on the homes of black people under the guise of combating 'Yardies'. In the US it has led Jackson into supporting tougher anti-immigration measures on the Mexican border. He is a strong supporter of import controls; in other words, a conventional bourgeois protectionist. And let's not forget his preface of 'Reverend'. His moral code fits his title. There is nothing proletarian about Jackson. Aside from the rhetoric, there is precious little that is radical about him. His pink tinge is obviously useful, as proved by the eagerness with which US lefties fawn before him.

The "experience struggling for empowerment in the electoral

arena" is experience in unambiguously bourgeois politics. Rather than his challenge being a challenge to the establishment, as the left argues, it reinforces it. Why so? What in effect the Rainbow Coalition is doing is channelling the most radical elements of the working class and oppressed in the US into the Democratic Party. Supporting Jackson's campaign has been used by 'communists' to put off the task of constructing an independent proletarian alternative. Discontent, instead of being independently organised and wielded, was channelled into the safe forum of the Democratic Party where it is safely stifled.

The logic of this position was most clearly drawn out by the erstwhile Maoists who produce the *Line of March* journal and the *Frontline* fortnightly paper: they called for "direct involvement in the political struggle internal to the Democratic Party" (*Line of March*, Winter 1987-88, p52). In effect, the liquidation of any independent proletarian stand.

The CPUSA went from supporting Jackson in the Democrat candidate contest down the slippery slope to supporting Dukakis against Bush. Would those CPBs and NCPs who so admire the CPUSA tell us how the line advocated by this party – and read by readers of the *Morning Star* in articles in election week by Tim Wheeler, Washington correspondent of the CPUSA's *Peoples Daily World* – is any different to the tactical voting advocated by Eric Hobsbawm in *Marxism Today* before the last British general election?

"The alternative of supporting the Democratic ticket in 1988 is determined by the absence of any meaningful, historically significant alternative." said *Frontline*, in its August 29 edition, urging a vote for Dukakis. But the fact is that no alternative can be built by chasing after the Democrats. In fact, such a standpoint guarantees that no alternative can be built. Instead of "opening up" the Democratic Party, the most advanced sections of the working class are transformed from a revolutionary, if small and fragmentary, movement into a radical appendage to the liberal bourgeoisie, with other workers urged to follow on behind.

The only way to build a mass proletarian communist alternative is to reject such a view – in fact, to openly confront it. In the 1920s this was done by the CPUSA. Unfortunately this once proud party has collapsed into opportunism since then.

What the US working class and oppressed need is a genuine Communist Party. It will be built on the streets and in the workplaces, not in the Democratic Party. It will be built to smash the bourgeois parties and their system, not to sow illusions in them.

Sean Quinn



# Forging the weapon

This is an edited version of comrade Jack Conrad's speech

**D**EAR COMRADES and friends, we meet today to celebrate the anniversary of the Great October Revolution and the anniversary of the *The Leninist*. As is our tradition we celebrate these achievements not with empty rhetoric, as does 'official communism', but by considering important questions of the day and facing up to our tasks as communists.

I would like to deal with three main topics: problems in the socialist countries – in particular in the Soviet Union, the political situation in Britain and thirdly our organisation.

## 1. Bureaucratic socialism is in crisis

### 1.1. A few comments on Poland

Comrades, as you know our bourgeois media is gleefully reporting the words of Rakowski, the prime minister of socialist Poland. He has made a great song and dance about his admiration of Mrs Thatcher's success in curbing the power of trade unions in Britain and has stated that he "would very much like to be a pupil in her school".

How is this for any sort of communist to speak? And why do 'official communists', like the *Morning Star*, keep quiet on this? We say they are duty bound to come out with their views in front of the working class.

For us, indeed for any genuine communist, Rakowski's outrageous praising of Thatcher is proof positive that 'official communism' is morally bankrupt. Those who play dumb, refuse to report, let alone deal with Rakowski's statements also prove their bankruptcy.

The fact is that there is not a trace of proletarian internationalism in the leadership of the Polish state – the understanding that the workers of the world are engaged in the same struggle, that in the last analysis socialism in Poland can only survive through the active identification, solidarity and assistance of the world proletariat and the extension of the world revolution. Indeed until the world revolution is completed, and we have a World Union of Socialist States, victories in this or that country can only be *partial*.

In other words a *factor* in ensuring that the victory of socialism in Poland is made final, irreversible and complete is winning workers in Britain to see Poland as theirs.

In this light what are British workers to make of a 'communist' who wants to be a pupil of Thatcher? Militant workers in our country hate Thatcher in a way no British prime minister has been hated for many, many decades. We know her for the government's anti-trade union laws, the banning of unions at GCHQ, the crushing of the miners' Great Strike, her anti-Soviet warmongering, her poll tax, her massive hand outs to the rich and the doubling of the number forced onto the dole. Workers in Britain who have been subjected to Thatcherism first hand have no wish to see it imposed on others. They can only be alienated from a government which calls itself socialist and yet wishes to import Thatcherism.

Likewise what are British workers to make of communists in a socialist state who have lost all support of the working class? If only all that the bourgeois media has been reporting of Thatcher's visit to Poland were lies. Yet as we know Poles enthusiastically welcomed Thatcher as she went on her royal walkabouts. In fact the reception was rapturous.

Of course, what drew the Polish masses to Thatcher wasn't so much details of her domestic policies in Britain. What the Poles loved about Thatcher was her notorious anti-communism. And not just peasants and intellectuals but workers too. At the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk she was greeted by workers not with the 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie ... Out, Out, Out' slogan she has got used to hearing from workers in Britain but 'Down with Communism' and 'Comrades out'. What a condemnation of the 'official communist' leadership in Poland!

It is no exaggeration to say that 'official communism' has not learnt from history. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that 'official communism' cannot learn from history. For over thirty years now socialism in Poland has been suffering crisis after crisis. But 1970 was not simply a repeat of 1956, and 1980 was not simply a repeat of 1976. Crises in Poland are occurring in a downward spiral. Each crisis has been worse than the one before.

In 1956 the workers were demanding *socialist democracy*; in 1980 they deserted the CRZZ, the official trade union, and flocked into Solidarnosc, an organisation whose leadership makes Labourites like Eric Hammond and Roy Lynk seem like raving leftists.

The reason Solidarnosc had between 8 to 10 million members and remains a powerful opposition force is not because workers in Poland are historically backward. Poland's proletarian movement has a long and proud history, producing Rosa Luxemburg, Felix Dzierzhinsky and many other fine revolutionaries.

Poland's workers have time and time again had their trust betrayed. They have been left angered and demoralised by the countless failures by the 'official communists' at the head of the Polish party and state to stand by their promise to democratise the country. Such promises, as the workers have learnt from bitter experience, are worthless. They were made not to be put into practice but only to defuse discontent. Such an approach has nothing to do with genuine communism – but that does not matter in the minds of Polish workers. For them communists are liars, their words are not to be believed. From this poisoned soil Solidarnosc grew.

We supported the banning of Solidarnosc in 1981 because of the *imminent* danger of counter-revolution. Solidarnosc, which came into existence due to legitimate working class grievances, had adopted a programme of capitalist restoration and things were unquestionably sliding into chaos. Emergency measures were required. Jaruzelski's military government could, though, only be a short term solution. We emphasised in *The Leninist* No.2 that the declaration of martial law and the use of coercion could only provide a breathing space. We went on to say that unless there was a break with bureaucratic methods, and a turn towards a genuinely communist programme, it would only be a matter of time before Poland again plunged into crisis.

Can it be said that there has been a break from bureaucratic methods since 1981? No it cannot. As a consequence Poland's problems have become ever more deep, ever more dangerous.

After all why did Jaruzelski invite Thatcher to visit Poland? Why did he give Solidarnosc the perfect opportunity to reassert its strength by agreeing to her precondition for the visit that a meeting with Lech Walesa would be allowed?

Frankly it's because the Polish economy is in a worse mess than ever. Industry and agriculture are stagnant, as are the masses' living standards. Jaruzelski and his prime minister Rakowski only have one remedy for this. It is to restructure the economy at the expense of the working class. The closing of the Lenin shipyards is only meant to be the first of many such steps. A Thatcher visit would, it was hoped, lend this de-industrialisation programme the *legitimacy* the Polish government could not give it. More than that, in return for letting Thatcher 'interfere in the internal affairs of Poland' it was apparently believed that she would see to it that the burden of debt owed to western countries would be lessened through the rescheduling of repayments.

Thatcher completely outmanoeuvred the Polish leadership. All she gave in return for boosting her standing as a world leader were her usual banal, philistine lectures on the marvels of capitalism and the market. She also implied that unless Poland took measures to further boost capitalism she would do nothing to help with the debt problem. Showing his gratitude for all this Jaruzelski went beyond what diplomatic protocol demanded and personally went to the airport to see her off.

What all this shows is that 'official communism' in Poland is in profound crisis. This cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that this crisis is not confined to Poland. All socialist countries based on the Soviet model face to a greater or lesser degree the same crisis. Living socialism is being eaten by cancer from within. Other than Poland this is most pronounced in Hungary and Yugoslavia.

But can it be said that the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the German Democratic Republic are immune from the Polish, Hungarian or Yugoslav 'disease'? No it cannot.

Certainly, looking at the clashes in Armenia and the dramatic growth of nationalistic Popular Fronts in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – which have the 'blessing' of the local communist leaderships – and demands for a similar set up in Byelorussia, it is clear that we are dealing with an epidemic.

### 1.2. The Soviet Union and Gorbachevism

Our bourgeoisie, its media, its politicians and academia are overjoyed by developments in the socialist countries. Whether its *The Economist* or *Marxism Today* – representing the left and right of mainstream bourgeois thought – the message is the same: Gorbachev's perestroika proves that central planning has failed and that the market is the key to human happiness. We disagree.

The market is a historically transient feature of human society. It goes hand in hand with classes, exploitation, ruinous economic crashes and poverty. To worship the market is akin to primitive peoples worshipping volcanoes and other devastating, uncontrollable, forces of nature. The future of mankind lies not with the market but with communism.

Planning lies at the very heart of communism. It is the vehicle that will take mankind from the deprivations of capitalism to abundance. Through the triumph of the law of planning over the law of the market we will at last be able to master social laws and produce for the first time fully developed, truly human beings. It is not central planning which has failed but the *bureaucratic form*. It is bureaucratic socialism which is in crisis, not communism. And naturally this crisis finds its sharpest expression in the Soviet Union.

Naturally so, because the Soviet Union is the world revolutionary centre, ie the country where the class struggle of the proletariat has reached its highest form. The Soviet Union is the leading socialist country, the country where bureaucratic socialism originated and whose model other socialist countries have copied.

According to Gorbachev the USSR was, during the latter Brezhnev years, in a "pre-crisis situation". This is true. Yet the so-called New Economic Mechanism and perestroika has not pulled the Soviet Union back from the brink. His 'reforms' have only made matters worse. And unless he is stopped Gorbachev will plunge the Soviet Union into a full blown crisis.

Being a crafty politician, knowing the enormous respect and love the Soviet people have for the heritage of Leninism, Gorbachev has attempted to equate his NEM with Lenin's New Economic Policy of the early 1920s. The resemblance is purely superficial.

Yes, NEP involved making concessions to capitalism. In the countryside commodity production was allowed free reign. This saw growing social divisions; the development of the kulaks (a class of small capitalists) and the relative pauperisation of the poor peasants. The situation in industry was similar. Foreign monopolies were offered huge concessions in Siberia, state capitalism was encouraged and, while the spivs and Nepmen flourished, workers' real wages declined as inflation soared.

Lenin and the Soviet government allowed these developments because the dictatorship of the proletariat itself was in mortal danger. The losses incurred in the civil war, and be-

fore that in World War I, had left the Russian economy in ruins. Unless action was taken to revive trade the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasant mass would have shattered. Lenin's answer was NEP.

He made no bones about it whatsoever: NEP was a retreat, a temporary retreat but a retreat nonetheless. Lenin was also perfectly aware that as well as this retreat necessitating the voluntary curbing of struggles within the Party, it was also absolutely essential to ensure that the working class was equipped with the means to defend itself against the negative consequences of NEP.

As a result Lenin saw to it that the working class composition of the Party was strengthened. Petty bourgeois and careerist elements were purged and after a bitter struggle with Trotsky and Bukharin the principle of trade union independence from the state was established. Only through such measures, argued Lenin, could the proletariat *protect itself against its own state*; which in conditions of NEP would be even further bureaucratized and removed from its direct control.

Having seen what NEP was, let us outline precisely why we say Gorbachev's NEM is fundamentally unlike it.

1. It has been introduced in very different historical circumstances. The Soviet economy has experienced decades of sustained growth. It is hardly in ruins. Its Gross National Product is still the second largest on the planet and there is no immediate threat of the regime collapsing. In other words there is no unavoidable necessity of retreating before the forces of capitalism.

2. Even if this were not the case Gorbachev has not taken any measures at all to ensure that the proletarian composition of the Party is strengthened – quite the reverse, in fact. Gorbachev wants to liquidate the CPSU as a working class party. And of course, Gorbachev is doing nothing to equip the working class with the means to defend itself against the negative consequences of perestroika, let alone against the state.

3. Lastly, Gorbachev shows none of Lenin's honesty. Where Lenin *openly admitted* that NEP was a *retreat* and would have dangerous and harmful consequences, Gorbachev projects perestroika as the dawn of some sort of golden age.

Hence, apart from the packaging Gorbachev has given it, his NEM/perestroika has a completely different content to the NEP of the 1920s. So what is Gorbachev's programme if it is not a *necessary and painful*, but *tactical and temporary*, retreat? Everything we know about the transitional nature of socialism, the bureaucratic deformations in Soviet socialism and the personality of Gorbachev tells us that the danger of capitalist restoration is growing. Indeed we would say that the logic of the technocratic wing of the bureaucracy around Gorbachev is to restore capitalism. This is Gorbachev's hidden agenda. Already, under the cloak of attacking Stalin, the technocracy is going all out to strengthen the elements of capitalism which by force of circumstance persist under socialism.

It is very significant that in order to give this a theoretical underpinning Nicolai Bukharin has been rehabilitated. Lengthy articles have appeared in *Pravda*, the central organ of the CPSU, lauding Bukharin and pointing out the similarity of his political platform – outlined for example in his *Notes of an economist* – and Gorbachev's perestroika. This contains elements of truth. Nevertheless it also contains an element of slander ... against Bukharin.

Of course, we Leninists stand opposed to Bukharin's political platform which saw NEP type policies carrying on way beyond their useful life. At the same time we never believed the charges levelled against him. He was never a Nazi agent or anything like that. Long before Gorbachev we openly called for his name to be cleared and his works to be republished. Yet what is going on in the Soviet Union is no matter of putting to right past wrongs.

Bukharin's politics were, until recently, cor-

rectly characterised by the CPSU as rightist. It was not so much because he wanted to roll back the limited economic frontiers of socialism. More that he proposed to advance along the road to communism at a dangerously slow pace. If his policies had been put in practice, the CPSU insisted, not only would we have seen the forces of capitalism grow ever more powerful but the USSR's industry would have remained feeble. Taken together, this would have made capitalist restoration easier, either through internal counterrevolution or outside intervention.

So we say Gorbachev's programme is to the right of Bukharin's. Under the banner of perestroika Gorbachev is selling revolutions. Not only the 'unpopular' (we are talking about western public opinion here) Afghan revolution but also 'popular' revolutionary struggles such as South Africa.

Internally there is much talk of democracy. But this amounts to little more than the creation of a Duma-like parliament and freedom for fascists to march along the streets of Leningrad. On the economic front plans have been announced to sell shares in state enterprises and create a stock market. And moves are already afoot to gut the five year plan.

This is far beyond anything Bukharin proposed. Gorbachev has also gone beyond Bukharin in not only criticising the methods used to collectivise agriculture, but questioning collectivisation itself. Gorbachev proposes to break up the cooperative farms (restore capitalism in the countryside) and lease parcels of land for 50 years to 'family units'.

The principle that the Soviet state exercises a monopoly on foreign trade has already been junked. Now there are suggestions that western companies be allowed to have a majority share ownership in joint enterprises in the Soviet Union and have the right to appoint the management and repatriate most of the profits. To ease this integration of the Soviet economy into western markets it is also proposed to make the rouble freely convertible in the world's currency markets in the 1990s.

These are hardly petty concessions to capitalism. Taken along with the fact that the working class in the Soviet Union only acts as a ruling class in a formal sense, the planks in Gorbachev's 'reform' programme make up between them a basis for the qualitative strengthening of the forces of capitalism. Gorbachev is a Russian version of Dubcek. Conditions are now much more fertile for capitalism to grow from below ... and, perhaps more importantly, from above.

The bureaucrats who used to have to bury their tens of thousands of roubles amassed in bribes will be able to turn their ill gotten gains into capital. Corruption in the Soviet Union can be used, as it is in many so-called Third World countries, as a form of what Marx called primitive capitalist accumulation.

Certainly in the short term it is crystal clear what Gorbachev's 'reforms' will produce. We need only look at the situation in China, Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary to see what Gorbachevism has in store for the Soviet Union. With these living examples of market socialism before our very eyes, at best all that perestroika will provide is a short term boost for agriculture along with growing social inequality, massive inflation, and yes, unemployment. This is anti-Sovietism.

It is of no surprise to us then that Gorbachev complains that his programme has failed to win the support of the working class. Nor is it a surprise to us that his solution for overcoming working class hostility is pure Thatcherism. It is planned to issue workers special shares in the enterprises in which they work!

The heroic class that made the October Revolution is supposed to own Soviet industry already. What right has Gorbachev to sell shares in working class state property? We say no right whatsoever!

This privatisation is not the same as what is going on in Britain. Here state property is not the collective property of the population but of the bourgeoisie. It is theirs to do with what they will. Our concern in Britain is not what form capitalist ownership takes but workers' jobs, wages and conditions. This is not the case in the Soviet Union. The bureaucracy in the Soviet Union does not own state property. It has no legal property rights over it. In spite of this, 'official communists' in Britain, who like to think things in our country like the electricity, coal and water industries belong to the 'people', do not raise a murmur in protest against what is going on in the Soviet Union. This is worse than double standards!

Leninists are sure that the Soviet working class will reject Gorbachev's miserable Thatcherite sop with the contempt it deserves. It will ensure that what is meant to be its own really becomes its own. And no doubt in the course of this it will deal in the appropriate way with those who seek to privatise working class collective property.

### 1.3. Gorbachev, Stalin and the role of the individual in history

It is pretty obvious that Gorbachev's 'reforms' will do the Soviet Union no good at all. In fact they will do great harm. Given this, some will simply conclude that Gorbachev is stupid. Obviously this is not the case. Gorbachev is a highly educated, politically experienced and relatively cultured technocrat.

So why is he doing what he is doing? The answer to this can only be found in what has been called the role of the individual in history. We, of course, understand full well that the masses make history. But, as Plekhanov in particular showed, outstanding individuals make a vital contribution, particularly at decisive moments.

Take Stalin. Although his leadership of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union led to a qualitative break with the Party's politics and practices under Lenin, this did not stop him playing to some degree a progressive, if contradictory, role. For all his faults and mistakes, his championing of bureaucratic socialism, nothing should be allowed to detract from the positive developments in the Soviet Union in the decades during which Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin led the USSR.

Certainly without the first five year plan and the four years taken, without the determined drive for collectivisation and industrialisation in the 1930s, the Soviet Union would have gone down to Nazi Germany. Instead – as a result of Stalin's far sightedness and the resulting socialist economic powerhouse behind the Red Army – the guts were ripped out of the Nazi war machine. Because of this the conditions were created for the establishment of a string of socialist states in Eastern Europe and the emergence of the Soviet Union as the second most powerful country on earth. To say the least, this achievement owed not a little to Stalin. This cannot be denied.

But before continuing with Stalin and Gorbachev let us take a brief detour.

In comparison to the genuinely great – and often ruthless and bloody – leaders of Britain and the United States in the past, such as Oliver Cromwell or George Washington, the supposed great leaders of Britain and the USA in our day, Thatcher and Reagan, are pygmies. They have no revolutionary culture, no ability to make bold, decisive and original political moves. The difference is not to be found merely in the upbringing and life experience of individuals. Neither is it to be found in class.

Cromwell and Washington, Thatcher and Reagan, come from the same bourgeois stable. The difference is that this class which was once revolutionary has now become irretrievably reactionary. Where the bourgeoisie once represented a force to free the forces of production, now it stands as a block on development. In the last analysis this is what prevents leaders of the bourgeoisie playing any sort of progressive role in society.

There are lessons to be learnt here about the Soviet Union.

Compared to Stalin, Gorbachev is a pygmy. Like the representatives of moribund capitalism, Gorbachev has no progressive role. His 'reforms' will not liberate the forces of production. They will further hold them back. His attacks on Stalin are a cover for attacks on socialism itself.

In this context against Gorbachev we obviously defend the Stalin of the five year plans, the Stalin of collectivisation, the Stalin of industrialisation, the Stalin of World War II and the Stalin of the spread of socialism into Eastern Europe. We proudly and unhesitatingly defend the forward march of socialism over which Stalin presided. Gorbachev uses Stalin's mistakes and yes, crimes to slander and undermine his achievements and the achievements of socialism itself. We will not be party to such anti-Sovietism.

The reactionary role of Gorbachev is, of course, not merely the result of personal attributes. As we have said before it is the result of

the bureaucracy running out of all progressive possibilities. Because it cannot and will not abolish itself, this stratum now stands as a block to the further development of the productive forces. Gorbachevism proves that today the bureaucracy has no answers for the Soviet Union except capitalistic ones.

It is therefore no surprise to us whatsoever that Gorbachev has had praise heaped upon him from almost every strand of bourgeois opinion. Where this causes us to ask the most searching questions, 'official communism' has been swept along by what the western media calls Gorbymania. We Leninists will stand against this tide, even if this means suffering temporary isolation. Gorbachevism is a passing phenomenon. It will go the same way as Bernsteinism, Kautskyism, Eurocommunism and other opportunist fads.

There can be no question that Gorbachev is a conscious agent of history. He is no proletarian revolutionary using the forces of capitalism in the short term in order to strengthen socialism in the long term, like Lenin.

As a man Gorbachev no doubt sincerely believes that his 'reforms' will save the USSR. This is not the point though. The technocratic wing of the bureaucracy which he heads objectively stands as a threat to the survival of the USSR. That is what is important.

The further development of the economy demands that the whole bureaucratic superstructure of Soviet society is transformed through what communists call a *political revolution*. That is a revolution which will, as Engels said, forcibly transform the bureaucracy from the master of society into its servant. This will create the conditions for discarding the worst lumber of the state and result in a dramatic upturn of economic growth rates.

The fate of the USSR hangs on Soviet workers making a political revolution. For unless there is a successful political revolution, the only alternative is a return to capitalism via internal counterrevolution or, as a consequence of permanent stagnation, a counterrevolutionary external intervention.

In his book, *Perestroika*, and in other works and speeches, Gorbachev claims he is leading a revolution, variously described as a revolution without guns, a second revolution, a revolution from above and yes, a political revolution. Transparently this is not the case. Nonetheless the fact that he uses such language goes to show that a real political revolution has come onto the agenda in the Soviet Union.

Bureaucratic relations in society have certainly come into profound conflict with the further development of the material productive forces, ie there is a pressing *objective* need for revolution.

Such a revolution will not come from above but below. It will have as its first task the introduction of genuine socialist democracy. This will go far beyond anything Gorbachev proposes.

Among other things, workers and collective farm workers will have the right to form soviet parties and bear arms through a workers' militia equipped with the most advanced weaponry. There will, of course, be free and open elections to soviet institutions. Bureaucratic privileges will be abolished and no state official will be paid more than the average worker. A political revolution will also mean democracy in the workplaces, workers' control will develop over every area of production and managers will be subject to election and recall. These are the fundamental features of democracy under socialism – what is *objectively necessary*.

For only with socialist democracy, the democracy of the working class, can socialist society move forward towards communism. A socialist society in which the working class increasingly rules directly will again show through its rapid economic growth, rich and dynamic culture and unshakable confidence in the future that it is a higher form of social organisation than capitalism, indeed that it is the first chapter in the history of human freedom and human fulfilment.

### 1.4. The future

It is our duty as proletarian internationalists and communists to speak openly against Gorbachevism. The working class movement has no need for those who are only wise after events, those who now denounce the likes of Stalin and Brezhnev, yet never did so while they were alive.

Having said that, our biggest contribution

to defending the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries is fighting to advance the world revolution by making revolution in Britain. Today most socialist countries are economically still backward. Through spreading the world revolution and through the triumph of working class power in advanced countries socialism will start to show its vast potential.

Truly, socialism is international or it is nothing. National boundaries are increasingly a barrier to the development of production. The world economy exists but is held back by the fetter that is capitalism and the existence of nation states. What is required is world political unity; this can only be realised in the form of a World Union of Socialist States.

Because capitalism produces for profit not for need, production cannot advance to its full potential. This is clearly seen today. With computers, biotechnology, nuclear power, robots, lasers, space stations etc we have the means to solve all the world's pressing problems *now*. We could feed the world ten or twenty times over, transform living standards of everyone – not only those living on the margin in the so-called Third World – and create a true civilisation.

But what does capitalism – which still dominates the world economy – promise? Pollution, economic crisis, unemployment, pauperisation, starvation and above all nuclear war, that's what. Unless we get rid of it capitalism will plunge humanity into yet another of its world wars, this time fought with nuclear and chemical weapons. As never before capitalism points to a new dark age, barbarism, and even the extinction of the entire human species.

Only the working class is capable of saving humanity, not through subordinating its class struggle to some supposed 'universal human interest', but precisely by carrying its class struggle to its highest point – making revolution. Far from this being the pursuit of some narrow sectionalism, as 'official communists' in the Soviet Union now say, it is the only hope for humanity. World proletarian revolution is the only way to preserve not only the gains we have made in the form of the socialist countries, but mankind.

### 2. The state of politics in Britain

We shall now turn to the class struggle in Britain. For the working class the balance sheet in 1988 was in essence little different from 1987. Indeed throughout the 1980s the picture on the economic front has been characterised by bitter struggles, often ending in defeat.

The reason for this is fourfold.

1. The Thatcher government. With the coming into office of Thatcher in 1979, the bourgeoisie has been led by a single minded and determined class war warrior. She has presided over a sustained assault on working class rights and organisation in order to facilitate the restructuring of British capitalism.
2. Unemployment. The last Labour government doubled the number of unemployed to 1.5 million. The Thatcher government doubled this figure again. This has had a profound impact on trade union membership and working class confidence.
3. The Labour Party. Labourism, the dominant ideology in the working class movement, is incapable of providing any sort of fighting lead for the working class movement.
4. The Communist Party. There is no vanguard party of the working class. The Communist Party of Great Britain, which up till the mid 1970s was able to provide some sort of a coordinating centre for militants, has been temporarily liquidated by Eurocommunism. Those who illegitimately use the name of our CPGB have not only steadily moved to the right in the 1980s, but have now constituted themselves as neo-Fabian advisers to the new realists of the Labour Party and the TUC. The 'official communist' splits have provided no alternative at all. While *Marxism Today* cheers on Neil Kinnock and Bryan Gould the *Morning Star* cheers on Tony Benn. There is no thought, no concept of genuine communist politics.

We are still living in the shadow of the defeat of the miners' Great Strike. This was a strike of world and historic importance. While there were lessons of tremendous value, lessons which will find life and be taken to even higher forms in future struggles, it is the fact of defeat which effects us now. Not only have the miners themselves suffered continued at-

tacks but a mood of impotence has been created in the class as a whole.

Yet although the working class has been very hesitant in taking industrial action there have been some important post Great Strike struggles, such as in the health, postal and car industries, which have *not* gone down to defeat. This is of great significance.

Unless there is some sort of pre-general crisis economic oscillation, there is every reason to believe that next year a combination of the rise in the rate of inflation and a drying up of the pool of skilled labour will help to generalise this. Given the fact that the economy is relatively buoyant and demand for commodities is high, bosses will be inclined to look for settlements rather than seeking to beat down their workers by withstanding long and bitter (and costly) strikes.

Even Lawson admits that inflation will soon rise to an annual rate of 6%. It is bound to go beyond this. As we know, inflation is a class question. It affects strata and classes in a differentiated way, invariably to the disadvantage of the working class. Because of this, if workers are to *maintain* their levels of subsistence, they will have to fight for wage increases of at least 10% to protect themselves against the erosion of inflation. In increasing numbers workers will therefore have to turn to industrial action.

The temperature on the wages front will also be raised by the relative shortage of skilled labour – especially in the highly populated South East. The Tories constantly whine about employers finding it difficult to fill certain job vacancies. Of course, in part this is because the wage rates for some of these jobs are little more than what is available on the dole. Nevertheless the main reason is that the job vacancies being advertised are for skilled labour and within the reserve army of labour there is a lack of skills.

This is entirely the fault of the capitalists, their government and their system. Long term unemployment leads to skills deteriorating or becoming obsolete through lack of contact with the demands and changes of working life. As for unemployed youth, they never even have the opportunity to acquire skills in the first place and ET and other such schemes will do nothing to change this. ET is about policing and intimidating the unemployed, driving down the wages of *unskilled* workers, not equipping the unemployed with skills.

In other words, although unemployment rates remain high – including in the South East – employers will be forced into fiercer competition for skilled labour and will be more willing to concede demands from skilled and semi-skilled workers for wage rises and improved conditions.

Because of this, and the continued weakness of Britain compared with its main imperialist rivals, the Tories are still faced with the task of inflicting a strategic defeat on the working class. A string of successful strikes can only increase the pressures and demands for this from the boss class.

What this necessitates from the working class is a *political* response. This, as we have already indicated, is a problem for the working class movement, in fact it is a central question. There is no *vanguard party*. Until there is the working class will be unable to act for any length of time as a class and there will remain a dangerous gap between working class economic consciousness and working class political consciousness.

The extent of this gap is best illustrated by the attitude of the working class movement towards the struggle for national liberation in Ireland. In the main it identifies with its ruling class. Since Ireland is so close, so important for British imperialism, this is hardly surprising. Nonetheless the consequences are to disarm the workers against capitalist state attacks. Inevitably the methods used in Ireland come home to be used against us.

This was seen most sharply in the miners' Great Strike – police tactics used against the mining communities were first developed on the streets of Derry and Belfast. The repression employed in Ireland increasingly affects all aspects of life in Britain. The TV and radio ban on Sinn Fein and the erosion of our right to silence are only the latest examples. And the fact that these latest measures have produced little except Labourite hot air can only encourage the state to turn to sweeping authoritarian measures in order to crush working class resistance to a full scale strategic attack. Truly, a nation that suppresses another can never be free.

For communists the gap between the economic and political facets of the struggle of the

working class stands both as a warning and also a challenge. A warning because unless the gap is closed any wave of militant economic struggle will in the end be safely diverted by the ruling class and reversed. A challenge because it is precisely our task to close the gap by providing communist leadership for the class in the form of a genuine Communist Party. This is the weapon the working class needs.

It is no exaggeration to say that reforging the Communist Party is the key task facing the working class movement today. It is the main link in working class politics. If grasped and successfully secured this makes possible the struggle for socialism. Without it talk of socialism is just that, mere talk.

'Official communism' is a barrier to this. It discredits the name of communism and fosters illusions in the minds of workers – not least that our hopes for the future should lie in the Labour Party.

As history has conclusively shown us, the Labour Party is a bourgeois party of the working class. It is not a weapon in the hands of the workers which will liberate them, but a weapon in the armoury of the ruling class to dupe workers. More than that, as we have shown the Labour Party has gone from being the alternative party of government back into a party of crisis.

Given that there is no mass pressure from below, the Kinnock leadership of the Labour Party has turned on the left wing of the party. For Labour to be trusted with governmental power by the bourgeoisie it must appear to be a safe and respectable party. This means giving the Labour Party a Thatchnockite ideology and marginalising the left. That Kinnock has been successful was seen at this year's Blackpool conference.

The results for the Benn/Heffer ticket were truly humiliating. Announcing their leadership bid, Benn declared that he would be satisfied with 20% of the vote. That was to admit defeat before battle was joined. Nonetheless, that he barely managed to get half of that, and Heffer got even less, shows that the Labour left not only suffered a predictable defeat but has indeed been marginalised – at least for the moment.

Kinnock also scored a resounding victory on policy questions. The Labour Party is now committed – both in the theory as well as in practice – to the market, it has embraced the European Community and has turned its back on so-called Morrissonian state capitalist nationalisation.

Successful in curbing the left, Kinnock might have been. Yet, whatever this or that *Guardian* opinion poll says, this has hardly transformed Labour's prospects. Labour has only increased its ratings because of the mess that is the SDP and Liberal Democrats – but this is not going to be the case for ever. Kinnock has by no means restored the Labour Party to its 1940s-1970s position of being an alternative party of government.

There is every reason to believe that the Tories will go on to win a fourth term. Even with a Suez or Profumo type crisis it could stay in office simply by sacking a minister or two or, if particularly hard pressed, coming up with a new leader. The two party system which characterised British politics throughout the 19th and 20th centuries seems to have given way to a one party system.

As we have explained, this does not mean that Britain has the same sort of political system as backward capitalist countries such as Kenya or Tanzania, where only one party is allowed. Rather that Britain is now nearer to Italy and Japan which have one dominant governing party.

Whether Kinnock likes it or not this means that the Labour Party has more in common – in terms of political status – with the socialist parties of Italy and Japan than with the US Democratic Party. As with the Liberal Democrats and the Owen SDP, it will remain on the fringes of the governmental process. The 'into the 1990s' slogan at the Tories' Brighton Conference should not therefore be taken as empty boasting but as a warning. Likewise Thatcher's talk about Tory governments in the nineties "and beyond".

This one party system has definite advantages for the ruling class. The painful restructuring of British industry would have been impossible in the swings and roundabouts of the 1960s and 70s. Certainly in order to deal the working class a strategic defeat a one party system is of advantage. Yet there are disadvantages too. Not least that working class opposition will tend to seek expression outside parliament.

Before the last election labour movement bureaucrats countered demands for decisive action by arguing that everything will be alright with the 'election of the next Labour government'. Today such calls only provoke mocking laughter from the militant rank and file. This is of great significance for genuine communists who understand only too well that socialism will not come through an act of parliament but precisely as an act *against* parliament.

What the decline of the Labour Party from being a governmental party into being a party of crisis poses, what the marginalisation of the Labour left poses, what the emergence of a Tory, one party system poses is building a party which can act as a general staff for working class militancy and give it a definite revolutionary political direction. Left to itself working class militancy will at best take a syndicalistic form. It is our task to ensure that it takes the form of building a reformed Communist Party. Without such a party the working class is nothing, with it it is everything.

### 3. Our organisation and tasks

It is undoubtedly the case that *The Leninist* stands on all that is best in the communist tradition. We are dedicated to proletarian internationalism, we fight for revolution, have no truck with reform but place our faith in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence we firmly identify with the founding principles of the CPGB, with the role our Party played in organising the working class during the 1926 General Strike and in the building of first the National Minority Movement and then the National Unemployed Workers Movement.

*The Leninist* is therefore the legitimate continuer of both the CPGB and Lenin's International in communist politics in Britain today. Of course, at the moment we are *not* able to fulfil all the key conditions demanded of those wishing to affiliate to the Third International when it was founded. This has nothing to do with ideological problems though, merely the fact that we are a group fighting for the Communist Party rather than the Communist Party itself. It is not ideology but our size, political weight and lack of deep roots in the working class movement that, for example, prevents us from organising in the armed forces (condition 4), among the rural population (condition 5) or fully operating the democratic side of democratic centralism (condition 13).

None of the leaders of the various 'official communist' groups or 'parties' we are 'blessed' with in this country could say the same. Here it is a question of ideology and politics. 'Official communism' is more rotten than the opportunist parties of the Second International. Neither the Straight Leftists nor the NCP can "expose the falsehood and hypocrisy of social pacifism" (condition 6) because they suffer from this very form of opportunism. Neither the Euros nor the *Morning Star's* CPB can fight to "dismiss reformists and centrists from positions of responsibility in the working class movement" (condition 2) because their politics are precisely reformist and centrist.

Frankly, if any of our 'official communist' organisations could, in Dr Who fashion, be taken back in time to 1919 it is highly unlikely that even one of them would want to venture an application to join the newly established Third International. If by some strange aberration an application were made it would certainly have been rejected with contempt. 'Official communism' today has everything in common with the old ILP, nothing in common with the politics of revolution espoused by our CPGB when it was formed.

Having mentioned *The Leninist's* limitations there can be no doubt that we are doing our utmost to fight for practice with initiatives such as the Unemployed Workers Charter. This is good but far from enough. It only scratches the surface of the biggest problem we face – credibility in the eyes of the working class. This will not easily be overcome.

Our working class movement in Britain suffers from a low theoretical level, a feature which has a long history but which is exacerbated by the shift to the right of 'official communism'. This means there is far more respect for size and posts in the labour bureaucracy than for theoretical correctness.

Saying this is not to belittle, let alone dismiss, our working class as it exists now. It has many fine qualities. Organisation is second nature and while the weight of the past leads

to a certain slowness in going from thought to deed, when our class moves it moves with a oneness, with great power and determination.

Strong the working class may be in terms of organisation, but of course because of lack of revolutionary theory this tends to be employed in defending existing gains, unfortunately not in ending wage slavery and exploitation. Lack of revolutionary theory and consequent inability to free itself can only be overcome through the building of a genuine Communist Party. *The Leninist* has set itself this task.

As we well know this is no easy matter. Not only do we have to contend with the historically low respect for revolutionary theory, but throughout this decade our class has in general been suffering defeats.

This hardly encourages a search for revolutionary answers. Given the anti-theoretical traditions of our class, what we see is too many people looking for excuses. Around our periphery this takes many forms – retreats into personal life or simply turns to the right, opting out or refusing to act using baseless disagreements. But whatever the form, because of the existence of a relatively passive environment around us *The Leninist* has not grown as fast as it needs to.

That our answers are hardly easy obviously puts off those who prefer a quiet life. We say, for example, that socialism will not come because people vote in the Labour Party or push the unions to the left. Instead it will come through a violent revolution which must not only be fought on the barricades of the future but crucially in the day-to-day grind of the present. There are plenty who want to keep their contribution to the future, who say they will be with us when the time comes. These types might fool themselves ... but they do not fool us. A revolution will only be successful if we devote our lives to the building of a genuine Communist Party now. Without this approach nothing serious will be achieved.

In spite of the difficult conditions in which we are operating it is essential to understand that a great deal can be done. We are not living in a period of reaction where to be a communist is to risk one's life: apathy and lack of credibility are our main enemies.

These enemies will not be overcome simply by waiting around for times to change. Such an approach is not worthy of communists. Apathy can be overcome and credibility gained in two interlinked ways.

Firstly, we must convince the working class – that is, its advanced section – that revolutionary theory is not the icing on the cake for an organisation. We must show workers that what matters in a political organisation is primarily whether or not it possesses a correct world outlook and revolutionary strategy. This is how it should be judged.

But secondly, we can and must overcome apathy and gain credibility by increasing the size and weight of our organisation. This will be done through theoretical debate and polemic but also political action. It is stupid to suggest that numbers are irrelevant. We need recruits and those recruits must be made politically effective.

#### 3.1. 1989: the year of organisation

1989 will be for us the year of organisation. In 1989 those around *The Leninist* will be guided for the first time by a year plan. This is not intended to be a diary of events but an organisational strategy which will aim to decisively lift our work and lay the basis in early 1990 for comrades to be sent from London to work in selected areas of the country. In other words 1989 will be used to lay the ideological and political basis for our organisation to become national in 1990. Today we have some good supporters dotted here and there around the country but it cannot be said that they systematically work under our discipline or that they lead groups of sympathisers. We aim to change this in the course of 1989. Our success will in turn be a tremendous step forward in the struggle to reforge our Party and hence a tremendous step forward for our working class.

Success will depend on three main factors. **1. Development of cadres.** We need to develop and train professional revolutionaries. Only in the hands of such comrades can *The Leninist* truly be a weapon in the class war. Without them it is merely an interesting read. When we say professional revolutionaries

ries we do not use the word in the sense that comrades are supported by the organisation. It is not that we are against that in principle. But what we really mean by a professional revolutionary is a comrade who is prepared to give everything to the cause of communism. In this sense 'official communism' has no professionals, only paid employees. The truth of this was seen in the miners' Great Strike when the Euros' Young Communist League was unable to produce any copies of its paper 'because of lack of finance'. It had two paid full timers! Such a thing would be impossible with us. Those who have met our comrades know this to be the case.

The same lazy non-professional practice can be seen with the CPB. It has only produced two pieces of propaganda since it was formed in April this year. In line with this the CPB's Ray Colvin is reported to have only agreed to work 'full time' ... after a pension plan had been agreed! Leninists are rightly disgusted by such attitudes. We start by asking what we can do for our organisation, not what our organisation can do for us.

To further develop this quality in our existing supporters it is vital to emphasise the importance of education in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Already this year we have grappled with basic philosophy and economics, using such classics as Lenin's *Materialism and empirio-criticism*, Engels' *Anti-Duhring* and Marx's *Capital*. This serious approach will be continued next year. In this way we will equip our comrades with the ability to understand our strategy and world view. This is what we want loyalty to, not this or that tactic - as is the case with so many supporters of other revolutionary groups. And what's more, given that we live in a bourgeois society, in which bourgeois ideas are the dominant ideas, we know that unless our comrades are equipped with a firm grasp of theory they will go down one way or another to the bourgeoisie. So we need to develop our theory because it is a guide to action and also because we must combat the 'enemy within', ie the opportunism which exists within our heads. This has nothing to do with a bookish approach to politics. We intend to produce class fighters and in order to do this ideological understanding will go hand in hand with practice. The art of practice is organisation. We need to give this as much attention as we do questions of theory.

**2. Organisation.** The key question in developing our organisation must be efficiency at the top. That we now have a functioning centre is a splendid achievement. The problem is that it is very amateurish. Overcoming this will be one of our major organisational tasks in 1989. Perhaps of equal importance will be the establishment of self activating cells (and, related to this, readers' groups). Our comrades are brought together not because of accident of geography but to carry out definite tasks. Cells are key here. They are the most flexible, most dynamic and most effective form of communist organisation. At the moment though it must be admitted that our cells operate because of the presence and input of comrades from centre. This must be changed. Having self activating cells does not mean comrades 'doing their own thing'. Quite the reverse. We must and will develop effective means of communication and leadership of cells from centre. We will also see to it that cells take questions such as self defence and security seriously. Not something we can say we have done in 1988.

**3. Winning new comrades.** This is something we have paid far too little attention to. That we are living through a period of relative stagnation in the class struggle means there can be no room for the approach that says 'let's wait for people to come to us'. No, we must go to them! In part recruitment will improve with the changes we are planning in organisation, in part it will improve as we develop our professional cadres and move them out of London. Yet this is not enough. We are still a small organisation with very limited resources. What this means is that our work has to be much more selective than would be the case with a party. So our drive to recruit new supporters is best done if we target the social stratum in society we think will be most useful to our cause and most receptive to our message.

This stratum is young workers, especially those engaged in struggle and in trade unions - they are the ones to whom we will primarily direct our efforts and propaganda. This stratum carries less ideological baggage from bourgeois society. It is forming its ideas and, compared with others, is more interested in

answers than excuses. Relatively speaking it is enthusiastic, looking for change and action. And unlike students and others not engaged in work, it has staying power along with a 'natural' sense of discipline and understanding of organisation.

Of course, we recognise that we must fight for recruits. They are not going to meekly fall into our laps. Indeed we would not want that to happen. We want comrades to join our ranks with their eyes open. This means not only having some sort of understanding of our arguments and requirements but also the arguments and requirements of other organisations. Because of this approach we insist that our comrades read a wide range of the left press. We are not afraid of comparisons - we welcome them.

### 3.2. Our main opponents

To win the young workers whom we need we are obviously in competition with a whole array of different political organisations. It would be foolish though to try and deal with every so-called party, group, faction and trend. We need a systematic approach. We need to aim our polemic and political interventions at those groups which constitute the most important barriers between militant young workers and Leninism.

So who are our main opponents? In broad terms they can be divided into three categories.

1. 'Official communists'. For some comrades it is surprising that we place such emphasis on the groups that make up 'official communism'. Why bother with them when they are visibly disintegrating and increasingly marginal in the working class movement? While it is true that 'official communism' is disintegrating it is essential not to think that it is dead. Our polemics against 'official communism' are not the result of irrationality. True, 'official communism' recruits very few young workers. Yet 'official communism' is still a powerful organisational and ideological force, not least because of the existence of the 'official' world communist movement and the fact that the world's revolutionary centre is under the leadership of Gorbachevite 'official communists'. As a result the Euros, although in rapid decline, have been used by the Kinnockites in the Labour Party to cover their move to the right. This is evidence of their continued relevance, if evidence be needed. If the communists believe in the market and the active citizen, and reject large scale nationalisation, who are we to disagree, argue the Kinnockites. In the same way the CPB, the NCP etc all discredit the name of communism in the minds of young workers rather than recruiting them. Our job is to expose these opportunists as false communists, indeed we are determined to recapture the once proud name of our Party for revolutionary proletarian politics.

2. The Labour Party left. The Labour Party remains by far the largest workers' party in Britain, albeit with reactionary leaders and thoroughly bourgeois politics. In terms of recruits, though, it is not mainstream Labourism that we should be most concerned with, rather its left wing. Its strength lies in the electability of so-called 'socialist' Labour MPs and councillors and the weakness of workers' organisations outside the Labour Party. Although the Labour Party can never be transformed into a vehicle for socialism its left wing can claim to be 'realistic' because of the weight that the party carries in working class politics. The Labour left is best exposed by the fact that it is hopelessly utopian and reformist, and in the last analysis loyal to the Labour Party not the working class. There can be no doubt that via its left wing the Labour Party can attract large numbers of militant young workers, indeed via the various entryist groups significant numbers of militant young workers who would consider themselves revolutionaries are lured into the Labour Party pit. It would be pointless for us to attack every one of these groups. Far better to pick out the most important, namely *Militant*. It is the most successful of the entryist groups and has taken entryism to its highest and logical conclusion, ie it has become Labourite.

3. Non-LP, non-'official communist' left. These organisations have the advantage of not being 'tainted' by direct association with 'official communism' or Labourism. Of the huge number of organisations in this category our most important opponents are the SWP and the RCP. The SWP is the largest non-

Labour Party, non-'official communist' organisation. This, and the fact that its world view, which is economic and can see no difference between east and west, fits in rather neatly with bourgeois ideology, is its biggest asset. It can attract young workers on the basis that it is active in most large towns and that it accepts many of their prejudices on the Soviet Union and other important questions. Also it does not demand a high level of commitment - this means that the SWP can recruit members' friends and partners quite easily. Yet, although the SWP is ideologically very weak from a communist point of view, this should not lead us to take a dismissive attitude. Even with its disastrous 'downturn' theory it has within it quite a large number of young workers who consider themselves revolutionaries of some sort or another. As to the RCP, it is far smaller than the SWP. Yet, because of good marketing techniques and advertising and, it must be admitted, hard work and commendable dynamism, it has carved itself out an image of being far bigger than it is. Nonetheless its politics are often hopelessly leftist. It considers the world revolutionary centre - the Soviet Union - more or less irrelevant to world politics, declares the Labour Party to be dead and has contempt for the existing organisations of the working class. Where this leads could be seen in practice during the course of the miners' Great Strike, where the RCP's major slogan throughout the strike was for a ballot!

In the course of our polemics with these various categories of organisations it is important that we develop a systematic approach to their weaknesses and our strengths and vice versa. Let us give a few examples.

•Numbers. Obviously, unlike so many of the organisations dealt with above, we will not emphasise numbers. The Labour Party has millions of members. What we will emphasise is that it plays no positive role in the class struggle. In the same way the CPB boasts of having 2,000 members yet it has only produced two publications since it was formed. As to the SWP, its membership is afraid to argue with our paper sellers although it outnumbers us many times over. We will show that what is important is what organisations can do, not how many membership cards they can issue. The struggle for socialist revolution relies not on quantity but quality. This is a vital question. So while we should not deny the need we have to grow, this must be done in the context of our aim of developing dedicated communist revolutionaries.

•Internationalism. The internationalism of *The Leninist* is testified to by the presence of comrades from Iran and Ireland at this meeting today. Of course, organisations we have mentioned (with the exception of the RCP) have more international links than we have. 'Official communism' has the world communist movement, the Labour Party has the Socialist International and even *Militant* and the SWP have overseas clones. But the essence of this question is one's attitude towards the world revolution. What this means, we will explain, is fighting for revolution in our own country and supporting this fight in every other country without exception. This understanding of internationalism we will show certainly excludes the Labourites and 'official communists'. It is also important to place emphasis on the quality of the international links we do have. For example, while the SWP has laid-back mirror images in the advanced capitalist countries, our friends are to be found in the forefront of the world revolution, in Turkey, Iran and Ireland (where the SWP's economic comrades want everyone to become English).

•Honesty. This is a very important political question. We must show that the name of the *Morning Star* is synonymous with dishonesty, the Labour Party's clause four is a lie and the SWP and RCP have never given full publicity to the differences that exist within their ranks. We will hammer home Lenin's dictum that honesty is a sign of strength (not least for a small organisation). None of the organisations we have listed have a history of honesty. They have problems and make mistakes but instead of learning from them by openly debating them they hide them because they feel ashamed. All our opponents seem intent on painting a picture of themselves in constant forward motion - something which is impossible - and more than that, as we must explain, is a form of opportunism in itself. Take a very small and seemingly trivial example. Recently I was speaking to a member of an organisation which has just launched a new

publication. After asking how sales were going this young man said he'd been told they had sold 6,000 "so far" ... in fact only 5,000 were printed! This is in truth not a minor question. Organisations which sell more papers than they print also seem to have twice as many people at meetings and demonstrations than last year as a matter of principle. This might only be a little opportunist. But its like being a little pregnant ... in the end a baby is born. We have the obscenity of Gerry Healy and the WRP to hold up as an example of this. There is a logic involved in lying, first to readers and then to ourselves, and it ends in disaster. We are rightly proud of our ability to admit mistakes and problems. *The Leninist* has published full details of differences in our organisation. Our Third Conference being a prime example. We have also given full publicity to those who wish to state their reasons for deserting our ranks. What other revolutionary organisation can say the same? This can be used to good effect.

•Practice. This is the rub. We have a long way to go here. All our main opponents are ahead of us. Nonetheless it is important not to denigrate what we have achieved already in the field of practice. We must use what we have done so far to maximum effect. Take our achievements this year.

•We organised the biggest British contingent on the London May Day march.

•While others bemoan the plight of the unemployed we set up the UWC. Its lobby of the TUC was the biggest seen since the miners' Great Strike.

•We have a paper which, having overcome the technical problems that plagued us last year, approaches the fortnightly frequency we aim for. For an organisation of our size, lacking rich or overseas backers, this is a remarkable feat and has to be proclaimed as such. The Labour Party has for instance just virtually junked its last official journal, while the Euro's *7 Days* is on its last legs. Also *The Leninist*, while it is not immediately accessible, even for advanced workers, has won wide ranging respect in Britain and internationally. This also has to be emphasised.

•Ireland is the acid test of internationalism for any workers' organisation in Britain. Ten years ago the main revolutionary groups in Britain would only march on the Young Liberals Time to Go! demonstration as a separate, anti-imperialist, contingent. Now they have adopted the Young Liberals' strategy and slogans. In response to this we sponsored the launch of Hands off Ireland! which has as its main aim the organisation of an anti-imperialist contingent on next year's Time to Go! demonstration. This is a daring initiative which throws down the gauntlet to all who consider themselves anti-imperialist.

•*The Leninist* was the inspiration for the setting up of the Workers Theatre Movement which has already done sterling work for the UWC, not least at this year's lobby of the TUC.

•Because we are a serious organisation we take fund raising seriously. Over £10,000 was raised in our two month Summer Offensive in 1988. When we look at other organisations' fund drives - SWP: £40,000, CPB: £20,000, Euro CPGB: £60,000 - we have every reason for confidence. Next year we are confident of setting a target of £20,000 and we are confident that we will surpass it.

This is only a taste of things to come. 1989 will be a year of organisation that will lead to a qualitative step forward for our organisation and our class. To make that happen we commit ourselves.

On the anniversary of the October Revolution and *The Leninist* we dedicate ourselves to making our own October Revolution, to the struggle to complete the world revolution begun in Russia in 1917.

On the 71st anniversary of the October Revolution, on the seventh anniversary of the first publication of *The Leninist* we salute our fraternal Communist Party of Turkey which is brilliantly carrying forward the work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

On the anniversary of the October Revolution and *The Leninist* we call upon all genuine communists to join our ranks. Our country is in great need of a reformed CPGB, it has been without a real Communist Party for too long. The time will soon come when we claim back the name of our Party from the opportunists who now use it in the service of the class enemy.

Forward with the struggle to reforge our CPGB!

Long live communism!